



Common Council Agenda Item

Meeting Date: March 17, 2026

Agenda Item: Joint Post-Election Training Opportunities for City Council, School Board and Boards and Commissions

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BACKGROUND

(Enter the who, what when, where, why)

A member of the Common Council suggested to the City Manager that the City explore the possibility of offering a joint post-election training opportunity that would include elected or appointed members of the Common Council, School Board, and potentially other City boards and commissions.

The concept would be to provide foundational governance training that helps establish shared expectations, improve understanding of public sector requirements, and build working relationships across local governing bodies.

Potential topics that could be included in cross-functional training include:

Governance & Meeting Management

- Robert's Rules of Order/Parliamentary Procedure
- Roles and responsibilities of elected officials vs. staff
- Effective meeting management and agenda setting
- Best practices for boards and commissions

Legal & Compliance

- Wisconsin Open Meetings Law
- Wisconsin Public Records Law
- Ethics and conflicts of interest
- Quasi-judicial decision-making for boards and commissions

Finance & Public Administration

- Budgeting overview
- Reading and understanding financial statements
- Levy limits and basic local government finance
- Capital planning fundamentals

Collaboration & Leadership

- Intergovernmental collaboration between local entities
- Civility and professionalism in public meetings
- Effective communication with the public and media

The intent of a joint training would not be to replace the individual onboarding and specialized training typically provided to Council members, School Board members, or commissions. Instead, it could serve as a shared orientation or baseline governance training that encourages networking, collaboration and mutual understanding between local public bodies.

PREVIOUS ACTIONS – COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

(Dates, committees, action taken)

N/A

FINANCIAL IMPACT

(If none, state N/A)

Costs would depend on the structure and delivery of the training.

Potential costs may include:

- Facilitator or trainer fees
- Facility or technology costs (if outside space is needed)
- Printed training materials
- Staff coordination time

STAFF COMMENTS

While the concept could provide value in building cross-organizational relationships and ensuring a shared understanding of governance requirements, several logistical considerations would need to be addressed:

Potential Benefits:

- Build relationships between City, School District, and boards/commissions
- Establish a shared understanding of governance responsibilities
- Improve compliance with open meetings, public records, and ethics laws
- Provide consistent foundational training for newly elected officials

Potential Challenges:

Scheduling

Coordinating schedules across multiple governing bodies may be difficult, particularly during the post-election period when members are onboarding and regular meetings are already scheduled.

Cost

If external facilitators are used, there may be costs associated with professional training services. Budget considerations would need to be evaluated.

Training Delivery

Determining who would lead the training is another consideration. Possible facilitators could include:

- City or School District legal counsel
- City administration or staff subject-matter experts
- External governance trainers
- State or municipal association training programs

Staff is seeking Council direction on whether there is interest in further exploring this concept, including potential coordination with the School District and identifying possible training partners, estimated costs, and scheduling options.

ATTACHMENT(S) INCLUDED

(If none, state N/A)

1. N/A
