

TO: City Council, City Manager, Clerk/Treasurer and Department Heads
FROM: Peg Roth, Cory Johnston and Steve Arkwright
DATE: 11/24/08
RE: Council Meetings Policies, Procedures and Decorum

We met on Friday November 14, 2008 to review how we could improve the effectiveness of our council meetings. The following are our recommendations upon which we are asking the City Council to take action and approve. We want to be clear that it is **not** our recommendation or goal to stifle discussion or debate at our council meetings. It is not our recommendation or goal to set time limits that any speaker has to make his/her point or limit the time for our council meetings. Instead it is our goal and desire to set forth parameters that will result in more effectively run meetings delivering a better result for the City and more satisfying meetings for the council and residents.

First of all, it is our opinion that in order to achieve more effective meetings we will need **everyone's** cooperation, willingness to try something different, and some changes to what has traditionally taken place.

We have attached a "sample" agenda to illustrate many of the changes we are recommending. You will notice the following:

1. We recommend that we remove the following agenda items:

- a. Committee Reports / Council Comments / Mayor's Comments
 - i. We felt that these are not necessary agenda items. If there is something necessary to report on or take action on, it should be added as an agenda item under unfinished business or new business.
- b. DPW & Police Report
 - i. We felt that since the Charter states that the department heads report to the City Manager, that the City Manager should report to the Council with any necessary updates or requested reports. We recommend that we would set up a "report schedule" for the City Manager in which the reports that the City Councils would like to review would be delivered. (i.e. DPW Reports during the first meeting of the month and Police Reports during the second meeting of the month). We do not believe that it is necessary for the Chief of Police or the DPW Supervisor to be present at every meeting. If there is an issue that we need them to report on, it should be added to a meeting's agenda and we should request their attendance.

2. We recommend that we add the following agenda items:

- i. Consent Agenda
 1. A consent agenda is a component of a meeting agenda that enables the council to group routine items and resolutions under one umbrella. As the name implies, there is a general agreement on the approval, or consent, without discussion. Unless a council member feels that an item should be discussed and requests the removal of that item ahead of time, the entire package is voted on at once without any additional explanations or comments. Because there are no questions or comments on these items, and there is one motion and vote instead of multiple, this procedure saves time.
 2. Items included in a consent agenda:
 - a. Routine, standard, non-controversial, and self-explanatory are adjectives that well describe consent agenda items. The following are some examples:
 - b. Committee and previous board meeting minutes
 - c. Office reports
 - d. Routine correspondence

- e. Minor changes in a procedure (E-mail is added as an acceptable method of communication to announce a change in a meeting schedule)
- f. Routine revisions of a policy (Changes in dates or dollar amounts due to changes in laws)
- g. Updating documents (Address change for the main office)
- h. Standard contracts that are used regularly (Confirmation of using the traditional in-house contract with a new vendor) Confirmation of conventional actions that are required in the bylaws (Signatory authority for a bank account or acceptance of gifts)

3. Take Public Comments Earlier:

- a. This will allow for public to make comments about non-agenda items without having to sit through other parts of the meeting.

4. Agenda Items:

- a. We are recommending **written** reports or summaries be included in the meeting packets for anything that is to be included on an agenda (similar to this report). This practice will allow council to have the opportunity to read your report in advance of the meeting and you can address any questions that might arise. This will result in a more efficient meeting and more clear and accurate records. The reports should include the following information:
 - i. Detailed description of the item to be reviewed.
 - ii. Explanation of both sides of the issue
 - iii. All necessary supporting materials
 - iv. Proposed written motion or resolution to be considered.
 - v. Any cost affect, or analysis required, of the proposed action (if applicable).
- b. It should be a **VERY** rare emergency/situation that would cause the Council to allow an item to be added to an agenda at the meeting. Although we understand that unexpected situations occur, we believe that it is unreasonable to request action be taken in the form an of an agenda item without the due consideration being given prior to the meeting.

5. Meeting Packets:

- a. Meeting packet should be delivered electronically no later than Thursday night prior to the Monday meeting. We understand that we are not currently prepared to deliver electronically, but we believe this will dramatically improve our efficiency in communicating ahead of the meeting therefore this should be a high priority.
 - i. All items to be included on the agenda should contain all items discussed above and should be delivered to the City Manager no later than Noon on Wednesday.
 - ii. Receiving the Packets on Thursday, will generally allow for both Friday and Monday to get clarification prior to the Monday evening meeting.

6. Pre-Meeting Protocol:

- a. After reviewing the meeting packet, if a Councilperson has a question, or requires additional information on any agenda item he/she should email the person responsible for the topic in question requesting further information. In responding to the person asking the question, the responding person should copy all Councilpersons, City Manager and anyone else involved in the requested action. It is our hope that this will prevent duplicate questions/emails to whoever is responsible for the agenda item while still providing the needed information in a timely manner.

7. Meeting Decorum:

- a. There are several items that we will need to follow in an effort to enjoy a more efficient and successful meetings:
 - **Always** address each other and the public with respect.
 - Please show respect by listening to the person that is speaking without carrying on a side conversation.

- Speak **only** when recognized by the Chair.
- If we are able to stay focused on the agenda, we will be able to move the meeting along while effectively managing our business.
- It is essential that we control the following areas that side-track our progress. We will need everyone's help in managing these items and issues as well as everyone's support of the Chair's actions in trying to manage them.
 - Rambling member or discussion
 - Dominating member or discussion
 - Argumentative member or discussion
 - Discouraging member or discussion
 - Argument(s) between two members
 - Side conversations

8. This is how we recommend that will handle a Motion and Agenda item:

- a. A member makes a motion
- b. Another member seconds the motion
- c. The Chair states the question
 - i. "It has been moved and seconded that.... Is there any discussion?"
- d. Members discuss/debate the motion
- e. Chair puts question to a vote
- f. In the case of a roll call vote, the vote should be taken in a random order
- g. Chair announces result of vote

9. Let's give these changes a chance and the benefit of the doubt.

10. EVERYONE'S SUPPORT is paramount in having more efficient and effective meetings.

Proposed Motion:

_____ moves that the City Council adopts the attached Council Meeting Policies, Procedures and Decorum in an effort to benefit from the most efficient and effective City Council Meetings possible.

Second: _____

Motion (circle one): Passed Failed

Date: _____