



## City Council Protocol – Operating Guidelines

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The Open and Public Meetings Act (OPMA), [Utah Code § 52-4](#), regulates public bodies when conducting business and hosting public meetings. Council Protocols supplement OPMA and help implement [Park City Code 2-4-5, Relationship of City Council to Administrative Service](#). The protocols outline best practices for communication, provide clarity and establish consistent processes for navigating communications involving the Council, community, and staff.

### **Protocol 1: Council Requests for Simple Information**

- a) City Council should direct requests to City Manager, Deputy City Manager, or Managers – with cc to City Manager.

### **Protocol 2: Council Requests for Research on Topic**

- a) City Council should direct requests to City Manager, Deputy City Manager, or Managers – with cc to City Manager.
- b) If the project will require more than 2 hours of staff time, City Manager will determine whether the request requires City Council direction. If so, City Manager will seek informal or, if necessary, formal direction from the City Council.

### **Protocol 3: Resident Request of Council for Service**

- a) Refer requests directly to City Manager, Deputy City Manager, or Managers – with cc to City Manager.
  - 1) If the service request is within the scope of the current service policy, the issue will be addressed as soon as possible.
  - 2) If the service request is for a new or significantly expanded service, the issue will be referred to the City Council for direction (consistent with Protocol 4, Council Request to Place an Item on the Agenda).
  - 3) If the Council Member wishes to be notified of the outcome, the Council Member will request notification at the time of the referral.
- b) If an email question is sent to the Mayor or designee and City Council, the Mayor or designee may respond to the individual.
- c) If the Mayor and City Council receive a staff-related issue, the Mayor will forward the email to the City Manager, with a cc to Human Resources Director.
- d) The Mayor and Council may agree to implement an auto-reply to Council\_Mail@parkcity.org email acknowledging receipt of public input.
- e) If the Mayor and City Council receive an email that is public input on an issue, the Mayor or designated City Council member may also respond on behalf of the Mayor and Council, and send it to the appropriate staff person with a cc to the City Manager and to City Council.
- f) In addition to the Mayor or designee's email response, a City Council Member may also respond directly to the individual.

**Protocol 4: Council Request to Place an Item on the Agenda**

- a) A Council Member may request an item be placed on a future agenda during “Communications and Disclosures” or direct the request to the Mayor or City Manager directly. While Council may not discuss the merits of an issue not on the agenda, they may indicate support for a future discussion.

**Protocol 5: Placing a Resolution on the Agenda**

- a) A person or organization makes a request for a resolution not related to city operations to the City Recorder. Generally, requests should be submitted 4 weeks prior to the Council meeting.
- b) The City Recorder acknowledges receipt and informs the requestor that they have the option to promote their cause during the public input portion of upcoming Council meetings.
- c) The City Recorder sends the request to the Mayor, who informally polls the Council.
- d) If a majority of Council agrees to put the resolution on a Council agenda, the City Recorder adds it.
- e) If a majority of Council does not agree to put the resolution on a Council agenda, the resolution is not added. Any Council members supporting the cause can promote it during the Council Questions and Comments portion of the Council meeting.

**Protocol 6: Council Questions on Agenda Item**

- a) Make request directly to City Manager, Deputy City Manager, appropriate Manager, or the author of the staff report- with cc to City Manager.

**Protocol 7: Communication to Council from Staff**

- a) For material responses, communications should be sent to the Mayor and City Council as a group.
- b) If Staff is requesting a response in less than 24 hours, Staff must notify Council via phone call or text.
- c) If Staff has packet additions fewer than 24 hours before a Council meeting, the City Recorder must notify Council via text or phone call.
- d) Staff should include all Council Members, Mayor and City Manager in communications when related to a policy discussion.

**Protocol 9: Liaison Responsibilities**

- a) City Council determines its liaison responsibilities.
- b) Keep fellow Council Members informed.
- c) When a liaison sees an agenda item for a board or commission where the liaison may be asked for an opinion or vote on a potentially controversial item the liaison will use best efforts to contact the other Council Members before the meeting to gather input.
- d) A liaison’s opinion or guidance may be misinterpreted by others. It is important that others understand a liaison is providing information, not a policy position or direction. Liaisons should act with utmost care to avoid misinterpretation.
- e) If a liaison appears to have made a policy decision, it should be discussed with the Mayor. If the situation involves the Mayor, the discussion should be with the Mayor pro-tem.
- f) In the case where a new liaison is needed or a liaison would like to exchange roles with another Council Member, Council will discuss and determine the new liaison assignment as a group.
- g) A liaison may speak on behalf of Council in the context of a board or commission meeting when a policy decision has already been made by the Council.

**Protocol 10: Spokesperson for City**

- a) Generally, the Mayor or a member of the City Council speak for the City (as opposed to expressing their opinion as an elected official) only when they have been asked by the Mayor, on behalf of the Council, to do so.
- b) For major events or issues, including emergency situations, the City Manager or designee is the City's Spokesperson unless or until the Council designates a Spokesperson.

**Protocol 11: Alerts**

- a) The Mayor and Council can expect alerts on significant issues by text or phone.

**Protocol 12: Conflict Among Council**

- a) Try to work it out among yourselves.
- b) If you see a conflict continuing, provide feedback on a one-on-one basis, and help each other.
- c) Mayor will serve as mediator. If Mayor is part of the conflict, other Council Members should strive to assist with conflict resolution.
- d) It is not the role of the City Manager or other staff to resolve conflict between elected officials.

**Protocol 13: Closed Session**

- a) Closed session is only for the purposes in [Utah Code](#), City Code, or common law.
- b) Council to stay on topics for which the meeting was closed.
- c) Strategy or discussion during a closed session are not formal decisions. Formal decisions must be voted on in a public meeting.

**Protocol 14: Council Meetings**

- a) If late to meeting, call ahead of time. If unable to attend, inform the City Manager.
- b) Mayor presides over council meetings; if the Mayor is absent, the Mayor pro-tem presides.
- c) Mayor and Council should notify the City Manager and City Attorney of disclosures and recusals prior to meetings when possible, and mention the disclosure during Comments.
- d) Council should request to speak and the Mayor will recognize the individual by name.
- e) When there is anticipated public input or a public hearing, the order during an agenda item should be:
  - 1) Staff presentation;
  - 2) Technical questions from City Council. Council should refrain from policy comments until after the public hearing or public input is received;
  - 3) Open public hearing or input, take public comments, close public hearing or input;
  - 4) Policy related questions and discussion from Council;
  - 5) Call for a motion and a second. Once made, the Mayor will call for discussion or comment on the motion specifically; and
  - 6) Formal vote or summary of direction from Council.

**Protocol 15: City Manager Updates**

- a) City Manager provide a bi-weekly written updates on organizational issues.
- b) The City Manager will provide Monthly Budget Reports to City Council.

**Protocol 16: Council Budget & Travel**

- a) City Manager distributes approved budget after City Council adopts.

- b) City Manager monitors and informs Council of available funds.
- c) Council will be informally polled if travel is unanticipated.

**Protocol 17: E-Communication**

- a) All communications among and to Council Members should be courteous and professional. Under state law, a record is public unless there is an exception making it non-public.
- b) Some communications may be labeled private, protected, privileged, or otherwise identified as non-public. These communications may not be shared outside of City government. Communications requesting or receiving legal advice are privileged and confidential and may not be shared outside of City government.