

Memorandum

To: Common Council

From: John Weidl, City Manager

Date: 4/10/2026

Subject- Public Art Committee and Whitewater Arts Alliance coordination

This memo is provided in response to a request from a council member to review the potential partnership and coordination between the Whitewater Arts Alliance and the Public Art Committee.

Public Art Funding

- At present, the City has very limited direct investment in public art. The primary City-funded installations have been traffic box.
- The majority of public art within the community has been funded and initiated by external partners, with a significant portion supported through Downtown Whitewater and similar organizations.
- There is currently no dedicated City budget for the ongoing purchase or expansion of public art.

Given this, any discussion regarding expanded collaboration, increased activity, or additional public art installations should be framed with the understanding that funding would likely need to come from external sources or require future budget direction from the Common Council.

Per Section 12.46.090 of the Municipal Code, the composition of the Public Art Committee already includes one representative from the Whitewater Arts Alliance as part of its five-member structure. As such, the ordinance currently establishes a formal connection between the Arts Alliance and the Public Art Committee, and no modification is required to allow for representation.

If the designated Arts Alliance seat is currently vacant, it may be filled through the standard appointment process outlined in Section 2.12.011. If the seat is filled, any effort to expand representation or formally restructure the committee would require an amendment to the ordinance.

Section 12.46.080 (Community Initiated Public Art) applies specifically to the submission and review of public art proposals and does not pertain to committee membership or structure.

Committee Activity

- The Public Art Committee was reconvened in October 2024.
- A total of 14 meetings has been scheduled since reconvening.

- The committee was unable to meet due to lack of quorum on January 9, 2025 and March 6, 2025.
- No meeting was held in July due to the holiday schedule.
- The December meeting was moved by one week to allow for quorum; otherwise, it would have been cancelled.
- Currently, the committee does not meet on a regular schedule and typically convenes only when requested by a member.

The existing ordinance already provides for Arts Alliance participation on the Public Art Committee. Current considerations appear to relate more to committee activity and funding capacity than structural changes. Any expansion of public art efforts will likely depend on external partnerships or future budget prioritization.