

Mayor's Corner  
February 27, 2023

As your City Council, our primary mission is to ensure our community knows what's going on in their city government and the best way to accomplish this is by encouraging community involvement. One of the best places to start being involved with your community is to attend City Council meetings. But these meetings operate under some strict rules that most of us aren't exposed to on a daily basis. So while you may want to follow what's going on in town, attending a Council meeting can be difficult to follow; understanding the procedure, and what is being discussed & when can be frustrating.

Knowing the basic Council meeting rules of procedure goes a long way toward making the meetings more informative – and at times, even fun!

So, this is a “**Carlton City Council Meeting Primer**”. It's an outline of how a City Council meeting is structured. Also, just about every city follows the same procedure, so if you're visiting another community, it should be pretty easy to figure out what they're talking about too. (Times noted are specific to Carlton)

6pm – 7pm: The Work Session:

This is a time for Council to have an informal discussion about topics that may or may not ever reach a meeting agenda. We may have a guest speaker, but the only “official” decision made here is whether or not the topic will appear on the official agenda at a later date. (*Pro tip: Pay attention to the work session items – they are often indicators of upcoming topics.*)

7pm – 9:30pm: The Official Meeting: (*Council rules set this timeframe, however the Council can vote to extend the meeting if necessary.*)

### **The Meeting Order:**

#### **Call to Order & Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance**

**Announcement of any Changes or Additions to the Agenda:** Changes or additions to the published agenda are announced by the City Manager, Council members only may request adding an item to the agenda at this time. (*The City Manager begins preparing the next meeting agenda almost immediately after the current month's Council meeting. Councilors and citizens can request an item be included HOWEVER it's advisable to discuss with the City Manager asap to determine if this is an appropriate place to introduce a topic, and what background information may be required.*)

**Ceremonies/Appointments/Announcements:** This time can be used to recognize special citizen achievements or actions, awards, resolutions of appreciation, etc. This is also the time for appointing new members to city boards, commissions i.e. Planning Commission, and volunteer committees.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS! This is the time for YOU to bring up any concerns or questions you might have about the city.** (*Unless you are planning to comment at a Public Hearing – Public hearings take place during the business portion of the meeting and you need to hold your comments for that time.*)

The Council does not respond to or get involved in discussion at this time. We hear your comments, and if you are asking for follow-up or city actions, this is noted and you'll be contacted after the meeting for more information.

Citizens are asked to keep their comments to 3 minutes (and when you're standing there talking, three minutes is a lot longer than it sounds!). Additional time can be allowed if needed.

**Citizen comments has 2 parts:** time for comments concerning a topic or issue NOT a part of the meeting's regular agenda, a separate time for items that ARE on the evening's agenda. *(This is the only time during the meeting that citizens can comment on any issues – unless they have been specifically invited to provide input elsewhere.)*

**Consent Agenda:** Each month the council is provided with the city's monthly financial status report (how the city's actual income compares with the projected income), an accounts payable report – who we've paid, and why – this includes everything from the city power bill to contractor services, to water bill reimbursements (yes, they do happen!). The consent agenda is also used to approve meeting minutes for any meetings held the month before. All of this information is usually approved with a single vote, as it doesn't normally require discussion.

**Ordinances/Resolutions/Discussions/Action Items:** This is the business portion of the meeting, when public hearings are held, city projects and policies are discussed, special event requests are presented, contracts awarded, purchases are approved...all of the topics that concern the day-to-day city operations.

This is also the section that has the greatest potential to extend the council session, depending on how the topic discussions go.

**Ending the meeting.** Mayor calls for a motion to adjourn. Councilors make motion and vote to approve. Meeting is adjourned.

A couple of closing comments: These meetings and agendas would never happen without our City Staff. They're the front line for receiving citizen requests and questions, and dealing with the companies that do business with the city, or want to do business with the city. Every day they're helping citizens who need assistance filling out special event forms or requests, straightening out utility bills, or any of the other myriad tasks that keep Carlton functioning.

Our staff are also the folks who stay after on Council meeting nights to ensure the meetings are broadcast on Zoom, who provide in-depth information for specific projects and events, and ensure all of the minutes are recorded.

The majority of our City Councilors have full-time jobs, and like our city staff (and you!) start their days around 7a.m.; on meeting nights they get home after 10pm to spouses and children waiting for them. We try to be considerate of their time, even as we try to be considerate of your time and concerns. So if you do feel a topic was not sufficiently addressed, need more information, or have a question that you think didn't get full consideration, please DO reach out to staff or council for assistance, but please don't assume that you have been ignored or passed over – we're all human and we try to get it right, but sometimes we don't.