

EOC Staff Report – June 2025

EOC – 9 Commissioners

A. Commissioner update

- One new commissioner - Supervisor Fries appointed in May 2025, also attended May EOC meeting.

B. Inquiries followed up from last meeting

Q - It was discussed about EOC taking a role to support community events such as a proposed event called Global Fest to support diversity, preferably to be held in the fall or winter. Can EOC be involved in this?

A - The EOC's charge under Chapter 15 includes: "The commission may initiate special projects to enhance opportunities for traditionally excluded groups; collaborate with a wide range of individuals and organizations in the county to provide positive means of engaging the community in equal opportunities; and design initiatives and support existing efforts to increase cooperation and enhance understanding among diverse populations." Not seeing many specifics, but arguably such an event could fall under this. A word of caution: if funding or other resources are required, this may necessitate a further discussion. It is possible to have the event as attending at one's own discretion, as this may be simpler. Otherwise, the body would have to meet to make decisions regarding its involvement.

If there will be quorum of the committee, the event must be noticed.

Q - It was discussed that EOC could possibly partner with other established events e.g. Dane Dances or a resource fair. Can EOC be involved in this?

A - The EOC's charge under Chapter 15 includes: "The commission may initiate special projects to enhance opportunities for traditionally excluded groups; collaborate with a wide range of individuals and organizations in the county to provide positive means of engaging the community in equal opportunities; and design initiatives and support existing efforts to increase cooperation and enhance understanding among diverse populations." Not seeing many specifics, but arguably such an event could fall under this. A word of caution: if funding or other resources are required, this may necessitate a further discussion. It is possible to have the event as attending at one's own discretion, as this may be simpler. Otherwise, the body would have to meet to make decisions regarding its involvement.

If there will be quorum of the committee, the event must be noticed.

Q - Is there a way to desegregate data to aid in future planning in decision-making within the County?

A - Yes, this would depend on what data is needed, and where it is coming from/going to (i.e. what office houses the data). Please provide specifics, so more assistance can be provided.

Q - It was discussed that commissioners with disabilities were not being taken into consideration for hybrid meetings.

A - Our ordinances govern how we run meetings. If someone has a disability and wishes for an accommodation because they can't comply with these rules, they should file a request with the ADA Coordinator and the iterative process will proceed.

Ellen Derge – American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator contact: Monday – Friday 7:45 AM-4:30 PM, derge.ellen@dancounty.gov. You can set up an appointment via email with her to discuss concerns.

C. Reminder - Updated Processes for Hybrid Meetings

Boards and Commissions must follow the state Open Meetings Law. See this part of the Dane County Code of Ordinances:

15.02 OPEN MEETINGS REQUIRED. (1) It is declared to be the express policy of this chapter to grant the public the fullest information regarding the affairs of county government. To implement this policy, all meetings of boards and commissions shall be publicly held and open to the public in conformance with the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law, Wis. Stat. Chap. 19, Subchapter V.

There was a health emergency during the pandemic and the Attorney General for the state had advised that public meetings could occur virtually in an emergency. There is no longer an emergency. The memo from the Corporation Counsel (the county's attorney) is attached indicating that, in order to conform to the Open Meetings Law, there must be a physical space for the public to attend a meeting. In the hybrid format, individuals may attend virtually. (This is a huge step forward compared to prior to the pandemic when members and the public could only attend in person, regardless of disability.)

The county ordinance that was recently approved requires at least one member in the meeting room. The County Board believed this was important for members of the public who may attend and there is also a safety concern for a staff person holding a public meeting alone in the evening in an empty building.

The County Board Rules are Chapter 7 of the Dane County Code of Ordinances. The chapter that creates most boards or commissions is Chapter 15. Chapter 15 says:

15.05 PROCEDURAL RULES. Unless otherwise required by statute, boards and commissions will follow county board procedural rules in Chapter 7, and Section 7.55, D.C. Ords. All questions not covered by county board rules shall be governed by the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

Here is a link to the Dane County Code of Ordinances: <https://www.countyofdane.com/ordinances>

D. Current Complaints and Resolutions

- None