

COUNCIL POLICY MANUAL

Policy 7.3.19 Council Meetings

POLICY PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to outline Council-established policies relative to Council meetings. Council has underscored the importance of community input and citizen engagement in the conduct of City business, and the critical role of City Council meetings in this effort.

POLICY STATEMENT:

Placing Items on the Agenda

Items may be placed on the agenda by the Mayor, a majority of a quorum of the Council, or by the City Manager. The order in which items appear on the agenda shall be determined by the City Manager and approved by the Mayor.

Colleagues Memorandum

- A group of two or three Councilmembers may prepare a brief colleagues memorandum outlining a request to create a future agenda item for the Council to consider at an upcoming Council meeting.
- Councilmembers shall submit colleagues memorandums directly to the City Manager.
- Colleagues memorandums are not to be shared with Councilmembers outside of the group who authored a specific memorandum.
- Memorandums shall not exceed two (2) pages and shall be focused on the need for a future agenda item without advocating for or against the merits of the agenda item being requested.
- The City Manager will review and approve the Colleague Memorandums consistent with this policy and the Ralph M. Brown Act (open meetings law) or provide feedback to the authors.
- The City Manager will schedule the approved colleagues memorandum for the next available Council agenda.
- Completed colleagues memorandums will be included under the Non-Agenda Items & Comments portion of the Council meeting agenda for Council action.
- A colleagues memorandum is not required to request an agenda item be added to a future agenda.

Criteria for Mid-Year Project Consideration.

To ensure alignment with Council priorities and available staff resources, colleagues memorandums requesting the addition of a new project outside of the regular Council Priority Setting process should address one of the following:

- Emergency: Natural disaster, pandemic, or civil unrest requiring immediate City action.
- Time-Sensitive Funding: A new outside funding opportunity that must be acted on quickly.
- Multi-Agency Coordination: A joint initiative with other jurisdictions or agencies that cannot be delayed.
- Community Safety: A safety related policy issue that requires expedited prioritization for the preservation of life, health or property.

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- Legal or Regulatory Mandate: Changes in laws or mandates that require immediate City action.

Requests not meeting these criteria will generally be deferred to the next Council Priority Setting cycle or incorporated into ongoing City operations at the City Manager's discretion.

Public Noticing of Council Meeting Agendas

Every effort shall be made to publicly notice Council meeting agendas for regularly scheduled meetings five days in advance of the meeting (on Thursday preceding a Tuesday meeting). At a minimum, Council meeting agendas for regularly scheduled meetings shall be noticed three days in advance of the meeting or as required by State law.

Distribution of Council Meeting Materials

Every effort shall be made to publicly distribute all approved reports to Council (both online and hard copies) five days in advance of Council meetings (e.g., on Thursdays preceding Tuesday Council meetings). Hard copies should be made available at the Library and the City Clerk's Office.

~~When possible, Reports to Council should be distributed earlier than five days in advance whenever finalized and approved by the City Manager in advance of their due date.~~

When possible, Council Priority Project Workshop materials and Reports to Council with Planning Commission advisory action should be made available online at least seven days prior to the date the item appears on the Council agenda, and Utility Rate reports should be posted online at least 14 days in advance of a Council hearing (every effort shall be made to distribute hard copies of these reports five days in advance, like any other report).

Council Document/Presentation Submittals

On occasion Councilmembers may wish to share a presentation or other document during Council meetings. Councilmembers shall observe the submittal protocols and deadlines provided for members of the public to submit documents or presentations for public meetings. View Making Public Comment for public submittal protocols and deadlines. Councilmembers shall not use documents or presentations during questions directed to staff or when expressing advocacy for a motion.

Start and Ending Times

Study sessions will start no earlier than 5 p.m. on dates when regular Council meetings are held, except that the Mayor may schedule earlier sessions as ~~his/her~~their discretion.

Council has adopted a resolution providing that Regular Council meetings will start at 7 p.m. (Resolution No. 141-04)

Limiting late night meetings is intended to encourage public participation. Council will not begin hearing any new item after 11:30 p.m. unless, by a majority vote of those present, it agrees to do so. A separate vote must be taken for each matter to be considered after 11:30 p.m.

Notwithstanding the above, Council will not begin hearing any of the following agenda items:

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Councilmembers Reports on Activities from Intergovernmental Committee Assignments, Non-Agenda Items and Comments and Information Only Reports/Items, unless by a single motion it agrees to do so.

Council will need a supermajority vote to start a new item after 12:30 a.m. For purposes of this rule, a supermajority shall mean one more vote than a simple majority (for example, if seven members are present a supermajority is five; if five members are present a supermajority is four).

No new items or other Council business will be introduced after 1:~~30~~00 a.m.

Any item on an agenda for a regular meeting which must be continued due to the late hour, shall be continued to a date certain.

~~Study sessions will start no earlier than 5 p.m. on dates when regular Council meetings are held, except that the Mayor may schedule earlier sessions at his/her discretion.~~

Meeting Protocol

Meetings will be chaired and presided over by the Mayor, who shall be guided by The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (Sturgis), as modified by any policy, rule or procedure adopted by the Council, or as otherwise required by law, and the City's Code of Ethics and Conduct for Elected and Appointed Officials. The City Attorney shall serve as advisory parliamentarian to the Mayor. Any ruling by the Mayor that is challenged and seconded may be overruled by a majority vote of the Council.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes of general meetings shall be prepared and approved in accordance with parliamentary procedure (Sturgis). In general, they shall be a record of all actions and proceedings, but not a record of discussion. No Councilmember shall have views or protests on a motion recorded in the minutes unless a motion permitting such action is passed by majority vote. Adverse criticism of Councilmembers or staff should never be included except in the form of a motion censuring or reprimanding a member. Praise should appear only in the form of officially adopted votes of thanks, gratitude, or commendation.

Minutes of special meetings shall be prepared in similar fashion.

There shall be no minutes for closed sessions.

Minutes of Council Sub-committees shall generally be brief, but in some cases may be more detailed than those of general meetings as they often serve as the basis for the committee's report and subsequent Council action.

(Adopted: RTC 04-410 (11/20/2004); (Clerical/clarity update, Policy Update Project 7/2005); Amended RTC 06-376 (11/28/2006); RTC 12-233 (10/2/2012); RTC 17-0798 (8/22/17); RTC 22-0019 (1/4/2022); RTC 22-0035 (12/6/2022); RTC 23-0518 (5/16/2023); RTC 24-0001 (1/9/2024); Amended RTC 25-0569 (10/21/2025); Amended RTC 25-0912 (11/18/2025))

Lead Department: Office of the City Manager