

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 17, 2024

TO: Mayor, City Council

CC: Eric Holmes, City Manager

FROM: Jonathan Young, City Attorney

RE: City Council Policies

Mayor, City Council,

On April 1, 2024, you participated in a Workshop regarding your City Council Policies. Your comments and discussion provided City Staff with the following direction:

A. PROPOSED CHANGES

City Staff took away the following points and direction from City Council's discussion and has crafted proposed edits consistent with these points:

1. Community Communication:

- The current format of quarterly community forum events is going well and very productive. City Council is interested in expanding opportunities for community communication while maintaining the current practice of conducting quarterly community communication events.
- Council has an interest in providing additional opportunities for community members to express ideas and concerns that they may have. In doing so, the following interests should be balanced:
 - Frequency. Increase the frequency of opportunities for community members to engage with the entire City Council;
 - Decorum. Exercise any legal options to ensure that community engagement remains safe and welcoming for all voices – including, without limitation, voices that have been historically unheard;
 - Predictability. Ensure that community communication events have a regular, predictable cadence. (E.g., first City Council meeting of each month.)

- Responsive to Priorities. (1) The Council wishes to ensure that the focus of conducting City Council meetings (which are business meetings) remains on conducting the business of the City; (2) the goal of community communication events is to afford City Council the opportunity to hear about issues and concerns from community members – not to provide an open platform for anyone who wants to be on television.

Summary of Proposed Changes: In an effort to address the points above, proposed changes have been offered to City Council Policy 100-32, City Council Meetings. If adopted, these changes would:

- Maintain the current practice of conducting quarterly community communication events;
- Add twelve (12) community communication events per year – one (1) additional community communication forum per month;
- Specify that the new, monthly forum will be held at the end of the first City Council meeting of each month (following Communications from the Council and City Manager);
- Allow participation in the new forum via in-person or remote attendance (advance registration by noon on the day of the meeting is required for remote attendance);
- Conduct the forum in a manner that is open to the public in full compliance with state law (audio recorded as necessary for compliance with RCW 42.30), but not televised;
- Specify that no final action may be taken by City Council following the end of the televised broadcast and beginning of the monthly community communication event;
- Provide a maximum duration of up to three (3) minutes per speaker and up to ninety (90) total minutes of testimony unless extended by majority vote of the Council;
- Specify that testimony may be on any lawful topic* related to the City of Vancouver.

(* To learn more about limitations on lawful testimony, please see: RCW 4.36.120 (libel and slander); RCW 9A.46 (harassment); RCW 42.17A.555 (use of public facilities for political purposes); and City Council Policy 100-32, Section 10.14.)

2. Complaints Against Appointed Officials:

On April 1, 2024, City Staff also took away that Council is interested in memorializing a consistent method for addressing any complaints lodged against the City Manager or City Attorney. This policy is still under development and, when completed, will address the following interests:

- Staff will propose a process for evaluating all plausible complaints that, if true, would constitute a violation of law or policy.
- Staff will memorialize the process via a written addition to the City Council policies, which are available on the City's website.
- The process will identify the following elements with specificity: (A) how complaints may be submitted, (B) what steps will be taken to evaluate complaints, and (C) City Council's expectations regarding notification of the outcome of such complaints.

City Staff anticipate returning to Council later this summer with a proposed policy containing the points above. Additionally, City Staff members are mindful that the Council may desire further discussion on City Council policies as specified below.

B. Further Discussion. Further discussion of the following topics may be of interest to one or more Councilmembers:

1. Filling Council Vacancies: (a) creation of community engagement event, and/or (b) use ranked choice voting to assist in narrowing the focus of Council's vote to appoint to a vacant position.
2. Attendance: notification of absences.
3. Travel: e.g. conferences or sister city.
4. Communications to the Council: one response on behalf of all.
5. Parliamentary procedure: increased specificity beyond reference to Robert's Rules.
6. Proclamations: curating topics.
7. DEI: Annual Council training in diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and accessibility.
8. Retreats: Programming retreats and fifth Mondays.
9. Council Compact.

On June 17, 2024, Council will be asked under "Manager Communications" which of the topics above are of interest to two or more Councilmembers. Follow-up time for discussion will be scheduled accordingly.

Attachment(s):

- Policy 100-32 with proposed tracked changes;
- Policy 100-32 clean copy; (proposed changes accepted for ease of reading).