



City Council Governance Manual

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Purpose

The purpose of this Governance Manual is to provide structure and guidance to the city council and administration and transparency to the citizens. The manual identifies the duties and roles played by elected council members, senior administrators, and citizen volunteers. The manual sets the expectations for civil conduct and clarifies the rules for council meetings.

The Governance Manual should be reviewed regularly and updated to adapt to changing circumstances.

Article 1: PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT

1.1 Form of Government

The City of Lake Forest Park was incorporated in 1961 and operates as a non-charter code city with a Mayor-Council form of government. The Mayor and seven City Councilmembers are non-partisan elected officials who serve four-year terms. Municipal elections are held in November of odd-numbered years, and terms are staggered so that four positions are up for election every two years.

1.2 Legislative Branch

The City Council is the legislative body of the City. It enacts laws and regulations, establishes policy direction for the City, establishes tax and fee rates, adopts an Annual Budget, and approves payments of all City moneys.

1.3 Executive Branch

The Mayor is the chief executive and administrative officer and ceremonial head of the City. The Mayor is in charge of all departments and employees and has authority to designate assistants and department heads.

1.4 Judicial Branch

Lake Forest Park has its own Municipal Court, which is organized under [Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\) 3.50](#) as a limited jurisdiction court to hear misdemeanor crimes and civil infractions committed within its geographical boundaries. The Presiding Judge is appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council for a four-year term.

1.5 Guiding Principles

Guiding principles establish the values that Lake Forest Park elected officials, employees, and volunteers embody.

Collaboration

We achieve greater results through collaborative engagement of each other and the communities around us.

Equity

Our actions provide all people with access to a good quality of life.

Accountability

We are committed to addressing the concerns and priorities of Lake Forest Park through transparent community engagement, decisions, and actions.

Stewardship

We are effective, efficient, financially prudent, and innovative stewards of the public's resources and we strive to achieve sustainable results through continuous improvement.

Integrity

We uphold the high standards, skills, competencies, and integrity of our professions in doing the work of City government.

Article 2: LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

2.1 Organization of City Council

The Council shall, biennially in even years, elect a Chair and Vice Chair of the Council at its first regular Council meeting of the year.

2.2 Duties of the Council Chair

The Council Chair shall coordinate the business of the Council and is the primary liaison for the Council with the Mayor and City Administrator. The Chair's duties include, but are not limited to:

- A. Meet regularly with the Mayor and the City Administrator to review and approve Council agendas;
- B. Represent the Council at the Quarterly Commission Chairs meetings;
- C. Coordinate reporting on achievement of the Council's work plan;
- D. Serve as the Deputy Mayor and preside over meetings of the Council at which the Mayor is not present ([RCW 35A.12.110](#)); and
- E. Act as the City's ceremonial head in the Mayor's absence.

2.3 The Council Chair May Embody Other Leadership Roles

By consensus of its members, the City Council may assign other roles and duties to the Council Chair pursuant to the authority granted to the Council in [RCW 35A.12.120](#) for the conduct of Council business. In doing so, the City Council is providing for its own efficiency and is not delegating or ceding its corporate legislative authority to the Chair of the Council.

2.4 Duties of the Vice Chair

The Vice Chair shall exercise the duties, powers, and prerogatives of the Council Chair in the event of the Chair's absence.

2.5 Service on Regional Bodies

The Council designates by motion the individual(s) to serve in liaison roles based on the desire, qualifications, and skills of those interested. Councilmembers and the Mayor are encouraged to reach out to Council leadership to express interest in serving on regional bodies.

Council should discuss regional body applications in early Fall to be prepared to respond to calls for volunteers and nominations.

2.6 Council Commissions Liaisons

The Council designates, by motion, members to serve as liaisons to each of the Commissions, Boards, and Committee listed in section 7.4 (a "Committee").

- A. A Councilmember serving as liaison is not a member of the Committee, rather, the Councilmember is a positive resource to support the Committee in the completion of its work.
- B. The Councilmember liaison is acting as a representative of the full Council. subject to guidance of the full Council.

- C. The Councilmember liaison can provide context and background on approved policies and regulations while respecting the independence of the Committee in its discussions and recommendations.
- D. The Councilmember liaison shall keep the Council updated on the work of the Committee at Council meetings and share requests or concerns from the Committee regarding changes to the annual workplan and resources needed to further its work.
- E. The Councilmember liaison shall facilitate timely reporting of the committee to the Council as appropriate.

Article 3: FUNCTIONING OF CITY COUNCIL

3.1 Importance of Open Public Meetings

Open and transparent governance is critical. The City and citizen commissions shall comply with the Open Public Meetings Act under Washington law ([RCW 42.30](#)).

3.2 Representatives of the City Act in Accordance with City Policies

It is a duty of City Councilmembers, the Mayor and City staff who represent the City to advocate positions that are consistent with the City Council's adopted or approved policies, projects, and plans. Should the circumstance occur in which a staff member is in a position of leadership in a professional association, the staff member shall make it clear as to which entity (the City or the professional association) is being represented. On occasions that an elected official is expressing the official's personal interest or that of another organization, the identity of the interest being expressed shall be made clear.

3.3 Council is Mindful of Limited Resources

Council expense reimbursement is limited by policy to budget and requires receipts. An annual Council Budget is determined each year during the Budget process.

3.4 Council Authorizes Certain Grant Applications Before Submittal

The Administration is authorized to submit grant applications that align with the goals and priorities of the City and adopted policy. If a grant would require material matching dollars affecting the current budget, impact policy, or require conditions inconsistent with current operations, the Administration will seek Council approval prior to applying. The Council may also initiate the process of pursuing a grant.

3.5 Volunteers Play an Important Role

Mayor will propose appointments to advisory committees, boards, and commissions. The Council will then interview and choose to confirm those appointees.

3.6 Cell phones

Cell phones are allowed in the Council Chambers when they are on silent or meeting mode. Cell phone calls will be answered outside the Council Chambers during meetings. In order to avoid the appearance of private discussions, elected officials shall refrain from using cell phones, including texting, during public meetings.

3.7 Council E-mail Policy.

E-mail viewed by four or more Councilmembers is not an appropriate venue for discussions of policy. Any e-mails, whether from a member of the Council or from City staff, that are to be viewed by at least four Councilmembers shall include a copy to the City Clerk so that they may be included as part of the City's official record.

Councilmembers shall not reply to all other Councilmembers or a quorum of the Council by e-mail to discuss policy; and, in no case, shall Councilmembers make decisions by e-mail.

Article 4: COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Council is required to act as a corporate body in a very transparent manner. All Council and Committee meetings are open to the public and have established rules for notification and process.

4.1 The “Three-Touch” Rule

Decision makers and residents of the City should have adequate time to thoughtfully consider the issues prior to final decisions. It is the intent of the Council that the Council and Administration should abide by the “Three-Touch Rule” whenever possible (unless an exception applies). The following procedural guidelines are designed to avoid “surprises” to the Council, Administration and the public.

Any pending request or proposal for adopting or changing public policy, ordinances, resolutions or directives which will require a decision of the City Council or Administration should normally “touch” (oral, written or any combination thereof) the decision makers at least three separate times. Quasijudicial matters and any subject discussed in Executive Sessions are excluded from the application of the “Three-Touch Rule.” Touches may generally include city council meetings, work sessions, and committees of the whole.

It is recognized that the hands of decision makers should not be tied unnecessarily. Unexpected circumstances may arise wherein observance of the “Three-Touch Rule” is impractical or unnecessary, for example, for noncontroversial or time-sensitive matters. However, when unusual circumstances arise which justify a “first discussion” decision, the persons requesting the expedited decision should also explain the timing need. The “Three-Touch Rule” excludes staff reports and other general communications not requiring a future Council decision.

4.2 City Staff - Attendance at Meetings

Attendance at meetings by City staff shall be at the discretion of the Mayor. It is the intent of the Council that the Mayor schedule adequate administrative support for the business at hand while protecting the productive capability of department heads. When a sound system or other monitoring capabilities exist, the City Administrator may allow personnel to utilize time in their offices or other areas while waiting for the item of business for which appearance before the Council is required. It is expected that business items at council meetings will be presented by a relevant staff member who will present the topic and take questions from the Council. Staff is encouraged to use visual tools when appropriate to present material in a clear fashion.

4.3 Special Council Meetings

Special meetings shall be called as provided in the Open Public Meetings Act and as otherwise required by RCW. Special meetings will be strictly limited to time-sensitive matters that cannot be accommodated within regular business meetings or work/study sessions. The notice of a special meeting shall identify the agenda item(s). The notice of the meeting shall suffice as the meeting's agenda.

4.4 Public Notice

Notice of all meetings and hearings shall be provided as required by the Open Public Meetings Act and as otherwise required by the RCW and Lake Forest Park Municipal Code (LFPMC). Notice of regular, special and study session meetings, along with draft agendas, shall be posted on City bulletin boards designated for public notice, any public library located in the City, Third Place Commons and the City website.

4.5 Remote Attendance at Council Meetings

1. From time to time, a Councilmember may not be able to be physically present at a Council meeting but will want to be involved in the discussion and/or decision of all items on the agenda or only on particular agenda items. The procedure and guidelines for permitting a Councilmember to attend a Council meeting by speakerphone or audio/video equipment are as follows.

Absent extraordinary circumstances such as an emergency, remote attendance should be the rare exception, not the rule.

2. Procedure and Guidelines Related to Remote Attendance of In Person Council Meetings:

- A. The Councilmember should notify the Deputy Mayor or City Clerk no later than the business day prior to the Council meeting which the Councilmember wishes to attend remotely. If the Mayor attends remotely, he or she may participate in discussions, but the Deputy Mayor, if physically present at the Council meeting, shall be the presiding officer.
- B. A Council member may participate in some or all of the Council meeting remotely.
- C. The presiding officer shall confirm and announce that all present at the meeting and in the remote location can clearly hear all other parties and (as appropriate) access visual content that may be presented.
- D. With such confirmation, Councilmembers – whether they are physically at the meeting or at a remote location - constituting a majority may approve the use of remote communication for all or any specified portion of the meeting.
- E. Unless the Councilmember is participating remotely for the entire meeting when the portion of the Council meeting for which remote attendance has been approved has concluded, the presiding officer shall announce the same and the attendance of the Councilmember communicating remotely shall end. The City Clerk shall record the beginning and ending times of the remote attendance.
- F. In the event that a remote communication link is broken or significantly degraded such that it no longer meets the full requirements of this section, the presiding officer shall confirm the loss of service and announce the close of the remote attendance. The attendance of the Councilmember communicating remotely shall end. The City Clerk shall record the time of the closure.

3. Requirements of the System. The Councilmember attending remotely must be able to hear the discussion on the agenda item taking place in the Council Chambers and must be able to be heard by all present in Council Chambers.

4. For purposes of voting, remote attendance at a Council meeting shall be considered equal to being physically present at the meeting.

4.6 Council Meetings Open to the Public

Council differentiates among five types of public meetings: (1) committee meetings; (2) work/study sessions (and single-issue workshops); (3) business meetings; (4) goal-setting retreats; and (5) public meetings, forums, and town halls. All meetings of the Council and of any Committees thereof shall be open to the public or available remotely except as provided for in [RCW 42.30.110](#) or [RCW 42.30.140](#).

4.7 Council Committees

Council Committees are a part of the governance structure that extends the reach of the Council and makes it effective between meetings. Council Committees are established to inform and educate the Council on existing City programs and issues, to provide an opportunity to explore the implications of policy alternatives as part of the policy development process, and to serve in an advisory capacity to the Council in reviewing policy matters referred to them by the Council, and such other matters as the Council, by simple majority vote, may direct. The Committees shall have no power or authority to commit the City or to take any binding action on their part without the express authorization of the Council. The Committees shall be concerned primarily with policy matters and matters vested in the legislative body of the City and shall not become involved in the administration of the City government.

- A. All Council Committee meetings shall be open to the public and posted at City Hall per the Open Public Meetings Act. Participation by Councilmembers not named to the Committee, the Mayor, other public officials and the public shall be at the discretion of the Chair of the Committee.
- B. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Committee to notify the City Clerk of the date, time and place of any Council Committee meeting, and to provide a committee agenda at least seven calendar days prior to committee meeting. The City Clerk will arrange for notice to be conveyed to the public, the Mayor and all Councilmembers.
- C. The Mayor will work with the Chair of each committee to assign staff to support Committee deliberations. The Chair of each Committee will report on their deliberations and recommendations to the Council after each Committee meeting.
- D. Council may change membership of Committees by majority consent.
- E. The following Council Committees and Committee responsibilities are currently established.

4.7.1 Council Committee of the Whole (COW):

All seven Councilmembers serve on the Committee of the Whole. The Council Chair shall chair the Committee. The Committee considers policy issues of concern to the entire Council, with the exception of issues of specific concern to other Council Committees that are charged with specific responsibilities, such as the Budget and Finance Committee.

The COW is generally the first touch for new policies that are proposed by councilmembers. If a Councilmember is interested in introducing a policy matter, they should first ensure a second Councilmember supports the policy, then reach out to Council leadership to request time to present the matter at a future COW meeting.

The Committee of the Whole may send legislation and policy issues for final action by the Council during a Council business meeting.

The Committee is responsible for the Council's annual work program, rules procedures and organization for council operations and city governance, the City's state and federal legislative agenda, complex interdisciplinary issues that are beyond the scope of other policy committees and may host public meetings.

Public comment may be taken at the discretion of the Chair.

4.7.2 Budget and Finance Committee:

Three Councilmembers serve on the Committee. The Committee is responsible for the review and recommendations associated with current and projected financial conditions, supplemental budget considerations, finance, reserve and financial operational policies, audits, financial reports, the review and tracking of capital improvement projects, and salary schedules. The Chair is elected on a bi-annual basis at the Council Organizational meeting. The Chair of the committee or their designee on the committee will review and recommend approval of checks or warrants drawn on behalf of the City on a bi-weekly basis, or as needed, except for payroll.

The remaining councilmembers are welcome to attend the Committee, and their input will be solicited and welcomed, however, they will not be permitted to vote on Budget and Finance Committee related matters, with the exception of consideration of the Mayor's bi-annual budget.

The Committee is responsible for reviewing the Mayor's proposed biennial and interim budget and recommending a biennial and interim budget to the Council for consideration. For purposes of considering the Mayor's proposed biennial and interim budget and recommending a biennial and interim budget, all seven Councilmembers shall be members of the Committee. The Chair is responsible for notifying the City Clerk of any Committee agenda that will contain consideration of the Mayor's proposed biennial budget or recommendations related to a biennial budget.

4.7.3 Legislative Steering Committee

The Committee is responsible for interfacing with the City's State and Federal legislative delegation as well as the associated lobbyist(s). They will provide timely updates on meetings and interactions with the above. Its members are the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Vice Chair of the Council and City Administrator.

4.8 Council Work Sessions

Council work sessions are meetings of the Council at which legislative proposals and proposals relating to city administration, inter-governmental relations, or other city business are studied, discussed and evaluated by the Councilmembers. Work sessions are chaired by the Mayor and will normally be held in an informal, collegial setting conducive to discussion. Council work sessions are the primary venue for briefings and presentations. Public comment will not be taken at the work session.

The key difference between Work Sessions and the Committee of the Whole is that Work Sessions are for policy proposals brought to the council by staff and the Administration, while the Committee of the Whole is for policy proposals brought to the council by fellow councilmembers.

4.8.1 Schedule of Work Sessions

Work sessions of the Council of the City of Lake Forest Park shall be held on the second Thursday of each month, immediately before the regular council meeting. Council work sessions shall be held at 6:00 p.m. at Lake Forest Park City Hall, located at 17425 Ballinger Way NE, Lake Forest Park, Washington, 98155.

4.8.2 Work Session Agendas

A. Work session agendas will include:

1. Call to Order
2. Adoption of Agenda
3. Staff presentations and Council Discussion
4. Council Discussion Topics
5. Adjourn

B. Agendas will list the following elements for each Council Discussion Topic:

1. Subject: The project designation or descriptive name for the item. The person requesting the item should use the same title in any subsequent business.
2. Identify the Discussion Leader: The person who will introduce the subject and give the background information; identify the discussion goal; and act as facilitator to keep the discussion focused toward the goal.
3. Activity: A brief description of the discussion necessary for the Council to speak to the question posed in the "Goal" column.
4. Goal: The reasonable outcome contemplated, whether a final action, advancement to a future agenda, just a "touch" according to the "Three-Touch Rule," or for general information.

C. Board, Commission and Youth Council Engagement

Boards, Commissions and the Youth Council may request a place on the agenda in advance of the meeting. The specific date shall be within three work session meetings and coordinated through the agenda preparation and review meeting.

D. Joint meetings

From time to time, Council may schedule joint meetings with bodies such as the School Board, Fire Commission, or neighboring City Councils.

4.9 Regular Business Meetings

A regular business meeting is a meeting convened on a regular series of dates (and at a time) stated in City ordinance. A regular or special meeting of the Council is primarily for the purpose of voting on the City's business, generally in the form of motions, resolutions or ordinances.

4.9.1 Schedule of Regular Business Meetings

Regular business meetings of the Council of the City of Lake Forest Park shall be held on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month, January through the second week of December each year. Regular business meetings shall be held at 7:00 p.m. at the City Hall Council Chambers, located at 17425 Ballinger Way N E, Lake Forest Park, Washington, 98155.

4.9.2 Public Comment

A regular business meeting includes public comment on the agenda, during which a member of the public may address the Council on any matter of public concern that the Council has purview, control or influence over (whether or not on the agenda) for up to three minutes. Overall limit on time allowed for individual public comment may be determined by the presiding officer and stated publicly at the beginning of the public comment period.

- A. Any member of the public wishing to address the Council is encouraged to do so in person or virtually. Individuals in person should fill in the sign-in sheet provided for that purpose. Speakers must be recognized by the chair, come forward to the microphone and identify themselves by name, and state the agenda item or topic they are addressing before proceeding. The presiding officer may offer an opportunity for comment to those in the chambers who wish to speak who are not on the sign-in sheet. After members of the public in person have spoken, the presiding officer will take public comment from those participating virtually by asking virtual speakers to signal their intent to speak.
- B. Speakers shall abide by the time limits established for the particular comment period. The presiding officer shall announce this rule at the beginning of any regular meeting or hearing. Speakers shall respect the decorum of Council Meetings. If the speaker makes disruptive, slanderous or threatening remarks while addressing the Council they shall be asked to leave the Council Chambers by the presiding officer, or if the speaker is participating remotely, the presiding officer will request the City Clerk remove their permission to talk in the application. Members of the public who join a meeting remotely after the remote public comment begins shall not be permitted to make public comments.
- C. Written comments may also be submitted by emailing the City Clerk. These comments will be distributed to the whole Council, and their author, date of the email, and topic will be read into the public record by the City Clerk or designee. The City Administration will provide a written summary of all questions asked by citizens. The City Administrator or Mayor are responsible for providing a City response to the questions and will inform the Council of their follow-up actions.

4.9.3 Public Hearings

Public hearings required by State law shall be held before the Council, but legislative action shall not be taken during such a hearing. Public hearings may be scheduled during a regular meeting or a special meeting.

- A. The Chair shall open the hearing and state its subject, explain the rule governing public participation, limit the period for individual comments (3 to 5 minutes, depending on the subject), confirm the duration of the hearing, and, if necessary, arrange for continuation of the hearing. If appropriate, a City representative will provide background information, and then speakers will be recognized by the Chair in order according to the sign-in sheet. The public hearing typically occurs during a publicly noticed portion of a regular or special meeting of Council, where the time of the hearing has been stated in the prior public notice.
- B. The Council may request the Administration to respond to any question raised and not answered during the hearing.

4.9.4 Business Meeting Agendas

Proposed agendas shall state the date, time, and location of the Council meeting. Proposed agendas shall be delivered in electronic format to members of the Council no later than two days before the meeting date. The agenda will be posted at city hall, the Council Chambers and the library by 5:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding the meeting.

Updated agendas will be posted by 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting.

- A. Regular Meeting Agendas shall include:
1. Call to Order: 7:00 p.m.
 2. Pledge of Allegiance
 3. Proclamations
 4. Adoption of Agenda
 5. Public Comment
 6. Public Hearings
 7. Presentations
 8. Consent Calendar
 9. Final Confirmation
 10. Ordinances and Resolutions for Introduction/Referral
 11. Ordinances and Resolutions for Council Discussion
 12. Ordinances and Resolutions for Action
 13. Council Discussion and Action
 14. Council Committee Reports
 15. Council/Mayor/City Administrator Reports
 16. Other Business
 17. Executive Session
 18. Adjourn
 19. Future Schedule
- B. The Consent Calendar is used for Council action items that do not need further discussion at the Regular Business meeting either because they are routine, such as contract renewal, or have been thoroughly vetted as a function of the Work Session. Councilmembers may request that any item on the Consent Calendar be removed to Council Discussion and Action.
- C. Business items on the agenda shall be annotated with the expected work and action of the Council for that item at that meeting. There shall be a bold notice at the bottom of all agenda pages indicating that the council may take action on items not on the agenda or may take other actions on agenda items that are not annotated, as allowed by Washington State law and in the best interest of the City.
- D. Public Comments shall be held at or as close to the beginning of the meeting as possible. Public Comment may be moved to the beginning of the meeting at the discretion of the Council and Chair, particularly if there are a large number of citizens present.
- E. Each agenda item should be annotated with the requested Council action.
- F. Executive Sessions will be convened only for purposes allowed by the Open Public Meetings Act. The Mayor may convene Executive Sessions at any time during a Council meeting. The Mayor shall announce the general purpose of the session and the associated RCW reference, its anticipated duration, and if the Council may take action after returning to the regular meeting. The Mayor shall interrupt an Executive Session exceeding its announced duration and notify the public of an extension and its estimated duration. At the conclusion of the Executive Session, the Mayor shall reconvene the Council meeting and resume Council business. No action shall be taken in an Executive Session. Only those staff members whose presence is required for the topic currently under discussion should remain in the Council Chambers during an Executive Session.
- G. Confirmation Review may be placed at any time during the meeting.
- H. No less than five copies of proposed ordinances on the agenda shall be available to the public on the public information table before consideration of such ordinances by the Council during the meeting. Every effort shall be made to provide sufficient public copies in anticipation of the interest in specific issues at the meeting. A packet containing all ordinances will also be available electronically through the city's website.

4.9.5 Councilmember Requested Agenda Items

Members should notify the Deputy Mayor by noon on the preceding Tuesday of requested agenda items, particularly those requiring final action at the same meeting. These should only be items of an emergent nature.

4.9.6 Council's Business Meetings Will Be Efficient and Businesslike

The information exchange, review, deliberation, and vetting of issues during the prior Work Session enables Council business meetings to be expeditious. The Presiding Officer's role, especially at the business meeting, is to keep Council business focused and expeditious.

4.9.7 Inauguration

Prior to the end of November of odd numbered years, the Council shall set a day and time for the official City inauguration of newly elected officials, which shall occur prior to and apart from the first regular meeting. The inauguration purpose is a public celebration of community unity and pride in Lake Forest Park with the beginning of a new biennial period in the City's history.

4.9.8 Organizational Meeting

At the first regular meeting in January following an election, the Council shall begin the meeting with an organizational agenda as follows:

- A. Adoption of Governance Manual
- B. Election of Council Chair and Vice Chair
- C. Appointment of Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs

4.10 Goal Setting Retreats

A retreat is generally a Special Meeting called for the purpose of very informal discussion dealing with goals, objectives and guidelines for future activity of the organization. At a retreat, the Council may, for example, develop goals and objectives for its own organization for the year, consider priorities for the Council work plan, consider priorities and goals for the volunteer commissions, or set goals for the City.

These goals should be elements of annual performance evaluations. Although a detailed listing of the City's activity plan for a coming year may result from informal consensus, formal adoption should be made in a regular Council meeting by motion or resolution. Retreats are open to the public, but participation is limited to Councilmembers and others that are designated by the Council, such as a facilitator.

4.11 Public Meetings

The Council may organize other meetings with the public in various settings outside of City Hall, such as public forums, presentations to community organizations, town halls, and so on. In such settings, the meeting shall ideally include one or more Councilmembers and one or more members of the Administration.

4.11.1 Town Halls and other community forums

When major public policy development warrants, and after adequate preparation of issues and alternatives, from time to time, Council may schedule public forums to help develop a public consensus on the issues. The general procedure would be to provide basic information, to explore alternatives and options and to receive verbal and written public comments.

Article 5: COUNCIL DELIBERATIONS

5.1 Effective Decision-Making Requires Finality

Effective decision-making results in finality and “moving on.” The process for reconsideration is such that immediately following a vote, if a Councilmember feels she/he voted incorrectly, she/he may immediately request a revote, stating the reason. A revote will be taken upon a majority vote to approve by the Council, and such consent shall not be unreasonably withheld. The Council will generally not take another vote on a matter for the sake of prolonging the debate unless significant events have transpired since the original vote.

5.2 Council Meeting Agendas Are Set by a Team

Agendas for Council Business Meetings and Work Sessions are routinely developed and refined by the Council Chair (Deputy Mayor), the Mayor, and City Administrator or designee. The agenda-setting team shall review the next three months’ meeting topics and coordinate other meetings to ensure staff work and public notices support the Council’s work schedule.

The Administration shall establish a 12-month prospective calendar of agenda items for Council Business Meetings and Work Sessions, which shall be reviewed in the Committee of the Whole quarterly. Councilmembers should inform the Council Chair with regard to topic requests for upcoming agendas. The agenda setting team shall make every effort to reasonably accommodate requests in a timely manner.

5.3 Council Actions

Council actions take the form of motions, resolutions and ordinances in accordance with Robert’s Rules of Order. All actions require a motion and a second for discussion and then a majority vote of a quorum of the Council for adoption.

5.3.1 Motion

Only Councilmembers may discuss a motion pending before the Council. Others may address the Council only at the request of a Councilmember with the consent of the Council.

An adopted motion is a form of action taken by the Council to direct that a specific course of action be taken or executed on behalf of the municipality. A motion is similar to a resolution, but is generally oral, much shorter and worded in a more informal manner than a resolution. An adopted motion is the administrative equivalent of a resolution.

5.3.2 Resolution

An adopted resolution is a statement of legislative policy or direction concerning matters of special or temporary character. Council action shall be taken by resolution when required by law or in those instances where a written expression of legislative policy that is lengthier or more meticulously worded than a motion is desired. While resolutions are often just a statement of policy, a resolution may also have the force of law (e.g., a resolution setting permit fees or a resolution declaring certain City property to be surplus).

5.3.3 Ordinance

An enacted Ordinance is a local law (legislative act) prescribing general rules of conduct. Council action shall be taken by ordinance when required by law or where prescribed conduct may be enforced by penalty. An ordinance is a legislative act within the City Council's law-making sphere, similar to the way in which a statute is a legislative act of the State Legislature. The general guiding principle is that actions relating to subjects of a permanent and general character are usually regarded as legislative and should be addressed through an ordinance, and those providing for subjects of a temporary and special character are regarded as administrative and should be addressed through a resolution.

5.3.4 Motion to "Lay on the Table"

The motion to "lay on the table" shall require that the main motion be brought back to the Council at that meeting immediately after the final action item or immediately after the City Administrator's report, whichever comes first. This motion shall not be used to end discussion on an item. The proper motion to end discussion is to either move the previous question or to move to postpone indefinitely or to a definite time. In the latter case, the item remains on the agenda for the next meeting.

5.3.5 Reconsideration-Mayor's Veto

The motion for reconsideration of an ordinance--Ordinance Veto Override--may be placed as the first item on the final action calendar at the next regular meeting or as an action item at a special meeting, following the filing of the Mayor's veto message. The motion may not be tabled or postponed. The Deputy Mayor will chair the meeting during this agenda item. The Mayor, if present, may have up to three minutes to address the Council. Council discussion on the motion will follow. At the conclusion of discussion, if any, the Deputy Mayor shall put the motion to a vote. Councilmembers present shall cast an "aye" or "nay" vote unless they are recused. The vetoed ordinance must receive five affirmative votes to be adopted. Fewer than five votes for the ordinance shall mean that the veto is sustained.

5.3.6 Dissents and Protests

Any Councilmember shall have the right to express dissent from, or protest, orally or in writing, any motion, resolution or ordinance of the Council and have the reason therefore entered or retained in the minutes.

5.3.7 Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Such an amendment is a legislative act in which the Council amends all or part of the Comprehensive Plan after the Planning Commission has deliberated, held public hearings and made recommendation(s) to the Council. The Council likewise holds a public hearing before passage.

5.3.8 Budget Adoption

The Council adopts or amends the budget document for the City on an annual or biennial basis. Although the budget is a maximum spending plan, it must be managed by the Mayor and City Administrator to operate within actual revenue received for each fund.

5.3.9 Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) Adoption or Amendment

The CFP is a 6-year capital facility and infrastructure development and financing plan that is required by the Growth Management Act, RCW 36.70A.070(3). It is required to be kept up to date on an annual basis, and may by law be amended outside the regular Comprehensive Plan update process if the amendment occurs concurrently with the adoption of the City's budget, RCW 36.70A.130(2)(a)(iv). It is done in Lake Forest Park as a companion to the budgeting process and establishes priorities for construction or replacement of capital facilities of the City. A full update is on a two-year cycle that coincides with the mid-biennial budget review. The biennial budget also includes any project additions or updates as needed, such as new projects for which grants have been received.

5.3.10 Quasi-judicial Ruling

A quasi-judicial ruling is an administrative ruling made by the Council, Hearing Examiner, or Planning Commission wherein the process and facts to be heard and judged are prescribed by regulatory laws or ordinances and, as such, are appealable to a higher authority or court of law. The role of the deciding authority is carried out as a legal duty in the manner prescribed by the facts and applicable laws or regulations. The deciding authority's role in this regard is separate from the more usual role of legislative preference, and Council and the Planning Commission should be mindful of this role on the limited occasions during which a quasi-judicial decision is before it.

5.3.11 Confirmation of City Officials

The following procedure shall apply to all confirmation proceedings:

- A. The Mayor will make nominations to the Council indicating the name and address of the nominee, commission or position of appointment, term expiration, and position number on the agenda for confirmation review.
- B. At the time of nomination, the Mayor will provide to each Councilmember a copy of the nominee's application and resume and a letter from the nominee (if any).
- C. The confirmation agenda item at a regular meeting will be divided into two items:
 1. Confirmation Review; and
 2. Final Confirmation Calendar
- D. All nominees shall appear on the agenda for the first time for confirmation review preferably during study sessions. After completion of the review process, final confirmation of the nominee shall be placed on the Consent Calendar for final confirmation during the regular meeting. Upon consent of the Council, the nominee may be confirmed at the same meeting as the confirmation review.
- E. Confirmation review process shall include:
 1. Introduction of nominee by the Mayor.
 2. Three-minute statement by the nominee that should address the following issues:
 - a. Why does the nominee seek to serve the City as a commissioner or official?
 - b. What qualifications, skills, or abilities does the nominee bring to the commission or position?
 3. Questions from Councilmembers for the nominee.
- F. Final Confirmation Calendar: The list of nominees for final confirmation may be a separate addendum sheet to the regular agenda, provided it is posted with the agenda for the public. The entire list may be confirmed as part of the Consent Calendar, except any one Councilmember may remove any name from such a motion and that nominee shall thereafter be voted upon by separate motion.

- G. All nominees shall appear before the Council during confirmation review unless the nominee requests to be excused and such request is approved by the Council. An approved motion to suspend this rule and excuse the nominee from appearing shall allow the nominee to be scheduled for the final confirmation calendar. The confirmation review may be delayed no more than three consecutive meetings at the request of the Mayor, nominee or by majority consent of the Council.
- H. Final confirmation may be delayed for one regular meeting at the request of the nominee, the Mayor or by majority consent of the Council. The majority of the Council may approve a second delay. The nomination may be withdrawn prior to the call for the question for final confirmation. This action must be by the nominee in writing or verbally at a Council meeting or by the Mayor verbally at a Council meeting. Once a nomination is withdrawn, a subsequent nomination of the same individual must begin at the start of the process.
- I. Only Councilmembers and the Mayor may speak to a motion regarding final confirmation.

5.4 Voting

The votes during all meetings of the Council shall be transacted as follows:

- A. Unless otherwise provided by statute, ordinance, or resolution, all votes shall be taken by voice, except that at the request of any Councilmember, a roll call vote shall be taken and recorded by the City Clerk. The Presiding Officer shall determine the order of the roll call vote.
- B. In case of a tie vote on any proposal, the motion shall be considered lost. The Mayor shall have a vote only in the case of a tie in the votes of the Councilmembers with respect to matters other than the passage of any ordinance, grant, or revocation of franchise or license, or any resolution for the payment of money.
- C. Every Councilmember who was present for the meeting in person or remotely is eligible to vote. If any Councilmember abstains (for example, due to a conflict of interest), the result shall be determined in accordance with Robert's Rules, which generally means that it shall be as if the individual who abstained from voting was not present for the vote.
- D. In the event that absences or abstentions reduce the number of voting councilmembers to five or fewer, it will be made clear whether a motion/ordinance requires a majority approval of those voting, or a majority approval of the total number of councilmembers.

5.5 Ordinance and Resolution Drafting Standard

A resolution shall be drafted using the same rules as an ordinance and shall be drafted as follows for consideration by the Council:

- A. The ordinance number shall be at the top, centered and in bold. On all pages, the ordinance number shall be placed in the footer, on the same line as the page number, right justified.
- B. The title shall be centered below the number in bold, capitalized letters.
- C. A straight line shall be placed below the title.
- D. The body of the document shall use 0.6-inch margins on the top, right, and bottom and 1-inch on the left. Indentation shall always be five spaces when used. Block justification should be used with continuous line numbering in the left-hand column. A line space should be used between paragraphs. Twelve-point font should be used.
- E. "Whereas" clauses shall be stated with only the first sentence indented and "Whereas" capitalized and in bold.
- F. The required ordaining clause is placed following the "Whereas" clause(s). The first sentence will be indented. The clause is in capitalized bold lettering.

- G. The section number and short title shall be bold lettering using sentence capitalization. The remaining section-amending or adding clause is to use normal lettering and capitalization. The words “new section,” when used, shall be stated in bold capital letters following the section number. The content section shall be at one indentation with hanging indentation after the section amending clauses.
- H. The words being deleted from law shall be struck through with a line. Words being added shall be underlined. Words being added in a “new section” shall be in regular type.
- I. Legislative history shall appear at the end of the ordinance, as follows:
 - 1. Introduced by: (must be a Councilmember or by Executive Request)
 - 2. Date Introduced:
 - 3. Date Work Session (first and last dates only):
 - 4. Date Redrafted (with Council-adopted amendments):
 - 5. Date Final Action:
 - 6. Date Posted:
 - 7. Date Published:
- J. All ordinances, except those adopting quasijudicial decisions, shall have an “Ordinance Information Summary.” This summary shall be formatted as the ordinance with the ordinance number and title immediately below the page heading of Ordinance Information Summary. The headings for the summary information will be: (1) Purpose; (2) Effect; (3) Estimated Financial Impact. The date and version shall be indicated at the end of the text of the summary. The summary should be updated upon the adoption of major amendments to an ordinance.

5.6 Amendments to Ordinances and Resolutions

- A. Once an ordinance or resolution is introduced it may only be changed by action of the Council.
- B. A referral to the Ordinances and Resolutions calendar constitutes a main motion to adopt the ordinance. Amendments to an ordinance are in order during Ordinances and Resolutions. Adoption of the main motion (ordinance as amended) is in order only on the Council Action calendar.
- C. Amending the ordinance or resolution may be done in two ways: 1) line-by-line, etc., or 2) by striking the entire ordinance/resolution after the title and replacing it with another entire version (this is known as a striking amendment). Line-by-line method is normally in order prior to a striking amendment unless by consent of Council. If a striking amendment is approved, the ordinance/resolution is considered automatically engrossed upon approval of the striking motion.
- D. The format for line-by-line (can be section-by-section) amendments is the following:

Amendment to Ordinance XXX by Councilmember XXX

On page _____, line _____ after the word “_____” Strike “_____” and Insert “_____”

- E. Line numbering will be used on amendment pages.
- F. Words that will be struck will be typed exactly as presented in the ordinance. It is also proper to state: “Strike all language in this section and insert,” if appropriate. Insertions will be typed exactly as required in ordinance standards. Striking language is always stated before insertion.

- G. In order to simplify amendments, only one strike and one insert may be put together in one amendment paragraph. The above example is one amendment paragraph. More than one amendment paragraph may be listed on a page.
- H. Drafting and copying of amendments, resolutions or ordinances for the Council by City staff shall be provided only upon the request of a Councilmember, the Mayor or by formal commission or board action.

5.7 Appointment to Fill Council Vacancy

- A. The City Council, pursuant to RCW 35A.12.050 and RCW 42.12.070, is authorized to fill a vacancy on the City Council by appointing a qualified person to fill the vacant position. A Council position shall be considered vacant upon the occurrence of any of the causes of vacancy set forth in RCW 42.12.010. A Councilmember who is vacating his or her position may not participate in the appointment process. The position should be filled at the earliest opportunity, but no later than ninety (90) days from the vacancy occurring.
- B. The City Council shall ask the Mayor to direct City staff to begin the administrative processes needed to fill the vacancy as provided below:
 - 1. The City Clerk or designee ("City Clerk") shall advertise for the vacant Council position in the City's Official newspaper once each week for two consecutive weeks. Courtesy copies of the advertisement shall be provided to other local media outlets and current members of City commissions and task forces.
 - 2. The advertisement shall include the qualifications needed for appointment to the vacant Council position consistent with the requirements to hold public office in the City: be a registered voter of the City; and have at least one year of residency in the City. The advertisement shall include the time period to be served in the vacant position, a summary of Councilmember duties, salary information, the deadline for submitting an application, projected interview and appointment schedules as determined by the City Council, and such other information as the City Council deems appropriate.
 - 3. The City Clerk shall solicit input from all Councilmembers and prepare an application form. Applications shall be available at City Hall, the King County library located in the City, and other locations the City Council deems appropriate.
 - 4. Completed applications and supporting materials received from applicants by the deadline shall be electronically distributed by the City Clerk to the City Council within two business days of close of the application period.
 - 5. The City Clerk shall publish the required public notice for meetings at which Council will be interviewing applicants, deliberating, and voting to fill the vacancy. Interviews may take place at either a regularly scheduled business meeting of the Council or a special meeting of the Council Committee of the Whole.
 - 6. The City Clerk shall notify all applicants that the Council has decided to interview of the location, date and time of the interviews.
- C. The City Council shall use the following interview process for filling vacant Council positions:
 - 1. If the number of applications received by the deadlines is more than six (6), the Council may choose to interview less than all of the applicants. The decision regarding which applicants to interview shall be made by a vote of the Council.
 - 2. Prior to the interviews, the Council Chair shall accept one interview question from each Councilmember.
 - 3. The applicants' order of appearance for the interviews shall be determined by random drawing by the City Clerk prior to the meeting.
 - 4. Each interview shall last no longer than thirty (30) minutes, unless Council decides to reduce the allowed amount of time based on the number of applicants to be interviewed.

- a. The applicant shall have up to five minutes to present his or her credentials to the Council. (5 minutes)
 - b. The Council shall ask a predetermined set of questions to the applicants. Each applicant will be asked the same questions and will have up to two minutes to answer each question. (14-21 minutes)
 - c. After the predetermined questions, Councilmembers may ask and receive answer to miscellaneous questions from an applicant. (4- 11 minutes)
- D. The following shall govern the Council's process for voting on applicants to fill a vacant Council position:
1. Upon completion of the interviews, Council may convene an executive session to discuss the qualifications of the applicants interviewed pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(h). All interviews, deliberations, and votes taken by the Council shall be in open public session.
 2. In open public session, the Council Chair shall call for motions from Councilmembers for the purpose of voting on an appointment to a fill a vacant Council position.
 3. At any time during the appointment process, the City Council may postpone voting on the appointment if an affirmative majority vote has not been received for an applicant.
 4. Nothing in this policy shall prevent the Council from reconvening into executive session to further discuss applicant qualifications.
 5. The Council Chair shall declare the applicant receiving the affirmative majority vote as the new Councilmember who shall be sworn into office by the City Clerk at the earliest opportunity or no later than the next regularly scheduled Council meeting.

Article 6: THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

6.1 Mayor

The Mayor shall be the chief executive and administrative officer of the City, in charge of all departments and employees, with authority to designate assistants and department heads. The Mayor may appoint and remove a chief administrative officer or assistant administrative officer, if so provided by ordinance or charter. He or she shall see that all laws and ordinances are faithfully enforced and that law and order is maintained in the city, and shall have general supervision of the administration of City government and all City interests (see RCW 35A.12.100). Other duties include:

- Faithful performance of contracts; bonds approved/disapproved; may file lawsuits (with Council confirmation);
- Make recommendations for Council consideration and action;
- Prepare and propose a budget; may veto ordinances passed by the Council; and
- Serve as the official and ceremonial head of the City and shall represent the City on ceremonial occasions.

6.2 City Administrator

The City Administrator is the chief operating officer for the City with administrative, executive and liaison functions under the direction and authority of the Mayor as chief executive officer. Duties, powers and responsibilities are: supervise, administer and coordinate the activities and functions of the various City offices and departments in carrying out the policies of the City Council, and administer and supervise the carrying out of the decisions, regulations and policies of the various City departments and commissions; regularly report to the Mayor and City Council concerning the status of all assignments, duties, projects and functions of the various City offices and departments; serve as personnel officer for the City, including, without necessary limitation:

- The hiring and discharging (subject to the approval of the Mayor) of all City employees except those employees and officers required by state law or City ordinance to be appointed by the Mayor or elected by the voters of the City, and subject to any applicable civil service laws, ordinances or regulations;
- Supervise all purchasing by the various City offices, departments and commissions;
- Supervise all expenditures by the various City offices, departments and commissions for the purpose of keeping the same within the limitations of the annual budget of the City;
- Assist the Mayor and City Council generally in conducting the City's business in all matters; and
- Perform such other duties and assume such other responsibilities as the Mayor or City Council may direct, and as by ordinances and resolutions of the City Council may be required. (See LFPMC 2.04).

6.2.1 Role of the City Administrator

The City Administrator shall attend all meetings of the City Council, unless excused by the Mayor. Under the direction of the Mayor, the City Administrator may recommend for adoption by the Council such measures as he/she may deem necessary or expedient, prepare and submit to the Council such reports or proposals as may be required by the body or as the City Administrator deems advisable to submit; keep the Council fully advised as to the business and finances of the City; and, when appropriate, shall take part in the Council's discussion on all matters concerning the welfare of the City. In the event that the City Administrator is unable to attend a Council meeting, the City Administrator, with the consent of the Mayor, shall appoint a

key staff member to attend the meeting as the representative of City Administration.

During Council meetings, the Presiding Officer should rely on the City Administrator to introduce the administrative participation on agenda items and should offer opportunity for comment or recommendation of the City Administrator before final vote on important matters.

6.3 Communications to the Public are Essential

The Mayor and City Administrator shall be responsible for the City communications function, but important and/or controversial communications shall be promptly copied to Council and other responses sent to Council pursuant to Council rules of procedure.

The Mayor is responsible for accurately communicating Council legislative policies. Prior to a final policy decision by the Council, the Mayor may also express the Administration's view as regarding a specific legislative policy but must clearly identify the Administration's view as separate from Council's proposed policy. When a final policy decision has been made, the policy of the City shall be clearly communicated.

6.4 Professional Standards are Respected

Through its personnel handbook, the City of Lake Forest Park encourages its key employees to participate in professional and trade organizations. City leaders support professional government and respect the professional association standards and model documents.

6.5 Regular and Understandable Financial Reporting

The City's regular financial reports enable the Council and community to understand the City's financial condition, and are in harmony with accounting standards for governmental organizations, applicable law and municipal best practices, taking into account brevity, cogency, and clarity.

6.6 Mayor and Administration are Mindful of Risk Management

Mayor and Administration assure the Washington Cities Insurance Authority (WCIA) member compact is followed. There is an annual review of risk management with WCIA. The interlocal agreement for WCIA membership provides for WCIA settlement of claims and lawsuits in consultation with the member. The Council empowers the Mayor and City Administrator to represent the City in claims administration, and the Council should be consulted on major claims and lawsuits or settlements involving direct payment of City resources. The Council will not interfere with the claims adjudication process. The Council will conduct its business equally mindful of risk management.

6.7 Public Information is Enhanced by Audio, Video, and Website Access

The City will strive to make its proceedings as accessible to the public as possible within the budget and technology available. Video, audio and/or approved minutes of meetings are concise and are approved and posted online in as timely a manner as possible.

6.8 Correspondence

The Mayor and Council recognize the value of the City speaking with one voice and have agreed that, unless specifically otherwise determined, the Administration will prepare written responses to

the public.

The Administration will make every reasonable effort to respond to all written correspondence addressed to the Mayor and Council and copy the Council within 14 days of receipt. Response to verbal testimony by the Administration will be at the specific request of the Council.

The City Administrator will report on correspondence from the Administration between Council meetings in their report. Copies of such responses should be provided to the Council in their next meeting packet.

In addition to an official response by the administration, individual Councilmembers are also welcome to respond to the public, so long as it is clear that their response does not represent the official position of the City.

6.9 City Clerk - Minutes - Public Information Access

The City Clerk shall adhere to the requirements of State law (RCW 35.23.121), and shall be the ex-officio Clerk-of-the-Council. The City Clerk shall keep minutes as required by law, and shall perform such other duties in the meeting as may be required by the Council, Presiding Officer or City Administrator. In the absence of the City Clerk, the City Clerk shall appoint a replacement to act as Clerk-of-the-Council. The Clerk-of-the-Council shall keep minutes, which identify the general discussion of the issue and complete detail of the official action or consensus reached, if any. The City Clerk shall make an audio recording of the proceedings of all public hearings, regular business meetings, study sessions and workshops, and quasi-judicial proceedings. The Clerk shall keep, and make available, an agenda and date for each video recording, which will facilitate location of the recorded proceedings. The video recordings shall be posted publicly on the City website, ideally within 48 hours after the meeting.

Article 7: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN CITY GOVERNMENT

7.1 Public Comment Period at Business Meetings

The agenda for Council Business Meetings shall generally include a period of time known as the Public Comment Period. Within that time period, any member of the public may be recognized by the Presiding Officer and may address the full Council on any public issue – whether or not on the agenda. Unless Council determines otherwise, the Public Comment Period at a Business Meeting is reserved for comments by the public, rather than responses from the Council or the Administration.

Public comment is limited to items listed on the agenda and/or items within the purview of the Council, e.g., speeding concerns or requesting street lights on a particular street.

7.2 Other Meetings with the Public Outside of City Hall

Work sessions, committee meetings and retreat meetings may provide opportunities for public comment. Opportunities for public comment will be noted on individual agendas.

7.3 Additional Avenues for Public Participation

Public process activities may also incorporate a range of tools such as press releases, newspaper columns, fact sheets, Q&As, etc., as described in the City's documents and guidelines pertaining to public participation in various projects and processes.

7.4 Commissions, Committees, and Boards

Lake Forest Park has adopted a volunteer commission system (detailed in LFPMC 2.22) that provides for appointed individuals to make policy, program, and budget recommendations in specific issue areas. The following Commissions, Committees, and Boards are currently established for public engagement and participation:

- A. Planning Commission
- B. Civil Service Commission
- C. Salary Commission
- D. Tree Board
- E. Parks and Recreation Board
- F. Climate Action Committee

7.4.1 Alternates for Commissions, Committees, and Boards

Recognizing the importance of the contributions of volunteers in our community, the Mayor shall interview and recommend to the City Council two alternates per commission, committee, or board, subject to the following conditions:

In the absence, resignation or expiration of term by a member of a commission, committee, or board member, an alternate, if able to be present, will become a voting member of the body. The seniority of the alternates is based upon their date of confirmation.

Article 8: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNCIL, MAYOR AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR, STAFF AND THE PUBLIC

Council sets public policy to be carried out by the Administration and establishes budgetary authority for departments and positions, and may determine the duties and compensation of each, but does not interfere with the Mayor's and the City Administrator's management of City employees or the setting of internal operating policy.

8.1 Council and Administration Roles and Responsibilities Differentiated

Leaders adhere to the separate and distinct public policy and management roles of the Council and Administration. Administrative policy and complaints are handled by the Mayor, City Administrator and Department Heads (RCW 35A.12.100); legislative policy is established by Council for enactment by City Administration (RCW 35A.11.020).

8.2 Performance-Driven Management

The Mayor reviews the City Administrator's performance annually. The City Administrator is responsible for performance reviews of subordinates.

8.3 City Attorney Is Legal Counsel to the City and Its Officials Collectively

The City Attorney is retained by the Mayor, subject to the confirmation by a majority of the City Council, and represents the City. In that capacity, they provide legal advice to the Mayor the Council, the City Administrator and staff to the extent their interests coincide with the City's.

8.4 Staff Communications Encouraged

Members of the Council are encouraged to interact with City staff designated by the administration for the purpose of gathering information, obtaining progress reports on policies and programs or providing information to staff relevant to their Council office. Councilmembers should avoid giving direction or advice to members of City staff.

Councilmembers should be mindful of limited resources, and understand that larger requests for information may require additional time to fulfill. City staff should provide their supervisor with the same information shared with the Councilmember. Should the information provided relate to an actionable item on an upcoming agenda, Councilmembers should share the information with the Council.

8.5 City Administrator – Interference by Councilmembers

As provided by RCW 35A.13.120, neither the Council, nor any of its committees or members, shall direct the appointment of any person to, or his or her removal from, office by the Mayor or any of his or her subordinates. Except for the purpose of inquiry, the Council and its members shall deal with the administrative service solely through the Mayor and neither the Council nor any committee or member thereof shall give orders to any subordinate of the Mayor, either publicly or privately. The provisions of this section do not prohibit the Council, while in open session, from fully and freely discussing with the Mayor or the City Administrator anything pertaining to appointments and removals of City officers and employees and City affairs.

8.6 Complaints to Councilmembers

When performance complaints or complaints of non-action are made by members of the public about staff directly to an individual Councilmember or in a Council or committee meeting, the Council member or Council should then refer the matter directly to the Mayor for review and/or action. The individual Councilmember or the Council may request to be informed by the Administration of the action or response made to the complainant.

8.7 Administrative Complaints - "Best Practice"

Although public direct access to elected officials is to be encouraged to help develop public policy, City Councilmembers should not develop a "personal intervention" pattern in minor calls for service or administrative appeals which may actually delay a timely customer service response. The best policy is to get the member of the public into direct contact with the appropriate department or the City Administrator, unless an unsatisfactory result has occurred. In that case, refer to Section 8.6 above.

8.8 Staff Provides Adequate Information for Council Legislative Policy-Setting

Good information facilitates good decisions. Given the size of the City, the Council does not have its own separate research staff. Therefore, the Administration should assure that staff time is made available to the Council so that information provided to the Council is timely and sufficient for effective decision making.

- A. Information is adequate or sufficient when it provides a balanced background of the subject and gives the Council reasonable policy options and costs.
- B. Factual information requested by one member should be given to all members (within reason).
- C. Council will be notified in writing of delays in provision of information beyond one business meeting. This notification shall include a time line with regard to when and how a request will be handled.
- D. Subject to the foregoing, the Mayor, City Administrator and staff will work in good faith to respond to requests for information as thoroughly and as promptly as possible or refer the request to the Council for guidance.
- E. In the event that an information request is overly broad, the Mayor may request a narrowing of the scope of the request, and/or a reprioritization of current Council goals, which requires a majority vote of the Council.
- F. In addition to the foregoing procedures, each department head shall make a quarterly report to City Council on their department and outcomes of Council Legislation.

8.9 Public Documents Ensure Open And Transparent Government

The Council and Administration will adhere to laws on public access to documents.