



Memo

Date: December 10, 2021
To: Honorable Mayor Armitage; City Council
From: Erin LaPere, City Manager
Re: Discussion on Council Policies 2021-01 and 2021-04

City Council has adopted policies related to how it conducts business at meetings. These policies function together with applicable statutory rules of conduct, including the City Charter and state laws. Copies of both policies are attached for Council's review. These policies were first enacted in 2016, and are on the agenda for discussion by Council as to whether any changes are warranted.

Policy 2021-01 - Resolutions

This policy requires all actions by Council which are not an ordinance to take place in the form of a resolution. There is no legal or procedural requirement that every action be in the form of a resolution, although there are specific circumstances that dictate when a resolution is required. Typically, a resolution is only taken up by Council for matters of significance. At the time this policy was originally enacted, the stated goal was to encourage more citizen participation. It is unclear that the use of resolutions has achieved the goal of encouraging citizen participation. Furthermore, by requiring every action to take place in the form of a resolution a burden is placed upon staff to draft these resolutions, and the Clerk's office must maintain a certified record of each resolution that is passed. We also are required to include the entire text of the resolution in the meeting minutes which can be time-consuming due to issues like formatting inconsistencies as well as due to the policy to consider most matters at two meetings. This creates inefficiencies and requires staff time to be spent on these processes which then takes away from the time available for other tasks.

Administration would recommend that this policy be rescinded and we resume the long-standing and common practice of taking action by way of motion in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order except where a resolution is required. We are committed to providing Council with the information it needs to be informed on the decisions placed before it, and will continue to provide thorough staff reports on every matter. Such staff reports typically include general and/or historical information, financial impacts if any, and a suggested motion to help ensure both the Council and the public are properly informed. Of course, we also stand ready to continue to provide additional information or answer questions as

needed during the deliberations at the Council meetings. We believe that this will provide the Council with a thorough understanding of the matter at hand and help achieve the goal of encouraging citizen participation and transparency by eliminating an inefficient and unnecessary process.

Policy 2021-04 – Order of Business

This policy outlines the order of business at the Council meetings, including the parameters for items to be placed on the agenda for expedited (one meeting decision) or introductory/action (two meeting decision). In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Council put into effect the unanimous consent procedures to facilitate efficient use of the public’s time and encourage participation in those matters which required deliberation. Generally speaking, routine matters are placed on the expedited agenda for approval at a single meeting; this is in-line with typical municipal procedure in which a matter is placed before the approval body and a decision is made at that same meeting. The use of introduction and then approval at a subsequent meeting is not a common practice for most business in municipal government, and doing so results in delays in decision making and reduces the efficiency of governmental operations. This can also mean interested members of the public have to attend multiple meetings to be engaged in the discussion and be informed on the final outcome of a matter.

Administration is recommending a modification to the Council policy as follows:

1. Eliminate the agenda items: Expedited Resolutions and Ordinances; Action Items— Resolutions and Ordinances; Introduction of Resolutions and Ordinances
2. Add agenda items: Consent Agenda; Business Agenda

The Consent Agenda will contain routine matters, such as approval of claims, mayoral appointments, and ceremonial proclamations that do not require deliberation. All of which may be approved in one motion. Members who would like to have discussion on any item on the Consent Agenda may make a motion to move the item to the Business Agenda. The Business Agenda will contain new and/or prior business matters which will be discussed and voted upon individually. Additionally, any item can be postponed for decision until a subsequent meeting date by Council so matters that require further discussion or information can be given that additional consideration. We are recommending this as a way to improve efficiency in government proceedings and reduce administrative workloads as well as to achieve positive public engagement and participation.

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