City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes

MKE COMMUNITY IMPACT COMMITTEE

AMANDA AVALOS, CHAIR
Anita Johnson, Vice-Chair

Nik Kovac, Bill Christianson, Steve Mahan, Jordan Schettle, Brook Stanley, Tammy Rivera, Jamaal Napoleon, Christlyn Frederick-Stanley, and Ashley Harrell

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Wednesday, June 10, 2026 | **5:00 PM** | **Room 301-B, Third Floor, City Hall**

This is also a virtual meeting via GoToMeeting. Should you wish to join this meeting from your phone, tablet, or computer you may go to https://meet.goto.com/341076005. You can also dial in using your phone United States: +1 (646) 749-3122 and Access Code: 341-076-005.

1. Call to order.

Meeting called to order at 5:05 p.m.

2. Roll call.

Present	9 -	Avalos, Kovac, Christianson, Stanley, Rivera, Frederick-Stanley, Harrell, Johnson, Schettle
Excused	2 -	Mahan, Napoleon

3. Review and approval of the previous meeting minutes from May 12, 2026.

Meeting minutes from May 12, 2026 were approved without objection.

4. Public comments and/or announcements.

Femi (Orobola) Akinmoladun testified. He was a member of the African-American Roundtable (ART) participatory budget team that does outreach. At a food-campaign launch the previous month, the team tabled and collected pledges. At the launch he met a 10 year old girl. As the committee writes its rulebook, it should consider the voting eligibility to be set at 10 years of age or lower and to be open to all Milwaukee residents. Marin County, California had its voter age eligibility set at 14 years of age, and Eau Claire had its voter age eligibility set at the 6th grade level.

Mr. Akinmoladun advocated that participatory budgeting was for everyone and was a *school for democracy. The committee should adopt ART's definition of community safety: "Community safety is keeping people safe and creating environments where people feel supported, connected, and cared for through prevention, community-based support, healing, and non-police responses to harm and crisis."*

Chair Avalos thanked Mr. Akinmoladun for his comments and asked him to submit the referenced ART definition for "community safety" to staff in written form.

There was no other public testimony.

5. Review and/or approval of the title and definition for a community budgeting program.

Members Harrell and Rivera presented. They were assigned to create a program name title and definition, particularly regarding non-police solutions. Member Harrell had generated a document, which was provided to members, with edits from member Rivera.

The document pulled definitions of public safety and non-police safety from the Common Council resolution, which stated: "All proposals shall be for non-police public safety solutions." There were six proposed initiative names: Community-Led Public Safety, Community-Led Public Safety Participatory Budget Initiative, Community-Led Non-Police Safety Solutions, MKE Community Voices and Action Powered by Participatory Budgeting, and MKE Community Led Safety Solutions (Non-Police) Powered by Participatory Budgeting.

Member Harrell said "non-public safety" were approaches that would still advance safety. They reduce police-citizen escalation, redirect law enforcement to violent crime, and fund alternatives like repair vouchers for broken lights.

Members discussed their preferences for an initiative title name based on the last two titles, one with and the other without the term "non-police".

Several members said to remove "non-police' from the title to prevent unnecessary attention and focus on policing. The term would be referenced as an explicit exclusion in the rulebook in that projects cannot fund activities the police department already does.

Member Rivera said that she had included "non-police" in the title as an education tool to signal that safety was not police-only and to deter applicant who would not read application details fully.

Members Johnson and Harrell said that the term "non-police" could confuse community members unfamiliar with the term and that the application process should require applicants to be intentional and read information thoroughly. Those who do not read the criteria would not be selected.

Member Rivera said that she would not oppose the removal of the term "non-police" from the title but asked to retain the term "public."

There was unanimous consent from members to list the program initiative title as "Community-Led Public Safety Solutions Powered by Participatory Budgeting."

Members Harrell and Rivera further presented a proposed definition as follows:

“Community-Led Public Safety Solutions Powered by Participatory Budgeting is a new initiative. The initiative is driven by City of Milwaukee neighbors ensuring the voice of the community members who have the most lived experience and are the most impacted through collaboration, transparency, and collective decision-making, neighbors direct their taxes to fund safety solutions. Neighbors identify and prioritize safety opportunities and challenges that reflect the strengths and needs of their neighborhoods. Neighbors share ownership and provide accountability in fostering greater equity, trust, strengthening, and uplifting their communities, and creating lasting community change. Non-police refers to efforts that do not directly or by partnership fund law enforcement centered or promoting activities. This initiative is a result of the African-American Roundtable Six-Year Liberate MKE Campaign, which was sponsored by Alderperson Coggs and successfully adopted in 2025."

Members discussed making edits as follows: change "resident" to "neighbors" or "community member" because "resident" is a loaded term in immigration debates for Latino/a/x and immigrant communities; add "neighbors direct their taxes" to emphasize this is public money, not a gift; add "shared ownership and provide accountability"; and add historical credit to ART and Ald. Coggs.

Member Stanley suggested restructuring the definition to make it simpler for a first-time reader: put the funding purpose in sentence one ("is a new initiative to provide funding for non-police community public safety projects") and define terms later.

Member Johnson said that an overly wordy definition could confuse readers.

Member Harrell said that a glossary should be created in the rulebook to define terms such as "community-led", "public safety", "participatory budgeting", and "non-police". The final text should be checked through a readability software set at a third-grade reading level.

Member Christianson added that the definition must state plainly that this was for "participatory budgeting", that the community proposes ideas that get funded with taxpayer dollars.

Member Rivera said that there should be consensus first on the concepts for the definition followed by further refinement of the definition.

Member Stanley volunteered to revise the definition, as discussed, and noted that edits to the definition may require multiple drafts.

Chair Avalos said for member Stanley to synthesize the concepts and definition under participatory budgeting, draft the glossary defining terms, and bring a simplified version to the next meeting for the committee's review.

6. Review of research matrix on best practices and use cases.

Mr. Lee noted that Ms. Bein could not attend today’s meeting, but members were in possession of the matrix for their review.

Member Stanley commented. The matrix showed that, most often, comparable cities have much larger budgets than Milwaukee's. The closest models were the African American Roundtable, Eau Claire, and Philadelphia. Other municipalities were at $11 million or $30 million and often use ward-by-ward structures. The committee should *focus on other comparable budgets closest to Milwaukee's when designing structure. The timeline column was useful. Most cities spent months designing their process before brainstorming. Many distinguished between one-time projects (infrastructure) versus ongoing services or programs.*

Member Christianson said that Milwaukee may want to limit projects to one-time occurrences.

Ms. Stanley concurred but said there should be allowances for a time-limited service, like a workshop series on mental-health crisis response, as long as it was not a permanent city service delivery.

Member Rivera said the committee was getting ahead of itself to discuss a rulebook and criteria. Members should review the full matrix, regardless of budget size, and consider elements that would strengthen the City's program.

7. Review and/or approval of a program timeline.

Member Frederick-Stanley yielded to member Harrell, who presented. The draft timeline was built working backwards from the November 2026 Common Council deadline.

June 2026 would consist of planning and launching with the identification of funding allocation, securing of staffing (possibly a consultant rather than a city hire to move faster), engaging with community-based organizations, and development of a communications and outreach strategy.

July to August 2026 would consist of the design phase with scheduling community idea collection sessions and digital engagement opportunities, developing of outreach materials and promotional campaigns, and developing a rulebook.

September to October 2026 would consist of community idea collection with listening sessions and recruitment of residents and community-based organizations to serve as ambassadors, evaluators, and budget delegates. There should be paid opportunities.

November 2026 would consist of evaluation and implementation planning with the launch of online idea submission platforms and public announcement of the program. Presentation of the program framework would be presented to the Common Council. Metrics should be included from the start so the pilot can be evaluated for future replication.

2027 and beyond would consist of implementation beyond the committee’s charge.

Member Rivera inquired about the timeline’s alignment with the City’s 2027 budget and future budgets to continue the participatory budgeting initiative.

Member Kovac said that the City’s 2027 budget process would commence this September through November. The committee’s participatory budgeting funds was a one-time standalone initiative independent of the City’s budget process, and the committee’s proposal did not have to align with the City’s overall budget process.

Chair Avalos concurred with member Kovac and said the City’s future budget processes or consideration of additional participatory budgeting programs was beyond *the committee's purview presently. She was thankful for the draft timeline but raised a concern about waiting until November to present a framework without first checking in with the Common Council should the Common Council want the committee to move in a different direction. The committee's work would be for naught. She inquired about how to legitimize the committee's proposal, if approved, should the Common Council want to move in a different direction.*

Mr. Lee said that the current legislation gave the committee authority to implement a program proposal, if approved, and that there would likely be future legislation that would need approval to memorialize the committee's proposal. He would check with his office on what future legislation would be required.

Member Frederick-Stanley added that, if possible, the timeline should be extended to add more dates, especially to give the public more time to be informed and to be engaged in the process.

Chair Avalos said she would like to consult with Ald. Coggs, sponsor of the committee, and would add an agenda item to invite Ald. Coggs to provide her input and clarification regarding the committee's assigned tasks, timeline, and alignment at the next meeting.

8. Review and/or approval of the establishment of work groups or subcommittees.

Member Schettle presented. Based on his research of other municipal rulebooks, other participatory budgeting programs would often conduct their work through three subgroups: Eligible Projects and Proposals, Community Building and Outreach, and Rulebook and Online Organization.

The Eligible Projects and Proposals Subgroup would be tasked to develop defined criteria, funding limits (other cities use caps like $100,000 per proposal), applicant requirements, proposal and funding timelines, and process for sharing proposals and and voting guidelines. Significant time would be needed to set proper guardrails.

The Community Building and Outreach Subgroup would be tasked to define community vision and goals, organize outreach efforts (surveys, forums, community meetings), and engage with community-based organizations like the African American Roundtable and others.

The Rulebook and Online Organization Subgroup would be tasked to create the rulebook in defining process, vision, goals, and timeline for full expenditure of all funds. The subgroup would also develop an online presence and platform.

Initial target dates would include review of a fully drafted rulebook by September and finalization of a rulebook by November.

Chair Avalos directed members to identify which subgroups that they would like to serve and to inform staff within two weeks.

Led by chair Avalos, members discussed whether to pursue adding additional capacity, either through a new City hire or outside consultant, as suggested by Ald. Coggs previously. The former would be more time consuming and the latter would be faster to acquire. Additional capacity would support the program structure, the subgroups, and the committee. Members were volunteers with full time jobs and would *find it challenging to complete the committee's work. Accountability required capacity. There would need to be further discussion to determine the work that additional staffing would be doing whether it would be with program design, community outreach, implementation, or all aspects from start to finish. Funding for additional staffing would be from the MKE Community Impact Funds.*

Chair Avalos said that an agenda item for the next meeting would be discussion on adding additional staffing and capacity.

9. Discussion on outreach plans.

Chair Avalos said that a webpage and support for developing an outreach plan were previously discussed. Discussion on an outreach plan would remain an agenda item at the next meeting. Public comments offered today was helpful in describing what the community was already discussing. Public commenting opportunities would remain and be ongoing for future agendas.

10. Discussion on budget and funding.

Member Christianson said that he did not believe there was real jeopardy of the MKE Community Impact Funds conflicting with the City's 3-year carryover rule. The funds were part of the City Clerk's Office's operating budget and were not segregated funds in a special fund or special purpose account. There would not be a hard 2028 deadline for the funds to be expended. However, the funds should go out into the community as soon as possible to provide an impact.

Member Frederick-Stanley inquired about the source of funds to use towards hiring additional support.

Chair Avalos said that a certain amount of funds from the MKE Community Impact Funds would have to be set aside, which Ald. Coggs had previously mentioned for the committee to consider.

Member Rivera requested for further information on the process and timeline to either contract with an existing CBO, such as the African American Roundtable, or hire a dedicated staff through the City Clerk's Office. The former would be preferable with the understanding that a new hire may require more process and time.

Mr. Lee said that the committee should defer having a full discussion on additional capacity to the next meeting when they would be noticed to do so.

11. Next meeting date and time.

-Set for Tuesday, July 14, 2026 at 5 p.m.

12. Items for future agenda(s).

Agenda items for the next meeting to include discussion on acquiring additional staffing capacity (options, timeline, and funding), discussion with Ald. Coggs to clarify the committee's proposal to present to the Common Council (scope of work versus a finished program framework), discussion on community outreach plans and *communications, review of the program definition, discussion on legislation needed to memorialize the committee's proposal, and establishing work groups (subgroups).*

Mr. Lee said that the insight to be gained from Ald. Coggs and decision on adding capacity, if any, would greatly clarify the committee's actions and scope of work going forward.

13. Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 6:29 p.m.

Chris Lee, Staff Assistant
Council Records Section
City Clerk's Office

Meeting materials for this meeting and past meetings can be found within the following file:

251987 Communication relating to the activities of the MKE Community Impact Committee.

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