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**City of Racine, Wisconsin
Common Council**

AGENDA BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

COMMITTEE: Public Safety and Licensing **ORDINANCE 0029-25**

AGENDA DATE: Common Council Agenda – December 2, 2025

Committee of the Whole – June 9, 2026

Common Council – June 16, 2026

DEPARTMENT: City Attorney’s Office

Prepared By: City Attorney Scott R. Letteney

Reviewed By: N/A

SUBJECT: Communication sponsored by Alderman Weidner presenting Ordinance 0029-25, Communications.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Proposed Ordinance 0029-25 – Would amend and expand the procedure under Racine Ordinances section 2-117 for Communications to be submitted to various City of Racine governmental bodies.

Note: Modifications recommended at the June 9, 2026, Committee of the Whole meeting are in [blue](#).

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS:

As Racine Ordinances section 2-117 currently exists, the mayor and any alder may submit a communication to the Common Council for referral to any standing committee. The proposed ordinance, principally Parts 1 and 2, which would amend subsections 2-117(a) and (b), would expand that authority to allow communications to be submitted for referral by the Common Council to any City of Racine governmental body, including standing committees of the Common Council and any City of Racine authority, board, or commission. The proposed

28 ordinance would also allow City of Racine administrative managers to be submitted for referral
29 by the Common Council to any City of Racine governmental body.

30
31 Part 3 of the proposed ordinance would create a new subsection 2-117(c), would place a
32 limit of 90 days for any communication referred to a governmental body to be deferred. Any
33 deferred communication not timely recalled to an agenda by the governmental body would be
34 placed on the agenda of the regular meeting of the governmental body immediately preceding the
35 expiration of 90 days from the date of deferral.

36
37 Part 4 of the proposed ordinance would amend the existing subsection 2-117(c) and
38 subsection 2-117(d) and would amend the procedure for recalling communications referred to a
39 governmental body, but not placed on the agenda of such governmental body, after 90 days have
40 passed. Principally, it would allow a majority of aldermanic members of the common council—
41 rather than ten—to direct such communication be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of
42 such governmental body.

43
44 Part 5 of the proposed ordinance would repeal the existing Section 2-117(d), which
45 provides a procedure for 250 citizens to petition the Common Council to place an item on a
46 standing committee agenda.

47
48 **NOTE: At its June 9, 2026, meeting considering this ordinance, the Committee of the**
49 **Whole recommended that Part 5 be deleted. Therefore, the existing subsection 2-117(d) will not**
50 **be repealed. Because Part 4 redesignated the existing subsection 2-117(c) and 2-117(d), it is**
51 **necessary to redesignate the existing subsection 2-117(d) and 2-117(dm).**

52
53 Part 6 of the proposed ordinance relates to communications received by the City Clerk
54 but not acted upon by the Common Council. As the ordinance currently exists, if
55 communications received by the City Clerk prior to December 31 of a year are not acted upon by
56 the Common Council by the third Monday in April of the next year, the communication is
57 deemed to have expired. Part 6 of the proposed ordinance would require the City Clerk to notify
58 the Common Council, no later than January 15 of each year, of communications received prior to
59 December 31 of the prior year but not yet acted.

60
61 A red-line version of the proposed changes to Section 2-117 follows. Text in red would
62 be modified. Text in black remains unchanged from the currently-existing ordinance. Stricken
63 text would be deleted. Underlined text would be added.

64
65
66 **Sec. 2-117. - Action on petitions and communications.**

67 (a) Except as otherwise provided herein, all communications shall be in writing, with the
68 name of the mayor or of the alder presenting the same endorsed thereon, and shall be
69 delivered to the clerk. Notwithstanding the foregoing, communications from
70 administrative managers may be presented without endorsement by the mayor or an
71 alder. The elected official or administrative manager presenting the communication may

72 recommend a standing committee, or other authority, board, or commission that has
73 responsibility relevant to the communication. to which to refer the communication. If the
74 elected official or administrative manager does not include a committee, authority, board,
75 or commission, recommendation, the clerk shall recommend a standing committee to
76 which to refer the communication based upon the guidance provided in section 2-77 and
77 elsewhere in this Code of Ordinances.

78 (b) ~~The clerk shall present all~~ All communications, ~~which that~~ are received by the office
79 of the city clerk no later than 12:00 noon on the Thursday prior to a common council
80 meeting, ~~to~~ shall be included on the agenda of the next meeting of the common council
81 for the common council's consideration and referral to a standing committee, authority,
82 board, or commission. The mayor or any alder may request the common council refer a
83 communication to any standing committee, authority, board, or commission. The
84 common council may refer communications to any standing committee, authority, board,
85 or commission by the majority vote of all alders present.

86 (c) No communication placed on an agenda of any standing committee, authority, board,
87 or commission may be deferred for more than 90 days. Any deferred communication that
88 has not been affirmatively recalled by the standing committee, authority, board, or
89 commission, shall be placed on the agenda of the regular meeting of the standing
90 committee, authority, board, or commission immediately preceding the expiration of 90
91 days from the date of deferral.

92 (ed) If more than 90 days have passed from the date a communication was made
93 available to a standing committee, authority, board, or commission chair, if the
94 communication has not been placed on a standing committee, authority, board, or
95 commission agenda or no committee, authority, board, or commission action has been
96 taken on a communication placed on a standing committee, authority, board, or
97 commission agenda, any alderperson may request the common council direct a standing
98 committee consider such communication as follows:

99 (1) The clerk shall directly refer any request to the next common council meeting,
100 consistent with the requirements of the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law.

101 (2) Upon the affirmative vote of ~~ten~~ a majority of the aldermanic members of the
102 common council members, the communication shall be placed on the agenda of
103 the next meeting of the relevant standing committee, authority, board, or
104 commission for consideration.

105 (dm) Notwithstanding anything else herein, upon the petition of no fewer than 250
106 qualified electors of the City of Racine, a communication shall be referred to a standing
107 committee. Based upon the guidance provided in section 2-77 and elsewhere within this
108 Code of Ordinances, within 14 days of receipt and verification by the clerk, the clerk
109 shall determine the most-appropriate standing committee to which the communication

110 should be directed and shall cause such communication to be placed on the next
111 committee agenda, consistent with the requirements of the Wisconsin Open Meetings
112 Law.

113 (e) Notwithstanding anything else herein, any communication received by the clerk by
114 December 31 that has not been acted upon by the common council by the third Monday
115 in April of the subsequent year, shall be deemed to have expired, and no further action
116 shall be taken. No later than January 15 of each year, the clerk shall notify the common
117 council of all communications received by the clerk by December 31 of the previous that
118 had not yet been acted upon by the common council.

119
120 If all proposed changes are approved, Section 20-117 would read as follows:

121
122 **Sec. 2-117. - Action on petitions and communications.**

123 (a) Except as otherwise provided herein, all communications shall be in writing, with the
124 name of the mayor or of the alder presenting the same endorsed thereon, and shall be
125 delivered to the clerk. Notwithstanding the foregoing, communications from
126 administrative managers may be presented without endorsement by the mayor or an
127 alder. The elected official or administrative manager presenting the communication may
128 recommend a standing committee, or other authority, board, or commission that has
129 responsibility relevant to the communication, to which to refer the communication. If the
130 elected official or administrative manager does not include a committee, authority, board,
131 or commission, recommendation, the clerk shall recommend a standing committee to
132 which to refer the communication based upon the guidance provided in section 2-77 and
133 elsewhere in this Code of Ordinances.

134 (b) All communications that are received by the office of the city clerk no later than
135 12:00 noon on the Thursday prior to a common council meeting, ~~to~~ shall be included on
136 the agenda of the next meeting of the common council for the common council's
137 consideration and referral to a standing committee, authority, board, or commission. The
138 mayor or any alder may request the common council refer a communication to any
139 standing committee, authority, board, or commission. The common council may refer
140 communications to any standing committee, authority, board, or commission by the
141 majority vote of all alders present.

142 (c) No communication placed on an agenda of any standing committee, authority, board,
143 or commission may be deferred for more than 90 days. Any deferred communication that
144 has not been affirmatively recalled by the standing committee, authority, board, or
145 commission, shall be placed on the agenda of the regular meeting of the standing
146 committee, authority, board, or commission immediately preceding the expiration of 90
147 days from the date of deferral.

148 (d) If more than 90 days have passed from the date a communication was made available
149 to a standing committee, authority, board, or commission chair, if the communication has
150 not been placed on a standing committee, authority, board, or commission agenda or no
151 committee, authority, board, or commission action has been taken on a communication
152 placed on a standing committee, authority, board, or commission agenda, any alderperson
153 may request the common council direct a standing committee consider such
154 communication as follows:

155 (1) The clerk shall directly refer any request to the next common council meeting,
156 consistent with the requirements of the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law.

157 (2) Upon the affirmative vote of a majority of the aldermanic members of the
158 common council members, the communication shall be placed on the agenda of
159 the next meeting of the relevant standing committee, authority, board, or
160 commission for consideration.

161 (dm) Notwithstanding anything else herein, upon the petition of no fewer than 250
162 qualified electors of the City of Racine, a communication shall be referred to a standing
163 committee. Based upon the guidance provided in section 2-77 and elsewhere within this
164 Code of Ordinances, within 14 days of receipt and verification by the clerk, the clerk
165 shall determine the most-appropriate standing committee to which the communication
166 should be directed and shall cause such communication to be placed on the next
167 committee agenda, consistent with the requirements of the Wisconsin Open Meetings
168 Law.

169 (e) Notwithstanding anything else herein, any communication received by the clerk by
170 December 31 that has not been acted upon by the common council by the third Monday
171 in April of the subsequent year, shall be deemed to have expired, and no further action
172 shall be taken. No later than January 15 of each year, the clerk shall notify the common
173 council of all communications received by the clerk by December 31 of the previous that
174 had not yet been acted upon by the common council.

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176 **BUDGETARY IMPACT:** None.

177

178 **OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES:**

179 To approve, modifying the procedures for communications.

180 To deny, declining to modify the procedures for communications.

181 To amend the proposed ordinance in some way.

182

183 **RECOMMENDED ACTION BY ALDERMAN WEIDNER:** To approve.

184 **RECOMMENDED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE:** To approve as
185 amended.

186

187 **ATTACHMENT(S):** None.