

Columbus, Wisconsin Citizen Advisory Boards

Advisory boards, committees, commissions and authorities to which the City Council makes appointments are an integral part of the governmental process in the City of Columbus. The volunteers who participate provide the Council valuable insights, and their service is greatly appreciated.

This brochure provides a listing of each entity, a general summary of purpose and the month during which appointments are made.

Members of the boards are appointed based on their background and interest in a particular field and are expected to attend all advisory meetings. Those who miss three consecutive meetings in a calendar year may be replaced.

A description of the duties of the boards is contained in the Columbus Municipal Code. A quick reference list follows.

Police and Fire Commission (PFC): Chapter 2-261 through 2-264
Community Development Authority (CDA): Chapter 2-361 through 2-370
Municipal Court Committee: Chapter 2-581 through 2-589
Board of Electrical Examiners: Chapter 18-51 through 18-52
Cable Commission: Chapter 26
Hillside Cemetery Association: Chapter 30-51 through 30-52
Election Board: Chapter 34-31
Library Board: Chapter 62-36 through 62-39, St Stats 43.60(3)
Plan Commission: Chapter 78-31, St Stats 62.23
Board of Review: Chapter 94-31, St Stats 70.47-70.49
Water & Light Commission: Chapter 102-56 through 102-62
Zoning Board of Appeals: Chapter 114-96 through 114-101
Historic Landmarks & Preservation Commission: Chapter 114-496 through 114-505
Columbus Area Aquatic Center Board (CAAC): City approves by-laws and has an agreement of cooperation for the operation of the aquatic center.
Community Activities Committee: Chapter 2-311

For more information on the appointment process, or the specific role of one of the advisory boards, contact:

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Police and Fire Commission: The Police & Fire Commission appoints the fire chief and the police chief and hears disciplinary matters of the departments. This commission has not taken the optional powers allowed by the Wisconsin statutes. The commission has 5 members appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council. Each member serves a 5-year term with one term commencing May 10th each year.

Community Development Authority: The Community Development Authority consists of 7 resident members with abilities and experience in the fields of urban renewal, community development and housing. 5 members serve 4 year terms each and 2 council members serve for their term of office. The authority has all the powers necessary or convenient to carry out and effectuate all aspects of urban renewal, development and redevelopment programs and governmental housing projects. The appointments are made by the mayor and confirmed by the council, effective May 10th of the year of appointment.

Municipal Court Committee: Columbus is a member of the Eastern Columbia County Joint Municipal Court. The purpose of the committee is to facilitate the orderly administration and communication between the municipal judge and the participating municipalities. Columbus appoints 1 member and 1 alternate member. The member is appointed by the mayor and approved by the council.

Board of Electrical Examiners: This board has authority over the issuance, suspension or revocation of electrical licenses and oversees the city's electrical inspector. The Board of Electrical Examiners consists of 3 members - the mayor or a citizen appointed by the mayor, one electrical contractor and one journeyman electrician. The appointments are made by the mayor, confirmed by the council for 2 year terms.

Cable Commission: The Cable Commission is comprised of a member of the Judiciary Committee, a member of the Water & Light Commission and 3 citizen members appointed for 2 year terms. The commission acts for the city in all matters relating to the cable telecommunications network, including preparing a budget and allocating funds for public access programming and production. Commission members are appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council by May 10th of each year.

Hillside Cemetery Association: The Hillside Cemetery Association consists of 9 members who each serve a 3-year term and 3 advisory members who each serve a 1 year term. Terms are staggered with 3 regular and 1 advisory member appointed each year. The association establishes rules and regulations for the operation of the cemetery and maintains all necessary records relating to the cemetery. All monies collected are received to the city. Members are elected by the association at the annual meeting in June of each year.

Election Board: The Election Board consists of 7 inspectors for each voting district. Each inspector must be a resident of the voting district he or she represents. There are currently 3 voting districts in Columbus. Inspectors are appointed by the mayor, confirmed by the council. The appointments are for 2 years and are made in December of every even numbered year.

Library Board: The library board consist of 7 members. Six members are appointed by the mayor, confirmed by the council. 5 of the 6 members of the board must be residents of the city, while the 6th member may be from a town adjacent to the city. The 7th member will be a public school district administrator or representative. The library board has exclusive control of the expenditures of all moneys collected, donated or appropriated for the library fund. The board also controls all lands, buildings or other property given or acquired for library purposes. The board supervises the administration of the library including hiring the librarian and any other staff. Board members are appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council, for 3 year terms, 3 members to be appointed in consecutive years and 1 member to be appointed in the following year. Terms begin on May 10th the year of appointment.

Plan Commission: The Plan Commission is responsible for adopting a master plan for the physical development of the city and for reviewing proposed conditional uses, subdivisions and zoning district amendments. The commission consists of the mayor, who serves as chair, the superintendent of public works, an alderperson, and 4 residents of the city. The alderperson is appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council. The residents are appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council, for 3 year terms, one each April.

Board of Review: The Board of Review is the first formal step in the appeal process for Wisconsin property owners who want to appeal their property assessments. The board's duty is to hear sworn, oral testimony about assessed values and based solely on that testimony decide whether an individual has proven the assessment to be incorrect. The Board of Review meets once a year, usually the 2nd Monday in May. The board consists of 5 residents of the city, appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council, for 5 year terms, one each year. Appointments are made by the 10th of May each year.

Water & Light Commission: The Water & Light Commission consists of 5 members, each serving a 5-year term, and 2 alderpersons who serve a 2-year term each. The management, control and supervision of any and all of the property pertaining to the water & the electric systems is invested in this commission along with employing all labor necessary in the operation, management and extension of the systems. Appointments are made by the council for terms that begin on October 1st of the year of appointment.

Zoning Board of Appeals: The Zoning Board of Appeals role is to determine whether, as applied to a particular set of facts and circumstances presented, the zoning administrator's interpretation and application of the local ordinance is in accord with the terms of that ordinance and State law. The board may grant variances in specific cases from the terms of the zoning code based on review of circumstances for practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship. The board consists of 5 residents of the city, appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council, for 3 year terms, one each year. Appointments are made by the 10th of May each year.

Historic Landmarks & Preservation Commission: This commission consists of 7 members serving staggered terms of 3 years each. The commission has the power to designate historic structures, sites and districts within the city limits. These designations are made subject to criteria found in local ordinances. The members are appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council. Terms begin on May 10th of the year of appointment.

Columbus Area Aquatic Center Board (CAAC): The CAAC Board was formed by members of the general public, financial supporters of the Columbus Area Aquatic Center and the city government to undertake the construction and operation of the aquatic center facility. The city dedicated the park site for the facility, managed the construction and contributed \$1,700,00. The CAAC board raised over \$1,100,000 in donations and undertook the operation and management of the facility after construction. The board consists of 9 members, whose appointment is confirmed by the City Council: 6 members are appointed by the board and serve 3 year terms, 2 appointed each year at the annual meeting in October. The remaining 3 members are appointed to the board, 1 each from the City Council, the Columbus School Board and the Columbus Community Hospital Board.

Community Activities Commission: This commission consists of an Executive Committee which oversees all community recreation, leisure and community wide events within the city; a Recreation Committee which oversees all community recreation activities and events; and a Community Activities Committee which oversees all community wide events and activities. The recreation and community committees each consist of 5 citizens members; the executive committee consists of 2 members from the recreation and community committees and one alderman. All appointments are made by the mayor and confirmed by the council. Terms are staggered.