

**CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA**



Agenda Date:	January 16, 2018
Action Required:	Direction from City Council
Presenter:	Wes Bellamy, City Councilor
Staff Contacts:	Maurice Jones, City Manager
Title:	City Council Meeting Structure and Procedures

Background:

The City Council reviews and updates its meeting procedures and policies every couple of years. In February 2016 the Council voted to overhaul the procedures in an attempt to make meetings more efficient and orderly. The new measures agreed upon on February 16 included the following:

- Publicly post Council's governing procedures on the City's website in a prominent location;
- Closer adherence to Robert's Rules of Order in deliberations, including formal motions and discussion periods;
- Incorporate most work sessions into the second Council meeting each month to promote transparency;
- Allot a maximum of 20 minutes for presentation and discussion of most agenda items;
- Limit most Councilor comments to 3 minutes, the same limit as comments by members of the public;
- Establish new guidelines for Councilor inquiries to City staff, in order to improve operational efficiencies;
- Expand opportunities to speak during the first public comment period by allowing speakers to sign up in advance by email and and/or telephone.

A random selection process for speaking slots for the first Matters by the Public section of each meeting was also adopted:

- Each request that comes in over email, phone, or in person by 9:00 a.m. the day of the Council meeting is given a number.
- A random number generator located at the web site www.random.org generates 12 random numbers in the range of total sign-ups; for example, 30 people sign up, and 12 random numbers are generated between 1 and 30.
- The 12 selected numbers are given speaking slots.
- The remaining people who signed up to speak are placed on a wait-list.
- Both the list of assigned speakers and the wait-list will be published on the City's website by 12:00 noon on the day of Council meetings.

- The second Matters by the Public section will remain in place; any remaining speakers on the wait-list from the first section will be called first.
- It was proposed that this process be put into place for a pilot period of six months, after which it will be evaluated by Council.

On September 16, 2016, the Council revised the Matters by the Public section by reducing the number of speakers who are assigned by the random number generator from 12 to 9 and reserving three slots for in-person sign-ups on a first come, first served basis on the evening of the Council meeting.

On March 6, 2017, the Council revised the procedures to allow for up to 15 speaking slots during the first Matters by the Public, ten of which would be chosen via the random selection process and the remaining five would be reserved for in-person sign-ups on a first come, first served basis on the evening of the Council meeting.

Discussion

The Council will be reviewing the procedures this evening and discussing whether to keep them in their current form or revise them. Councilor Wes Bellamy has proposed the following change to the structure of regularly scheduled City Council meetings:

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| 4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. | Council Closed Session |
| 5:45 p.m. – 6:45 p.m. | “Town Hall” style meeting, during which the Council would answer questions from the public. (This portion of the meeting would be similar to the Town Hall meetings that the Council has held in the neighborhoods over the past eight years.) |
| 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. | Council’s Regular Business Meeting |
- Continue to end each meeting with a Matters by the Public session, which is the current practice of the Council.

The Council will not be acting upon this proposal or any other changes to the procedures this evening. They will hold a public hearing to solicit feedback from the public on the current procedures and Councilor Bellamy’s proposal. It is anticipated that the Council will continue its discussion on these issues at its annual retreat January 18-19. A final discussion and vote on the structure of the City Council meetings and the Council’s procedures is planned for the February 5 Council meeting.

Alignment with City Council’s Vision and Strategic Plan:

This supports the City Council’s vision to be a *Community of Mutual Respect* and to have a *Smart, Citizen-Focused Government*. It contributes to Goal 5 of the Strategic Plan, to *Be a Well-Managed and Responsive Organization*, and objective 5.4, to *foster effective community engagement*.

Community of Mutual Respect

In all endeavors, the City of Charlottesville is committed to racial and cultural diversity, inclusion, racial reconciliation, economic justice, and equity. As a result, every citizen is respected.

Interactions among city leaders, city employees and the public are respectful, unbiased, and without prejudice.

Smart, Citizen-Focused Government

The delivery of quality services is at the heart of Charlottesville's social compact with its citizens. Charlottesville's approach to customer service ensures that we have safe neighborhoods, strong schools, and a clean environment. We continually work to employ the optimal means of delivering services, and our decisions are informed at every stage by effective communication and active citizen involvement. Citizens feel listened to and are easily able to find an appropriate forum to respectfully express their concerns.

Budgetary Impact:

None at this time.