

Updated/Approved: CC May 14, 2019

## **CITY COUNCIL OPERATING GUIDELINES**

These guidelines serve as operating policies of the Council/City Manager/professional staff.

1. **Mayor's Role.**
  - The Mayor serves as the ceremonial head of the Council at the pleasure of the Council and an equal among Councilmembers.
  - The Mayor is responsible for managing a smooth Council meeting that stays focused on the agenda items according to procedural guidelines as agreed-upon by the Council.
  - The Mayor, as available, is the designated person to represent the Council on general matters of the City.
2. **Agenda Process.** The City Manager prepares Council meeting agendas in consultation with Mayor and as possible, with the Mayor Pro Tem. Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem advise on the scheduling of items on agendas for the purpose of managing the meetings and the Council's affairs. The Mayor and individual Councilmembers may request that an item of concern be scheduled for a future agenda at a City Council meeting; the Councilmember may make the request under City Council reports. If a majority of the Council agrees, then the item will be placed on a future agenda. Additionally, the work plan as annually presented to the City Council by staff forecasts topics that will be on future Council agendas.
3. **Mayor/Councilmembers' Role in Press Relationships.** The Mayor serves as the City spokesperson for Council-related issues. Council members agree not submit letters-to-the-editor wherein they identify themselves as Council members on issues that related to City business, litigation and practices. The City Manager's role is to prepare press releases and public information. He/she may serve as the City spokesperson to convey Council policy and matters related to City management.
4. **Council Committees.** Council liaisons represent the Council's goals and objectives. The Council looks to the liaison as the lead in communications with committees. Liaisons are responsible for updating the full Council on committee progress at the next Council meeting at the appropriate point on the agenda (under "City Councilmembers' Reports").
5. **City Council/City Manager Interrelationships.** The City Manager serves as the administrative head of City Government. In performing his/her role,

s/he must discuss matters with staff, reconcile differences, prepare recommendations, and delineate options for Council policy determination. If the City Manager differs with staff on a matter within their expertise (engineering, legal matters, public safety, risk management) that is **significant** or **consequential**, the City Manager shall apprise the Council of this difference. The City Manager shall develop a “list of Upcoming Agenda Items” that will be periodically updated and distributed to the Council.

6. **City Council/Staff Interrelationships.** Councilmembers should feel free to contact department heads with constituent concerns that fall within the purview of the particular department, to make inquiries, or to receive information. An individual Councilmember cannot direct staff on how to proceed.

- Council should refrain from embarrassing the staff in a public setting. If an individual Councilmember has concerns about a particular Agenda item, he / she may ask questions of staff prior to the meeting to avoid “blindsiding”.
- It is appropriate for a Councilmember to convey resident concerns to the staff.
- It is **not** appropriate for a Councilmember to individually negotiate a contract or agreement with a contractor or vendor, unless authorized by the Council to do so.
- No individual Councilmember, nor City Committee or Commission, has the authority to commit City funds to any project. Recommendations for the expenditure of City funds must be submitted to the full Council. The final decision is the Council’s.

7. **Council Dissent.** It is entirely appropriate for an individual Councilmember to argue his / her point of view with the Council before a vote is taken on the issue. However, once the Council has made its determination on how to proceed, Councilmembers will endeavor to be respectful of the decision. Mutual respect is an indispensable ingredient for the Council to function effectively as a group.