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July 13, 2026

Memorandum

To: Ordinance and Licensing Committee

From: Alderman Wuteska, Chair, and Katie Panella, City Clerk

Re: Ordinance and Licensing Meeting Dates and Issuance of Licenses within the City Clerk's Office

Ordinance and Licensing Meeting Dates

Currently, the Ordinance and Licensing Committee meets twice a month, the second and fourth Monday of every month at 6:00 p.m. Outside of the renewal months of May and June, the meetings have been averaging anywhere between 5 to 15 minutes in length depending on agenda items. To decrease staff overtime and better align with the seasonal demands of the Committee's business, while continuing to support a reasonable application processing time, the Clerk's Office will only be scheduling a single meeting per month on the second Monday at 6:00 pm when there is a sufficient amount of business items to come before the Committee. This is similar to how the Finance Committee and Human Resources Committee conduct their business.

As an exception, the Ordinance and Licensing Committee will need to meet twice for the months of May and June on the second and fourth Monday at 6:00 p.m.

Issuance of Licenses within the City Clerk's Office

Currently, the City Clerk's Office issues several licenses that require the Ordinance and Licensing Committee to provide a recommendation of approval or denial to the Common Council.

The Clerk's Office receives numerous applications in-person or via mail. When the completed applications and fee are received, Staff send the application to the appropriate departments for their review and recommendation(s). Simultaneously, a background check is completed by the Police Department. Once the departmental recommendations and background checks are returned to the Clerk's Office, Staff place the application, along with the recommendations, on the Ordinance and Licensing Committee agenda and invite the applicant, if necessary.

The following is being submitted for consideration by the Ordinance and Licensing Committee to revise the review of these Miscellaneous Licenses:

- **Extension of Premises, Special Class B, Junk Peddler/Dealer, Secondhand Article/Jewelry Dealer, Successor of Agent, Amusement Game Devices, Private**

Alarms, Taxicab, and Taxi Driver. All required documents and fees would continue to follow the existing process.

However, in lieu of all applications going to the Ordinance and Licensing Committee, the Clerk's Office would have the authority to issue the license based on the Police Department recommendation.

- If the Police Department recommends approval, and there are no issues with the application, the Clerk's Office would have the authority to issue the license.
- If the Police Department recommends denial, the Clerk's Office will forward the application to the Ordinance and Licensing Committee for review and recommendation to the Common Council.

- **Sidewalk Café Permits.** All required documents and fees would continue to follow the existing process.

However, in lieu of the applications going to the Ordinance and License Committee, the Clerk's Office would have the authority to issue the license if all department recommendations are for approval as is, or if the departments have additional comments regarding furniture, security fencing, or signage. But, if any department does not recommend approval, the application would be forwarded to the Ordinance and Licensing Committee for review and recommendation to the Common Council.

Operator (Bartender) License Applications

For Operator (Bartender) Licenses, the current application processes are as follows:

- **New Operator (Bartender) License Application.** The Clerk's Office intakes applications and collects the \$82.00 fee (\$75.00 for application and \$7.00 record check fee). From there, a background check from the Police Department is requested.
 - If the record check comes back 'No Record' or with traffic violations, Staff will issue the license to the applicant.
 - If the record check comes back with any offenses listed, not related to alcohol, the application will go to the Ordinance and Licensing Committee for review and recommendation to the Common Council.
 - If the record check comes back with any alcohol related offenses, the application will go to the Ordinance and Licensing Committee for review and recommendation to the Common Council, and the applicant and their agent are invited to appear before the Committee.
- **Renewal Operator (Bartender) License Application.** The Clerk's Office intakes applications and collects the \$82.00 fee (\$75.00 for application and \$7.00 record check fee). From there, a background check from the Police Department is requested.
 - If there are no offenses since the license was issued for the existing or immediately prior licensing period, Staff will issue the license to the applicant.
 - If there are offenses since the license was issued for the existing or immediately prior licensing period, not related to alcohol, the application will go to the Ordinance and Licensing Committee for review and recommendation to the Common Council.

- If there are alcohol related offenses since the license was issued for the existing or immediately prior licensing period, the application will go to the Ordinance and Licensing Committee for review and recommendation to the Common Council, and the applicant and their agent are invited to appear before the Ordinance and Licensing Committee.

For both new and renewal applicants, if any offenses are not listed on the application, the applicants are sent an email they need to reapply and pay \$20.00 reapply fee and list the violations from the record checks returned from the Police Department.

For Operator (Bartender) Licenses, the revised application processes being requested for consideration are as follows:

- **New Operator (Bartender) License Application – Strongly Related Offenses – Applicant Invite.** If a new Operator (Bartender) applicant background check comes back with the following Strongly Related Offenses, the Clerk’s Office staff will send the application to the upcoming Ordinance and Licensing Committee for their review and invite the applicant and their agent.
 - Strongly Related Offenses (Committee review):
 - Multiple Strongly Related Offenses within five (5) years of application date
 - Homicide or injury by intoxicated use of a motor vehicle
 - Any single occurrence of crimes as defined in Wisconsin Statutes Chapters 940 or 948
- **New Operator (Bartender) License Application – Strongly Related Offenses - Application Review Only.** If a new Operator (Bartender) applicant background check comes back with the following Strongly Related Offenses listed within five (5) years of the application date, the Clerk’s Office staff would send the application to the Ordinance and Licensing Committee for their review.
 - Strongly Related Offenses (Committee review):
 - OWI
 - PAC
 - Serving underage persons
 - Serving intoxicated persons
 - Sober server violation
 - Any other violations of Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 125
 - Any other violations of Mun Code Chapter 9
- **New Operator (Bartender) License Application – Less Strongly Related Offenses - Application Review Only.** If the background check for a new Operator (Bartender) applicant has the following Less Strongly Related Offenses listed on their record and none of the specific offenses are repeated over the prior five (5) years, the Clerk’s Office would issue the license to the applicant. If there are specific offenses listed multiple times over the prior five (5) years old – e.g., Fraud in 2020 and 2023, the Clerk’s Office would forward the application to the Ordinance and Licensing Committee for review and recommendation to the Common Council.
 - Less Strongly Related Offenses (Staff may issue, if not repeated):

- Possession, manufacture, delivery, or use of controlled substances
 - Concealed carry of a firearm without a permit
 - Embezzlement
 - Fraud
 - Theft
 - Robbery
 - Credit card fraud
 - Wire fraud
 - Gambling, violations of Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 945
 - Other crimes of dishonesty
- **Renewal Operator (Bartender) License Application – Strongly Related Offenses – Applicant Invite.** If a renewal Operator (Bartender) applicant background check comes back with the following Strongly Related Offenses within the previous licensing period, the Clerk’s Office staff will send the application to the upcoming Ordinance and Licensing Committee for their review and invite the applicant and their agent.
 - Strongly Related Offenses (Committee review):
 - Multiple Strongly Related Offenses
 - Homicide or injury by intoxicated use of a motor vehicle.
 - Any single occurrence of crimes as defined in Wisconsin Statutes Chapters 940 or 948
- **Renewal Operator (Bartender) License Application – Strongly Related Offenses – Application Review Only.** If a renewal Operator (Bartender) applicant background check comes back with the following Strongly Related Offenses listed within the previous licensing period, the Clerk’s Office staff would send the application to the Ordinance and Licensing Committee for their review.
 - Strongly Related Offenses (Committee review):
 - OWI.
 - PAC.
 - Serving underage persons.
 - Serving intoxicated persons.
 - Sober server violation.
 - Any other violations of Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 125.
 - Any other violations of Mun Code Chapter 9.
- **Renewal Operator (Bartender) License Application – Less Strongly Related Offenses – Application Review Only.** If the background check for a renewal Operator (Bartender) applicant has the following Less Strongly Related Offenses listed on their record and none of the specific offenses are repeated over the previous licensing period, the Clerk’s Office would issue the license to the applicant. If there are specific offenses listed multiple times since the previous licensing period – e.g., Fraud in 2022 and 2023, the Clerk’s Office would forward the application to the Ordinance and Licensing Committee for review and recommendation to the Common Council.
 - Less Strongly Related Offenses (Staff may issue, if not repeated):
 - Possession, manufacture, delivery, or use of controlled substances

- Concealed carry of a firearm without a permit
 - Embezzlement
 - Fraud
 - Theft
 - Robbery
 - Credit card fraud
 - Wire fraud
 - Gambling, violations of Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 945
 - Other crimes of dishonesty
- For a new or renewal Operator (Bartender) applicant, if they fail to list a Strongly Related or Less-Strongly Related Offense on their initial application, the Clerk's Office would send an email to the applicant notifying them to reapply and charge the \$20.00 reapply fee. If on the next application, they fail to list all related offenses the application would be sent to the Ordinance and Licenses Committee for review.
 - If any Operator (Bartender) applicant, new and renewal, fails to list a traffic violation on their application, the Clerk's Office would have the ability to issue the license without having the applicant reapply.
 - If any Operator (Bartender) applicants are denied a license by the Common Council, the applicant would be notified, in writing, of the denial and the reason for the denial to allow for the applicant to be provided with the opportunity to appeal the decision.

Proposed Revised Operator (Bartender) Application Processes Table*

**Please read the above Operator (Bartender) Application sections for specific on the application process modifications*

Application Issue	Current Process	Proposed Revised Process
Application intake / fee / background check	Clerk's Office collects \$82 fee and requests Police Department background check.	No change.
New application – No record / traffic violations only	Staff issues license.	No change. Staff issues license.
New application — non-traffic offense(s)	Sent to Ordinance & Licensing Committee for review and recommendation to Common Council.	Offenses are divided into Strongly Related and Less Strongly Related categories. Staff may issue less strongly related offenses if not repeated within prior 5 years .
Renewal — no new offenses / traffic violations only	Staff issues license if no offenses since license was issued for existing or immediately prior licensing period.	No change. Staff issues license.

Renewal — non-alcohol offense	Sent to Ordinance & Licensing Committee for review and recommendation to Common Council.	Staff may issue license if the same specific Less Strongly Related offense was not repeated during the existing or immediately prior licensing period.
Alcohol-related / strongly related offenses	Sent to Committee and Common Council; applicants and agents are invited to appear.	Sent to Committee for review, depending on offenses, applicants/agents may be invited as part of initial review.
Repeated less strongly related offenses	Not addressed; generally sent to Committee.	Sent to Committee and Common Council if the same specific offense is repeated within the applicable review period.
Failure to list related offense	Applicant emailed and required to reapply.	First omission: applicant must reapply and pay \$20.00 reapply fee. Second omission: sent to Committee for review.
Failure to list traffic violation	Applicants must reapply and pay \$20.00 reapply fee.	Staff may issue licenses without requiring reapplication.
Denial by Common Council	Applicants receive written notices stating denial, reason, and appeal opportunity.	No change.

For additional background information on Operator (Bartender) Licenses, see attached memo from the City Attorney's Office, dated November 21, 2025, and Evaluating Arrest and Conviction Records in Licensing Decisions, League of Wisconsin Municipalities.

Similar to the meeting dates, the recommended modifications to the issuance processes are being submitted for the Committee's consideration as a way to improve efficiency and better align staff resources with the seasonal demands of the Committee's workload.

These changes are intended to reduce the amount of staff time required for routine license processing, provide more timely and responsive customer service, and create a more predictable process for applicants. In the case of Operator (Bartender) Licenses, the proposed modifications would also establish a clear, consistent standard for issuance, helping make sure that applicants are treated uniformly and that staff have clear directions when processing applications.

Based on the Committee's discussion, and whether there are certain pieces or if all these modifications are desirable for adoption, the Municipal Code would need to be reviewed by the City Attorney's Office to draft an ordinance amendment for consideration at a future meeting.

Thank you for your consideration.

Attachments:

- (1) Memo from the City Attorney's Office, dated November 21, 2025; and
- (2) Evaluating Arrest and Conviction Records in Licensing Decisions, League of Wisconsin Municipalities