



GREAT FALLS

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS

2024 HANDBOOK



NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS

greatfallsmt.net/neighborhoodcouncils

NeighborhoodCouncils

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Office of the City Manager

P.O. Box 5021
Great Falls, Montana 59403

Neighborhood Council Representatives:

On behalf of the City of Great Falls, I want to welcome you as a 2024 Neighborhood Council Representative and thank you for your service to the community. Neighborhood Councils provide an essential avenue for residents to share ideas, opportunities, and concerns.

As the link between City government and our residents, you are the voice of your neighborhood. The City Commission and City staff appreciate the thoughtful advice and guidance they receive from the Councils.

Choosing to be a civic leader is critical to building a vibrant community! Your hard work, civic engagement, and leadership will help strengthen and support our city. Above all, please enjoy your time on the Council. Serving on the Council should be an enriching experience that you can look back on with satisfaction and pride. You have a unique opportunity to help make your neighborhood and community a better place to live, work and raise families.

Thank you again for your commitment and service to your neighborhood and Great Falls.

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gregory T. Doyon".

Gregory T. Doyon
City Manager

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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your election as a Neighborhood Council representative. For those of you that are new to this experience, this handbook is designed to provide a basic knowledge of the rules and realities of serving on behalf of your local government.

In the Montana Code Annotated (MCA) there are two statements that set out compelling reasons for knowing the landscape you are charged with traversing. Note – these statements are only part of the full text of the sections noted.

§ 2-2-103 - Public trust, public duty. (1) The holding of public office or employment is a public trust, created by the confidence that the electorate reposes in the integrity of public officers. . . A public officer . . . shall carry out the individual's duties for the benefit of the people of the state. (2) A public officer . . . whose conduct departs from the person's public duty is liable to the people of the state and is subject to the penalties provided in this part for abuse of the public's trust.

§ 2-2-101 – Code of Ethics, Statement of purpose. The purpose of this part is to set forth a code of ethics prohibiting conflict between public duty and private interest as required by the Constitution of Montana. . . The provisions of this part recognize that some actions are conflicts per se between public duty and private interest while other actions may or may not pose such conflicts depending upon the surrounding circumstances.

The City Commission adopted Ordinance 2643, establishing the "City of Great Falls Code of Ethics," on January 19, 1993; and, more recently, Ordinance 3169 on October 17, 2017, that added: a requirement that all City public officers, including City board and commission members and elected officials file a disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest with the City Clerk's Office, and established an Ethics Committee that would work in conjunction with the City Attorney's Office to resolve any actual or potential conflicts of interest involving City officials.

All City officers or employees, all members of the City Commission, and all members of any City board, council, committee or commission are bound by this code of ethics.

The full text of the City of Great Falls Code of Ethics is codified in Title 2, Chapter 21 of the Official Code of the City of Great Falls (OCCGF), as follows:

CHAPTER 21 CODE OF ETHICS

Sections:

- 2.21.010 Title.
- 2.21.020 Findings.
- 2.21.030 Purpose and authority.
- 2.21.040 Definitions.
- 2.21.050 Ethical standards.
- 2.21.060 Great Falls Ethics Committee established.
- 2.21.070 Committee purpose.
- 2.21.080 Committee membership.
- 2.21.090 Committee meeting schedule.
- 2.21.100 Committee duties.
- 2.21.110 Nepotism.
- 2.21.120 Distribution.

2.21.010 Title.

This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "City of Great Falls Code of Ethics."

2.21.020 Findings.

The City Commission of the City of Great Falls finds and declares that:

- A. Public office and employment are a public trust;
- B. The vitality and stability of representative democracy depends upon the public's confidence in the integrity of its elected and appointed representatives; and

- C. Governments have the duty both to provide their citizens with standards by which they may determine whether public duties are being faithfully performed, and to apprise their officers and employees of the behavior which is expected of them while conducting such duties.

2.21.030 Purpose and authority.

It is the purpose of this chapter to provide a method of assuring that standards of ethical conduct for officers and employees of the City of Great Falls shall be clear, consistent, uniform in their application, enforceable, and to provide those officers or employees with advice and information concerning possible conflicts of interest which might arise in the conduct of their public duties. Such ethical standards shall inspire and stimulate each officer and employee to:

- A. Be dedicated to the concepts of effective and democratic local government by responsible elected officials and believe that professional general management is essential to the achievement of this objective;
- B. Affirm the dignity and worth of the services rendered by government and maintain a constructive, creative and practical attitude toward urban affairs and a deep sense of social responsibility as a trusted public servant;
- C. Be dedicated to the highest ideals of honor and integrity in all public and personal relationships so that each public servant may merit the respect and confidence of elected officials, of other officials and employees, and of the public; and
- D. Recognize that the chief function of local government at all times is to serve the best interests of all of the people.

2.21.040 Definitions.

As used in this section:

- A. "Agency" means any agency, board, governing body, including the chief executive officer, office, commission, or other instrumentality within the City of Great Falls, and any independent local authority created by or appointed under the authority of the City of Great Falls.
- B. "Business organization" means any corporation, partnership, firm, enterprise, franchise, association, trust, sole proprietorship, union, or other legal entity.
- C. "Employee" means any person, whether compensated or not, whether part-time or full-time, employed by or serving on an agency, who is not a local government officer.
- D. "Interest" means the ownership or control of more than ten (10) percent of the profits, assets or stock of a business organization, but shall not include the control of assets in a non-profit entity or labor union.
- E. "Member of immediate family" means the spouse or dependent child of an officer or employee residing in the same household.
- F. "Officer" means any person whether compensated or not, whether part-time or full-time, who is one (1) of the following:

1. Member of the City Commission;
 2. City Manager;
 3. Deputy City Manager;
 4. Director, Department of Finance;
 5. Director, Department of Planning and Community Development;
 6. Director, Department of Public Works;
 7. Director, Department of Parks and Recreation;
 8. Chief of Police;
 9. City Clerk;
 10. City Attorney;
 11. Municipal Judge;
 12. Fire Chief;
 13. Library Director;
 14. Human Resources Director;
 15. Housing Authority Director; or
 16. A member of any City board, council, committee, or commission.
- G. "Officer or employee" means an officer or employee of the City of Great Falls or of an agency under the authority of or appointed by the City Commission.

2.21.050 Ethical standards.

In addition to complying with the provisions of Mont. Code Ann. Title 2, Chapter 2, officers and employees of the City of Great Falls shall comply with the following provisions:

- A. No officer or employee of the City of Great Falls shall have an interest in a business organization or engage in any business, transaction, or professional activity which is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of his or her governmental duties;
- B. No officer or employee shall use, or attempt to use, his or her official position to secure unwarranted privileges or advantages for himself, herself or others;
- C. No officer or employee shall act in his or her official capacity in any matter where he or she, a member of his or her immediate family, or any business organization in which he or she has an interest, has a direct or indirect financial or personal involvement that might reasonably be expected to:
 1. impair his or her objectivity or independence or judgment, or
 2. substantially conflict with the proper discharge of officer or employee's governmental duties;
- D. No officer or employee shall undertake any private employment or service which might prejudice his or her independent judgment in the exercise of his or her official duties;
- E. No officer or employee, any member of his or her immediate family, or any business organization in which he or she has an interest shall solicit or accept any gift, favor, political contribution, service, promise of future employment, or other thing of value for the purpose of influencing him or her, directly or indirectly, in the discharge of his or her official duties, the appearance of impropriety must be avoided by the acceptance of such a gift;

- F. No officer or employee shall use, or allow to be used, his or her public office or employment or any information, not generally available to the members of the public, which he or she receives or acquires in the course of employment, for the purpose of securing financial gain for himself or herself, any member of his or her immediate family, or any business organization with which he or she is associated;
- G. No officer or employee, or any business organization in which he or she has an interest, shall represent any other person or party except the City in connection with any cause, proceeding, application, or other matter pending before any agency of the City of Great Falls; except in the process of collective bargaining for public employees or where any officer or employee or members of his or her immediate family shall represent himself, herself or themselves, in negotiations or proceedings concerning his, her, or their own interests;
- H. No officer shall be in conflict with these provisions if, by reason of his or her participation in the enactment of any ordinance, resolution or other matter required to be voted upon, no particular material or monetary gain accrues to him or her, or his or her immediate family;
- I. No elected officer shall be prohibited from making an inquiry for information on behalf of a constituent if in return, no fee, reward, or other thing of value is directly or indirectly promised to or accepted by the officer or a member of his or her immediate family;
- J. No officer or employee, elected or appointed in the City, shall without receiving formal written authorization from the appropriate person or body, disclose any confidential information concerning any other officer or employee or any other person or any property or governmental affairs of the City;
- K. No officer or employee shall approve, disapprove, or in any way recommend the payment of any bill, voucher, or indebtedness in which he or she has direct or indirect interests except reimbursement for proper expenses otherwise approved by the City Manager;
- L. No officer or employee shall request, use, or permit the use of any public property, vehicle, equipment, labor, or service for personal convenience or advantage for himself or any other person; except where it is the general practice to make the same available to the public at large, or where the same is provided pursuant to stated public policy for the use of officials and employees in the conduct of official business;
- M. All officers or employees shall exercise prudence and integrity in management of public funds in their custody and in all financial transactions;
- N. All officers or employees shall uphold the letter and spirit of the constitution, statutes, and regulations governing their duties and report violations of the law to appropriate authorities;
- O. All officers or employees shall be sensitive and responsive to the concerns and questions of the public; and
- P. All officers, whether elected or appointed, shall file a signed written disclosure with the City Clerk, and City Attorney, disclosing any appearance of a violation of this chapter, and said disclosure may, within the City Manager's discretion, be forwarded to the Great Falls Ethics Committee for

determination if a violation of this chapter exists and appropriate course of action.

2.21.060 Great Falls Ethics Committee established.

The City Commission hereby establishes The Great Falls Ethics Committee hereinafter referred to in this chapter as the "Committee."

2.21.070 Committee purpose.

The purpose of the Committee is to ensure that all City officers and employees are performing their duties in compliance with the provisions of Mont. Code Ann. Title 2, Chapter 2, and the provisions of this chapter.

2.21.080 Committee membership.

- A. Subject to the provisions provided in Subsection (B.) of this part, the Committee shall consist of three (3) members and one (1) alternate member, who shall be appointed and ready to serve in the event that a Committee member is unable or unavailable to serve. The members and alternate shall be appointed by the City Commission for not more than three (3) consecutive, three-year terms. Members shall be qualified electors and residents of the City. Members shall not be City employees. As is reasonably possible, the members shall have experience and or training in the following:
 - 1. Public administration;
 - 2. Governmental operation;
 - 3. Political practices; or
 - 4. Legal practice.
- B. The first appointee to the Great Falls Ethics Committee shall serve an initial term of three (3) years, the second appointee shall serve an initial term of two (2) years, and the third appointee shall serve an initial term of one (1) year. Following the expiration of these initial terms, the provisions of Subsection (A.) of this part shall apply.

2.21.090 Committee meeting schedule.

The Committee shall meet on an as needed basis, no more frequently than once a month, after a matter has been referred to the Committee by direction of the City Manager or City Attorney. Committee meetings shall be held in the Civic Center and shall be open to the public, pursuant to Mont. Code Ann. Titles 2 and 7. Committee meeting minutes shall be maintained by the City Clerk.

2.21.100 Committee duties.

The Committee shall meet and be presented testimony regarding matters referred to it. When considering an ethics complaint, the Committee shall determine whether a

complaint appears to be substantiated based on the information and testimony presented. If the Committee determines that a complaint appears to be substantiated, it may refer the matter to the Cascade County Attorney, or to the supervisor of a public employee who may be the subject of the complaint, for disposition. The Committee shall make written findings of its decision, which will be filed with the City Clerk.

2.21.110 Nepotism.

All personnel matters shall be administered on the basis of merit and through regular management procedure.

- A. No one participating actively in the appointment of a position, i.e., City Commissioners, City Manager, representatives of the Human Resources Department, the appointing department head, or division head, shall appoint any person related or connected by consanguinity within the fourth degree or by affinity within the second degree;
 - 1. "Consanguinity" means blood relation and degrees are determined as follows:
 - i. Parent and child are of the first degree;
 - ii. Grandparents, grandchildren, brothers and sisters are of the second degree;
 - iii. Uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces and great grandparents are of the third degree; and
 - iv. First cousins, great uncles and great aunts and great-great grandparents are of the fourth degree.
 - 2. "Affinity" means a relationship by marriage and the degrees are determined as follows:
 - i. Husband and wife are of the first degree; and
 - ii. Brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, fathers-in-law and mothers-in-law are of the second degree.
- B. No one may be appointed to a position, within a City department, if related or connected by consanguinity within the fourth degree or by affinity within the second degree to any person sitting on a board or commission representing or advising that department.
- C. The above shall include but not be limited to the following:
 - 1. City Commission;
 - 2. Board of Adjustment;
 - 3. Board of Health;
 - 4. Housing Authority;
 - 5. Library Board;
 - 6. Park and Recreation Board;
 - 7. Parking Commission;
 - 8. Planning Board and Zoning Commission;
 - 9. Police Commission;
 - 10. Business Improvement District;
 - 11. Tourism Business Improvement District; and
 - 12. Great Falls Ethics Committee.

2.21.120 Distribution.

The City Clerk shall cause a copy of this Code of Ethics to be distributed to every public officer and employee of the City within thirty (30) days after enactment. Each public officer and employee elected, appointed, or engaged thereafter shall be furnished a copy before entering upon the duties of his or her office or employment.

The Conflicts Disclosure Statement form reads as follows:

CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The Official Code of the City of Great Falls, (OCCGF) 2.21.010 *et seq.* provides the ethical standards for city officers and requires each city officer to file a Conflicts Disclosure with the City Clerk by January 31st of each year. In addition to the appointed or elected position with the City, the City officer's disclosure shall include the City officer's name and address, current employment, non-City board membership, and business or financial associations, so that actual, potential or apparent conflicts are disclosed. The disclosure shall include the same information for the City officer's family members (spouse or dependent child residing in the same household).

Name: _____

Address: _____

Current Employer(s) and position: _____

For you and each family member (including the name of each family member), please list the names of any business and/or financial interests or associations with persons and/or entities that contract, work with, or provide services to the City and list any non-City entities for which you or your family member(s) are board members, trustees, or hold other fiduciary relationships:

City officer: _____

Family member(s): _____

I certify under penalty of perjury that the above statement is true and correct. If any of the above information should change, I acknowledge I am obligated to immediately file an amended Conflicts Disclosure Statement with the City Clerk. I further acknowledge that this Conflicts Disclosure Statement is intended to be a public document and I hereby waive any right to privacy in the information I have provided herein.

Signature _____ Date _____

Date Received _____ City Clerk _____

☐ City Commission ☐ Neighborhood Council # _____ ☐ Board, Council, Committee or Commission
☐ City Officer Describe: _____

Complete and return the additional included form to Lanni Klasner, Communications Specialist, by **January 31st**.

HISTORY OF NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS



Citizens engaging in issues affecting their neighborhoods are nothing new to Great Falls. Responding to the Montana Constitution's provision that communities review their form of local government every 10 years, the Local Government Study Commission researched and recommended the implementation of neighborhood councils. In 1996, the citizens of Great Falls approved an amendment to the Great Falls City Charter reinstituting a neighborhood council program.

In 1997 the Great Falls City Commission adopted Ordinance 2727, and more recently Ordinance 3169 in 2017, providing for the establishment, organization and operation of the councils, as well as Resolution 8895 establishing the council districts. Each district shall be represented by a council of five members elected by the residents of the district for two-year terms. The stated purpose of neighborhood councils is to advise the City Commission, City Manager, and other City advisory bodies on all governmental issues, affairs, and services which affect neighborhoods.

The Ordinances also set forth that "a neighborhood liaison function is hereby established within the Community Development Department." The liaison is now known as the Communications Specialist and is under the direction of the City Manager's Office.



Ordinances 2727 and 3169 also established the Great Falls Citizen's Council, commonly referred to as the Council of Councils. The Council of Councils is made up of one member from each of the nine neighborhood councils and two members of the Great Falls City Commission. The purpose of the Council of Councils is to act as a forum to address issues of citywide concern or importance and each representative shares the goals and projects of his/her Neighborhood Council.

ESTABLISHING NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS via the Official Code of the City of Great Falls(OCCGF)



Ordinance 3169, codified in the Official Code of the City of Great Falls (OCCGF), under Title 2, Chapter 19, Sections 010 through 100, sets forth the roles and responsibilities of Neighborhood Councils.

Chapter 19 NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS

Sections:

- 2.19.010 Establishment.
- 2.19.020 Purpose.
- 2.19.030 District boundaries.
- 2.19.040 Council elections.
- 2.19.050 Duties and powers.
- 2.19.060 Organization.
- 2.19.070 By-Laws.
- 2.19.080 Open meetings and public records.
- 2.19.090 Great Falls Citizen's Council.
- 2.19.100 City resources.

2.19.010 Establishment.

Pursuant to the Charter for the City of Great Falls, a program of neighborhood councils is hereby established.

2.19.020 Purpose.

The purpose of the neighborhood council program is to provide a means for the citizens of Great Falls to actively participate in their local government through a formal organization working at the neighborhood level.

2.19.030 District boundaries.

- A. The City Commission shall divide the City of Great Falls into no less than nine (9) and no more than thirteen (13) neighborhood council districts. The residents of a district shall comprise the electorate for that district pursuant to the Great Falls City Charter.
- B. The district boundaries shall be established by a resolution of the City Commission.

- C. Neighborhood councils may petition the City Commission to amend district boundaries for good cause consistent with the purpose and intent of this chapter.

2.19.040 Council elections.

- A. Each neighborhood council district shall have a council comprised of five (5) resident members who must live within their designated neighborhood council district for which they were elected for their term of office; such members shall be elected to two (2) year terms at the election held in conjunction with the City general election.
- B. Nominees for election to a neighborhood council must be qualified electors and residents of their designated neighborhood district.
- C. The filing period for neighborhood councils shall open and close on the same date as the filing period for mayoral and commission candidates. Neighborhood council candidates are not subject to primary elections.

2.19.050 Duties and powers.

- A. The councils shall act in an advisory capacity to the City Commission, the City Manager and to other City advisory bodies. They may contribute information, opinions, advice, suggestions and recommendations to the City Commission, City Manager and other City advisory bodies on all governmental affairs and services having an effect on the area the neighborhood council represents. Topics and issues for council involvement may include, but are not limited to the following:
 - 1. Public finance;
 - 2. Public works;
 - 3. Public safety;
 - 4. Social services;
 - 5. Transportation;
 - 6. Economic development;
 - 7. Planning and zoning;
 - 8. Public health and sanitation;
 - 9. Parks and recreation; and
 - 10. Environmental issues.
- B. Neighborhood Councils may also work cooperatively, in an advisory capacity with, other governmental and quasi-governmental entities such as school districts, county government and the transit district.
- C. As advisory bodies, neighborhood councils shall not:
 - 1. Appropriate or commit City resources;
 - 2. Enact or enforce City Codes or ordinances;
 - 3. Engage in law enforcement;
 - 4. Assume a supervisory role or directorship over any City employee; or
 - 5. Interfere in any way with a City employee in the performance of his/her duties.

2.19.060 Organization.

- A. Each council shall select from its members, a chairman, secretary, an official delegate to attend City Commission meetings, and appoint a Vice Chair or other officers as it deems necessary.
- B. In the event of a vacancy on the council, the remaining members shall appoint a person eligible to hold the position to fill the vacancy until the next general election. In the event that a council cannot agree upon the appointment of a replacement member, the City Commission shall do so.
- C. On or before January 30 after each election, or within thirty (30) days after new council member(s) elected in a special election receive the oath(s) of, and are sworn into, office, each neighborhood council shall meet to organize as provided in this section.
- D. Neighborhood councils are encouraged to involve business persons, young people, and other individuals who may not necessarily qualify as an elected council member.
- E. Neighborhood councils, and the Great Falls Citizen's Council, are further encouraged to involve minorities, ethnic groups, community service organizations, environmental interest groups, and other like organizations to ensure broad participation in the neighborhood council program.

2.19.070 By-Laws.

- A. Each council shall adopt by-laws prescribing additional duties of the council, meeting criteria and times, and such other provisions as the council may deem appropriate.
- B. The City Clerk shall provide model by-laws for use by the councils in drafting their own by-laws.
- C. By-laws shall be reviewed by the office of the City Attorney and certified for consistency with the provisions of the Great Falls City Charter, the City Codes and the laws of Montana.
- D. A copy of the by-laws shall be on file in the office of the City Clerk.

2.19.080 Open meetings and public records.

- A. All meetings of the neighborhood councils shall be open to the public.
- B. All records maintained by the council shall be available for public inspection.

2.19.090 Great Falls Citizen's Council.

- A. The purpose of the Great Falls Citizen's Council (GFCC) is to act as a forum to address issues of community wide concern and to resolve disputes among the individual neighborhood councils.
- B. The GFCC shall organize as follows:
 - 1. the GFCC shall consist of one (1) member selected from each neighborhood council, and two (2) members of the Great Falls City

Commission who shall be appointed by the Mayor, with the consent of the City Commission;

2. the GFCC shall determine its rules of organization and operation, except that no rules adopted shall be inconsistent with the provisions of the Charter of the City of Great Falls, this Code, or the laws of the State of Montana; and
3. in addition to the membership set forth in subsection B, any council representing any unincorporated neighborhood or community may petition the GFCC for membership.

2.19.100 City resources.

- A. The City Commission, at its discretion, may provide funding and other resources to neighborhood councils and to the Great Falls Citizen's Council.
- B. A neighborhood liaison function is hereby established within the City Manager's Office.
- C. The City of Great Falls shall not be liable for any obligations incurred by the councils or the GFCC unless expressly approved by the City Commission.



OATH OF OFFICE

Before performing any official duties, every elected and appointed municipal officer must take the oath of office prescribed in Article III, Section 3 of the Montana Constitution. The oath may be administered by a Judge, Mayor, City Clerk, or any other person authorized by law to administer oaths. The oath of office must be filed with the County Election Administrator and with the City Clerk.



The law states that before the officer performs any official duties, the oath must be taken and filed. However, the Montana Supreme Court says the filing of the oath of office is not essential prior to discharging the duties of the office. However, if the oath of office is not filed with the County Election Administrator, then it is considered an abandonment of office.

DEVELOPING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Choosing Officers • Officer Roles • By-Laws



Choosing Officers:

Each Council shall organize a chairperson, secretary, official delegate to attend City Commission meetings, a vice-chair, or other officers as it deems necessary.

Officer Roles:

Neighborhood Council by-laws should break down the exact responsibilities of each of the officers to ensure that they understand who does what to make the Council successful. Below is a list of roles for officers and the respective responsibilities that go with those roles. These are guidelines to help Neighborhood Councils form an effective and productive leadership team.

On or before January 30th after the General Election, each neighborhood council shall organize and select its officers as follows:

Chairperson:

A Chairperson is the main representative to conduct meetings. The Chairperson is the key to the success of the meetings and the Council. It is very important that this person be able to be an effective facilitator that can stand on middle ground and help continue discussions. The Chair keeps the meeting running smoothly while allowing participation and is the person who makes sure that people keep to the agenda and the task, both in content and timing.

Vice-Chairperson:

Assists the Chairperson or, in the absence of the Chairperson, conducts the meetings and exercises all the usual duties of the Chairperson.

Secretary:

Records the minutes of the meetings in accordance with state law, and makes sure copies of the minutes, agendas and other Neighborhood Council records are forwarded to his or her successor and the Communications Specialist for the City.

Official Delegate:

Represents the Council at all official functions as deemed necessary by the Council, and shall serve as the Council's representative at City Commission meetings.

By-laws:

By-laws contain the rules governing the internal affairs of a Neighborhood Council. They are the constitution of your Neighborhood Council that establishes the legal requirements for the group. By-laws govern the way you must function and the roles and responsibilities of your officers.

- All Neighborhood Councils must have by-laws written and adopted by the Neighborhood Council. A copy of the by-laws must be filed with the City Clerk's Office and will serve as the official document governing your Neighborhood Council.
- By-laws should be reviewed periodically. Reviewing by-laws will ensure that members and officers continue to meet the Council's needs and other legal requirements.
- Submit any proposed changes to the by-law language to the Communications Specialist to review with the City Attorney for legal soundness prior to being added to a Neighborhood Council agenda for consideration and action. If by-law changes are adopted by the council, provide a copy to the City Clerk.

MONTANA OPEN MEETING LAWS



Montana's open meeting and public participation laws are derived from two fundamental rights contained within our Montana Constitution, Article II, Sections 8 and 9: The Right of Participation and the Right to Know.

The Montana open meeting law mandates that the gathering of a majority of the Neighborhood Council representatives, of any meeting of the Neighborhood Council, is subject to the open meeting law. Thus, if a private person invites the entire Neighborhood Council to hear a presentation on an issue, that presentation must be opened to the public and the media.

This law applies to all City boards, commissions, councils, committees and subcommittees as created by the City Commission.

Montana's open meeting law defines the term "meeting" very broadly. Mont. Code Ann. § 2-3-202 defines "meeting" as the convening of a quorum of the subject public agency . . . whether corporal or by means of electronic equipment, to hear, discuss, or act upon a matter over which the agency has supervision, control, jurisdiction, or advisory power.

Informal governmental action, which includes discussions and information-gathering by a quorum, must be considered a meeting open to the public as listening and exposing itself to facts, arguments and statements constitutes a crucial part of a governmental

body's decision making. The possibility that a decision could be influenced dictates that compliance with the law be met.

Mont. Code Ann. § 2-3-101 sets forth in part that citizens be afforded "reasonable opportunity to participate in the operation of governmental agencies prior to the final decision of the agency."

Council members, regardless of any salary or financial compensation, advisory or administrative in nature, are considered to be "public officials" and thus subject to the Code of Ethics and Open Meeting Law statutes.

Therefore, the essential elements of the open meeting law are as follows:

1. If a quorum, defined as the number of members legally required to conduct business (3 council members), is convened by either physical presence or by means of electronic equipment (§ 2-3-202, MCA); and
2. Members will hear, discuss or act upon issues that it has jurisdiction over (§ 2-3-202, MCA); then
3. The meeting must be open to the public (§ 2-3-203, MCA). A person may not be excluded from any open meeting and may not be prohibited from photographing, televising, transmitting images or audio by electronic or digital means, or recording open meetings. The presiding officer may ensure that these activities do not interfere with the conduct of the meeting (§ 2-3-211, MCA); and
4. Appropriate minutes of all meetings shall be kept and made available for inspection by the public (§ 2-3-212, MCA).

Pursuant to Robert's Rules of Order, the only business that can be transacted in the absence of a quorum is:

- to take a recess to take measures to obtain a quorum (make phone calls to determine if a member is on their way);
- to fix the time to which to adjourn (makes it possible for the meeting to continue on a later day when you know a quorum will be present); or
- to adjourn (wait for the next regular meeting)

Each municipal governing body, committee, board, authority, or entity, in accordance with Article II, Section 8, of the Montana Constitution and Title 2, Chapter 3, MCA, shall develop procedures for permitting and encouraging the public to participate in decisions that are of significant interest to the public (§ 7-1-4142, MCA), and to establish rules for conducting the meeting, affording citizens a reasonable opportunity to participate prior to final decision (§ 7-1-4143, MCA). This includes a schedule of regular meeting times and an agenda prepared and posted sufficiently in advance to provide notice of the topics to be discussed and actions to be considered.

A matter of significant public interest is defined as one "involving any non-ministerial decision or action which has meaning to, or affects a portion of the community." Discrepancies as to whether a meeting item is of significant public interest should always err on the side of transparency and opportunities for public participation. Pursuant to an Attorney General Opinion, forty-eight hours is generally considered sufficient to notify the public of contemplated action.

Exceptions to open meetings are detailed in Mont. Code Ann. § 2-3-203 and include, in part: The presiding officer of any meeting may close the meeting during the time the discussion relates to a matter of individual privacy and then only if the presiding officer determines that the demands of individual privacy clearly exceed the merits of public disclosure. The right of individual privacy may be waived by the individual about whom the discussion pertains and, in that event, the meeting must be open; a meeting may be closed to discuss a strategy to be followed with respect to litigation when an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public agency. A meeting may not be closed to discuss strategy to be followed in litigation in which the only parties are public bodies or associations.

Mont. Code Ann. § 2-3-212 requires that any time a presiding officer closes a public meeting pursuant to Mont. Code Ann. § 2-3-203, the presiding officer shall ensure that minutes are taken and kept of the closed portion of the meeting. The minutes from the closed portion of the meeting may not be made available for inspection except pursuant to a court order.

Those minutes would be kept separately from the regular meeting minutes and would not be made available to the public. Such minutes must be sealed and safeguarded.

Closed meetings are rare. Consult with the Communications Specialist prior to closing a meeting. If you have procedural questions, please do not hesitate to contact the City Clerk or the City Attorney's Office.

"Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."

~Henry Ford

PLANNING MEETINGS

Agenda Building • Agenda Process • Public Notice • Topics • Guest Speakers



Agenda Building:

The agenda states the purpose, time and goals of the meeting. It outlines each topic to be covered, presented on, voted on and may designate an amount of time allotted to each subject. The agenda should also list who is responsible for each topic and the type of action needed to help clarify the goals and direction of the meeting. The agenda must be written prior to the meeting and sent out in advance so people know what to expect of them.

The agenda for a meeting must also include an item allowing public comment on any public matter that is not on the agenda of the meeting and that is within the Council's jurisdiction. However, the Neighborhood Council may not take action on any matter discussed unless specific notice of that matter is included on an agenda and public comment has been allowed on that agenda item (§ 2-3-103, MCA).

Each voting item on the agenda must allow time for public comment prior to the Council Chairperson calling for the vote.

Points to consider when preparing an agenda:

- Set realistic time allotments for presentations and issues that require a vote.
- Take into consideration public comment.
- Prioritize issues.
- Stay on track, start on time and end on time.
- Plan the agenda to mix items of importance. Don't save big decisions for the end when people are tired or some have left the meeting.
- List each item. Include who is responsible for the presentation, what kind of action is needed and the time allotted.
- If the Council adopts a time limit on public comment, adhere to the rule with all comments.
- At the beginning or end of a meeting's agenda, have an item for public comment on items not on the agenda. These comments/issues cannot be voted on. Only agenda items noticed in advance can be voted on. Comments/issues brought forth at the meeting can be noticed and voted on at the next month's meeting (if appropriate).

Agenda Process

The Communications Specialist may develop a Neighborhood Council's agenda from requests by speakers wishing to address the Council and from requests by Council members for specific speakers. Neighborhood Council Chairs may prepare the agenda and then forward the completed agenda to the Communications Specialist for public noticing. Neighborhood Council Chairs should always check with the Communications Specialist when developing agendas to see if speaker requests have been made directly to the Coordinator.

The timeline for completed agendas is as follows:

- Meeting agendas shall be completed and delivered to the Communications Specialist no later than one (1) week preceding scheduled meeting.
- Submit the draft minutes of the prior meeting to the Communications Specialist to post on the City's website. Getting the draft minutes posted online helps neighbors utilize the information as well as share it with others. This can help increase citizen participation.
- Changes to agendas may be permitted if done within 48 hours of the scheduled meeting.
- The Communications Specialist will distribute completed agendas to the media and will post to the City website the week preceding the scheduled meeting.

Public Notice

Public notice is defined under the open meeting law. In summary, the law does not contain any explicit notice requirements. Consider the following when determining the extent of public notice to be given:

1. Are there matters of "significant public interest" on the agenda?
2. Is there an action item which has meaning to and deserves to be considered by the people it affects?
3. What method of notice is best, given financial resources and significance of issues on the agenda?

The public meeting statute does not require Neighborhood Councils to utilize a specific method of notification. However, as set forth above, forty-eight hours is generally considered sufficient to notify the public of contemplated action.

Topics

Your Council can choose the topics presented on, voted on or discussed during Neighborhood Council meetings. However, the topics should have some basis behind why they need to be presented, discussed or voted on.

Finding topics for discussion about your neighborhood can be found in a few ways: City department documents, neighborhood surveys, from City Council representatives, past neighborhood meetings, etc. To get started with regular meetings that encourage attendance, identify what is happening in your neighborhood that people want more information on and/or look at current City documents that show what will be happening in your neighborhood. City Departments conduct planning regularly that shows what projects will occur each year.

The Communications Specialist has a City Directory to utilize to determine who to call for presentations.

Guest Speakers

Guest speakers from non-profits, businesses, Chamber of Commerce, City Departments, etc. can come to your Neighborhood Council meeting to speak on an issue listed on the agenda. Guest speakers should have strong knowledge in the area being discussed. Multiple speakers with varying viewpoints may be invited, especially if the topic is controversial and all viewpoints are needed to make a decision or vote.

Neighborhood Councils may also hold candidate forums as a means to inform citizens on candidates running for office. All candidates must be invited and extended the same opportunity to answer questions and debate during the forum.

RUNNING MEETINGS

Robert's Rules of Order • Minutes • Audio Recordings • Follow-Up After the Meetings



By the time you get to the actual meeting, you should have already set an agenda and noticed the meeting. The Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of the Council ensures that decisions are reached in an orderly, equitable and deliberative manner. Setting a detailed agenda and appointing a competent Chairperson ensures order of the meeting as well as the balance of the rights of all opinions, majority and minority, and consideration of one subject at a time.

The purpose of a meeting is to accomplish the Neighborhood Council's work lawfully, in full view of the public and with reasonable opportunity for public participation. Whether the Council's work is carried out efficiently and in an orderly and harmonious

manner depends entirely upon each member's determination to do so. A smooth Council meeting that engenders and sustains public trust does not require that the Council agree with or even like one another. It does require civility and well practiced meeting procedures.

Civility merely requires individual self-discipline. Procedures, on the other hand, require collective self-discipline – agree to disagree with respect. That is precisely the purpose of all legislative procedures. To that end, many deliberative bodies have incorporated some form of Robert's Rules of Order as a guide to their own rules of procedure.

Unfortunately, Robert's Rules of Order is as easy to read and understand as your computer's program language. All of the recommended procedures in Robert's Rules of Order can be modified to fit the specific needs of any organization. Therefore, it makes some sense to extract from Robert's Rules the essential and most commonly used Rules and to incorporate them into the Council's own agreed upon procedures. It makes even more sense to practice the basic rules of procedure scrupulously at every meeting and on every Council action. By doing so, even on routine issues, the procedures will be well-practiced and therefore second nature to the members when faced with a "hot issue" and/or a "heated audience." With Council rules of procedure in place and in practice, the work set forth on the agenda should proceed smoothly, at least most of the time.

Robert's Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order are just that, rules to ensure order such as:

1. Making Motions (that are in order)
2. Obtain Permission to Speak (properly)
3. Opportunity to Speak
4. Courtesy (everyone follows the same rules, obtains the same respect, is heard and is polite to one another)

Robert's Rules of Order follow basic principles:

1. Parliamentary procedure rules are intended to make a meeting more effective, not inhibit it.
2. A majority vote decides an issue.
3. The minority has a right to be heard, and a right to oppose.
4. Every member has a right to his or her say on each issue.
5. Every member has a right to understand the meaning of any motion, and to know what effect a decision will have.
6. All members have equal rights, privileges and obligations, including the Chairperson.
7. Business can only be conducted if a quorum is present throughout the entire meeting.

8. All motions must be seconded, and adoption requires a majority vote unless otherwise noted.
9. All motions must be debated unless otherwise noted.
10. Deal with only one matter at a time; motions have an order of precedence.

While the entire compilation of Robert's Rules of Order is quite extensive, the following summary consolidates the most often used procedures.

On the date and time set, the Chairperson calls the meeting to order and the Secretary calls the roll to determine whether or not a quorum is present. Thereafter, business of the meeting shall be conducted according to the prepared agenda.

Motions are raised as follows:

Main Motion:

Council member obtains the floor by addressing the Chairperson: "I move that...."

- Any Council member may make a motion.
- Only one motion may be considered at a time unless there is a substitute motion to the main motion.

Second: Any Council member may second the main motion or substitute motion.

- A second is necessary before a motion can be debated.

Debate: Debate should be limited to the pending question.

Substitute Motion:

A substitute motion is used to amend or modify the main motion.

- The substitution motion replaces consideration of the main motion until voted upon and then, resumption of consideration of the main motion continues.

Vote: When debate appears to have closed, the Chairperson asks the will of the Council:

- Unless recently stated, the motion should be read again.
- Chairperson should call for affirmative and negative votes.

Minutes (§ 2-3-212, MCA)

Minutes of all meetings required by § 2-3-203, MCA, to be open must be kept and must be available for inspection by the public. Minutes must be available upon request (even draft copies) per § 2-6-1003, MCA.

In summary, Minutes must include:

- a. the date, time, and place of the meeting;
- b. a list of the individual members of the public body in attendance(also note the members that are either absent or excused);
- c. the substance of all matters proposed, discussed, or decided; and
- d. a record of any votes taken.

The duty of the secretary is mainly to record what is "done" by the Council, and not what is said by the members. The secretary records the name and address of citizens that address the Neighborhood Council. The minutes should contain a summary of public comment – this serves as the record of the majority and the record of the minority. The minutes should also contain deliberation on a voting item - - the vote outcome.

What does not need to be in the minutes?

- A verbatim transcript of every word or comment that was said.
- A complete summary of an informational presentation that is not being voted on
 - include a brief description of the presentation and who gave it, and general discussion about meeting process.

Audio Recordings of Meetings

Except as a memory aid for secretaries in preparing the draft minutes, no useful purpose is served by audio taping a routine meeting. If the Neighborhood Council audio records the meetings, then pursuant to the Secretary of State's Local Government Records Retention Schedule, the recordings must be kept for a minimum of one (1) year after approval of the minutes, and the Neighborhood Council must have the capability of producing copies of the recording upon request.

The Communications Specialist is the office of record for the audio recordings, and for requesting approval for disposal after the recordings have met the retention period.

Follow-Up After the Meetings

The level and amount of follow up required after a meeting is dependent on what was on the agenda, what was voted on and where that information needs to be shared.

- a. If an item was voted on the details of that vote should be given to the Communications Specialist and/or presented by the Official Delegate at a City Commission meeting. Make sure to provide the outcome of the vote, the number of ayes, nays, abstentions as well as the public comment from the vote.
- b. If there was public comment on an item that the group felt should be presented at the next meeting, coordinate with the Communications Specialist to make contact with the next presenter well in advance to make sure they have time at your next meeting.
- c. Forward the adopted minutes to the Communications Specialist after the meeting to update the webpage.

All neighborhood meetings must be documented by the Communications Specialist. It is important to remember to electronically send the agenda, draft minutes and adopted minutes to the Communications Specialist, as well as any written documentation provided during meetings and audio recordings. This office serves as the official record keeper of public neighborhood meetings.

OTHER IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

Neighborhood Council Website • Email • Social Media • Public Information/Public Records • Quorum • Training Requirements



Neighborhood Council Website

Each Neighborhood Council has its own webpage on the City of Great Falls' website at <https://greatfallsmt.net/neighborhoodcouncils>. The webpages are maintained by the Communications Specialist for the City of Great Falls.

Information contained on the webpages includes district boundaries, members of each council, by-laws, meeting schedules, and meeting minutes.

Email

Neighborhood Council members should refrain from having discussions or providing opinions via an electronic format regarding agenda items or topics under the Council's jurisdiction. Discussions could be viewed as an electronic meeting not open to the public. If you are the recipient of a group email, do not "reply all" to emails to avoid group discussions. If you have comments, questions or want to discuss a matter further, either call or individually reply to the submitter.

Emails are public records and the City utilizes Barracuda to capture and archive email. If you receive an email pertaining to Council business on your personal email account, either forward or cc the Communications Specialist when you respond so that the communication is archived in the City's system.

Social Media

Social media is a new world of opportunity for local governments to informally communicate with the public. Because comments/posts to social media constitute correspondence, state and local records retention applies to social media content. The City utilizes ArchiveSocial to capture and archive postings of its various social media pages. In an effort to better protect elected officials individual privacy for those utilizing social media in an official capacity, as well as to manage the City's risk, those elected officials utilizing social media technologies operated by non-city hosted services, are being requested to begin archiving their communications through ArchiveSocial to capture and archive postings. In doing so, the City would maintain the responsibility and accountability for the content as a public record.

Please notify the Communications Specialist if your Council is utilizing social media for government purposes. Councils are allowed to develop Facebook pages on behalf of the Council by a vote of the members and approval from the Communications Specialist. Facebook request forms and guidelines are available and must be complete prior to developing a Facebook page.

Public information/Public records

Pursuant to Mont. Code Ann. § 2-6-1002, "public information" means information prepared, owned, used, or retained by any public agency relating to the transaction of official business, regardless of form, except for confidential information that must be protected against public disclosure under applicable law; and, "public record" means public information that is: fixed in any medium and is retrievable in usable form for future reference, and designated for retention by the local government records committee.

Mont. Code Ann. § 2-6-1003, sets forth that every person has a right to examine and obtain a copy of any public information of this state, with certain exceptions pertaining to individual or public safety or the security of public facilities.

Quorum

On occasion there is a possibility that three or more members of the Council may be attending an event or function initiated or not initiated by the Council. On these occasions, if you believe there is a possibility that a quorum may be present, notify the Communications Specialist so that a "notice of quorum" can be posted indicating that, during these informal gatherings, there will be no Council agenda, no deliberations, no decisions made, and no minutes taken/prepared.

Training Requirements for all members of City Boards, Committees, Commissions and Councils

The Charter of the City of Great Falls established City Neighborhood Councils. The Official Code of the City of Great Falls established various boards, committees, commissions, and councils. These various local government boards, committees, and councils have civic duties and responsibilities to the City of Great Falls.

The adoption of Resolution 10229 by the City Commission sets forth training requirements as follows:

During their terms of appointment, or at least every two years, whichever is less, all appointed and elected members of City boards, committees, commissions, and councils, shall be required to participate in City sponsored training on governance, open meetings, rights to know, record keeping, public participation and/or other laws and policies impacting local government operations.

Attendance/Removal Policy

The City Commission adopted Ordinance 3169 on October 17, 2017, pertaining to attendance and removal of members of boards, commissions and councils. Said policy is set forth, in part, as follows:

A member of any board, commission, committee, or council, including Neighborhood Council, may be removed from office, by majority vote of the City Commission, if:

- a. The member misses more than one-third (1/3) of the regular meetings in a calendar year without a health or medical excuse;
- b. The member is unable to fulfill the duties of the office as a result of physical illness or mental disorder. A determination of whether the incumbent has a mental disorder shall be made pursuant to MCA Title 53, Chapter 21;
- c. The member neglects or refuses to discharge the member's duties;
- d. The member ceases to be a resident of the City, or in the case of a neighborhood council member, the member ceases to be a resident of the council member's district;
- e. The member is convicted of a felony, or of any offense involving moral turpitude, or a violation of official duties or the City Code of Ethics, Title 2, Chapter 21, while serving on a board, council, or commission; or
- f. Any other reason which City Commission deems to be in the best interests of the City, and in such case, only by a four-fifths vote.

If a member is to be removed from any board, commission, committee or council and be replaced by the City Commission, the member will be provided written notice of removal, stating the reasons for removal, by certified mail, postage prepaid, return receipt requested, or by hand delivery. Notice will be provided no less than ten (10) days prior to the City Commission hearing where said removal will be subject to the vote of the Commission.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CITY



The City Commission is the only policymaking body of the City. To help in this process, they receive recommendations from the various boards and commissions, City staff and the City Manager. The City Manager is designated to direct the day-to-day operations of the City and to carry out the policies of the City Commission. The City Manager is helped in this task by the Deputy City Manager, directors of the departments and staff.

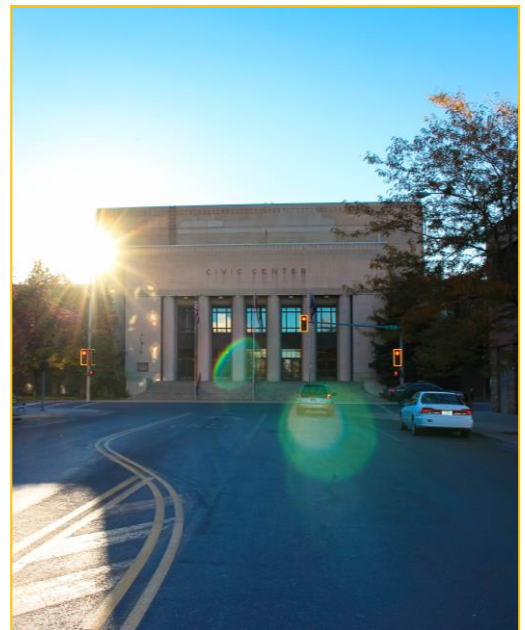
The departments and divisions in the City of Great Falls include City Manager, Communications Specialist, Animal Shelter Operations, City Clerk, Fire Rescue, Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, Legal, Mansfield Center for the Performing Arts, Park and Recreation, Planning and Community Development, Police and Public Works. Each department is headed by a director whose job is to organize and direct the operations of the various divisions under his/her control.

Municipal Court is under the direction of the Municipal Judge who is independently elected and does not report to either the City Manager or the City Commission. However, the receipts portion of Municipal Court falls under the direction of the Finance Department.

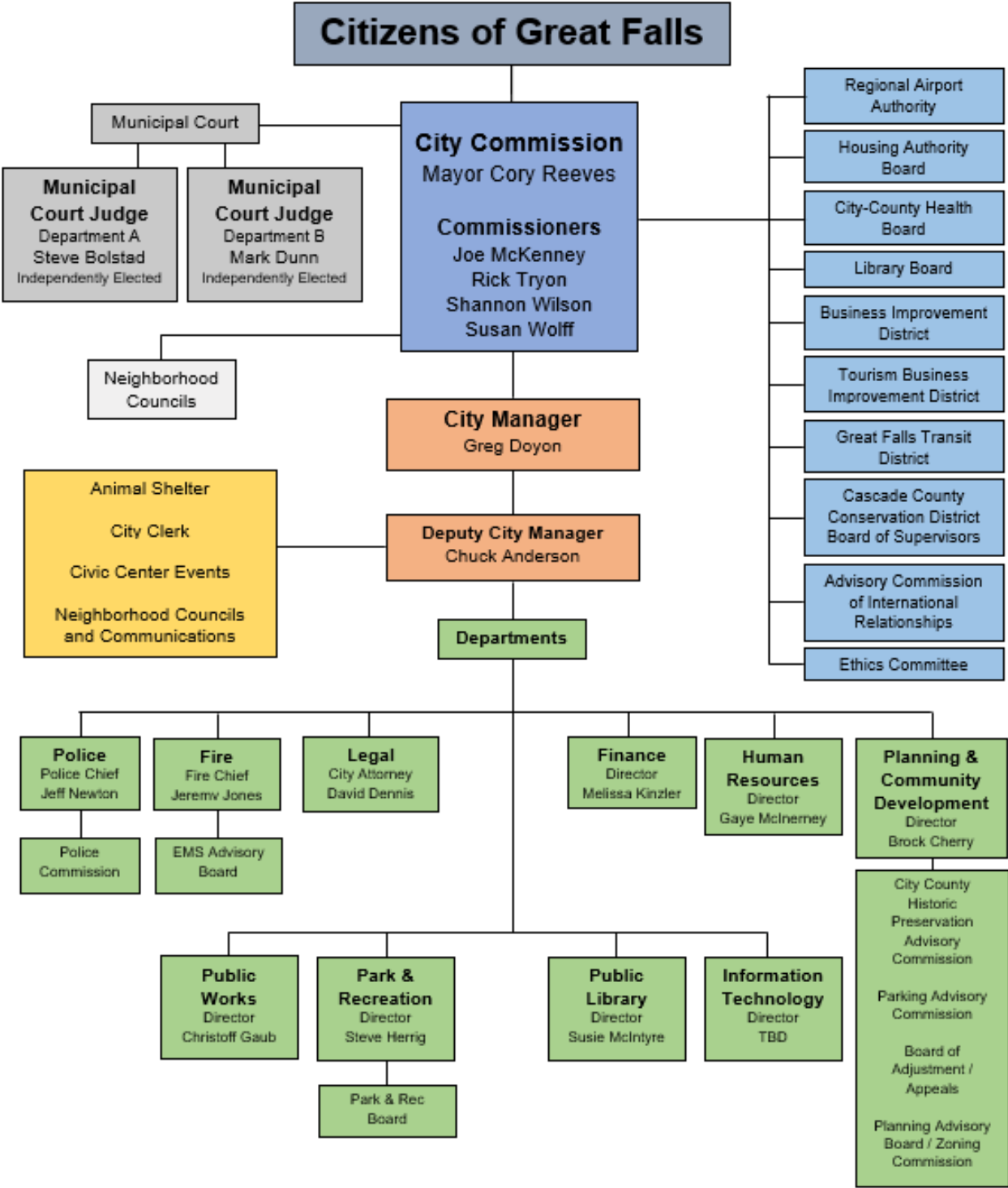
The Library Board is considered independent and has contracted with the City to handle the administrative responsibilities such as payroll, employee benefits, the hiring process and purchasing.

The Housing Authority contracts for staff-management services from the City of Great Falls. The Housing Authority Board is an independent authority and performs all of its own operational duties and responsibilities.

The Mayor and City Commissioners develop policy, and the City Manager develops the best method of carrying out the policy with the directors of the departments. The directors of the departments, with staff, carry out the tasks by determining how to allocate funds, manpower, and materials within the budget approved by the City Commission.



CITY ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Forms of Local Government

Municipal government in Montana is governed by Title 7 of the Montana Code Annotated (MCA). The City of Great Falls' form of government is "commission-manager" established by charter with self-governing powers. The City Charter was adopted June 3, 1986, and became effective July 1, 1986. The City Charter has since been amended and approved by the electors of the City of Great Falls on November 7, 2000, and November 7, 2017.

- **Powers of government**

City of Great Falls - Self-governing powers (§ 7-1-101, MCA). As provided by Article XI, Section 6, of the Montana Constitution, a local government unit with self-government powers may exercise any power not prohibited by the constitution, law, or charter. These powers include but are not limited to the powers granted to general power governments.

However, there are certain provisions to which the City must adhere. Those mandatory provisions are set forth in Mont. Code Ann. § 7-1-114, and include **finance**, several areas of **taxation**, **planning** and **zoning**, and some **labor** issues.

- **Form of municipal government selected by voters**

City of Great Falls – Commission-Manager form (§ 7-3-301). The commission-manager form consists of an elected commission and a manager appointed by the Commission who is the chief administrative officer of the local government. The manager is responsible to the Commission for the administration of all local government affairs placed in the manager's charge by law, ordinance, or resolution.

City of Great Falls – Charter required (§ 7-3-703). (1) Charter form of government shall be established by a charter which is a written document defining the powers, structures, privileges, rights, and duties of the unit of local government and limitations thereon. (2) The enumeration of powers in a charter shall not be construed as a limitation or prohibition on the residual or self-governing powers granted by the constitution.

CHARTER OF THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS



Preamble

We, the people of Great Falls, Montana, grateful for our past, confident of our future, and having considered the form of government which will best serve our needs, do adopt this charter to establish our self-determination as a city.

Article I - General Provisions of Charter Government

Section 1 - Charter Government

The City of Great Falls, Montana, establishes this charter form of government in accordance with Article XI, Section 5, of the Constitution of Montana.

Section 2 - Powers of City Government.

- (a) The City of Great Falls shall have all the powers of a self-governing charter city not prohibited by the Montana Constitution, this charter, or specific provisions of Montana law.
- (b) The powers of the City of Great Falls shall be liberally construed. Every reasonable doubt as to the existence of a power or authority of the City of Great Falls shall be resolved in favor of the existence of that power or authority.

Section 3 - Mill Levy Limit.

The total mill levy shall not exceed that allowed to general powers cities of the first class by Montana law, except that the City Commission may levy not more than two (2) additional mills for the purpose of providing additional funds for the operation, maintenance and capital needs of the Great Falls Public Library.

Section 4 - Exercise of Powers.

All powers of the City of Great Falls are vested in and derived from the people of Great Falls. These powers shall be exercised by the City Commission unless otherwise provided for by this charter or by Montana law. Enumeration of powers, rights, or duties in this charter shall not be considered exclusive or restrictive.

Article II - City Commission

Section 1- Composition.

The City Commission shall be composed of five voting members: four City Commissioners and the Mayor. The City Commission shall be the legislative and policymaking body of the City of Great Falls.

Section 2 - Duties and Responsibilities.

The City Commission shall:

- a) Adopt policies and procedures and enact ordinances and resolutions as necessary for the proper execution of governmental functions and responsibilities.
- b) Appoint and supervise, and may remove, the City Manager.
- c) Adopt an annual budget, levy taxes and special assessments, and may borrow money and issue bonds subject to Montana law. Appropriations, exclusive of bond and loan indebtedness, shall not exceed anticipated revenue.
- d) Adopt procedures for contracting with private and public agencies.
- e) Appoint citizens to boards, councils, committees or any other body or group pursuant to law.
- f) Set the salary of the City Commissioners and the Mayor by ordinance.

Section 3- Administrative Review.

On a majority vote of the whole number of the City Commission, the City Commission may review, inquire, and investigate any operation, management decision, administrative function or other affairs of the City. The City Commission may compel the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of books and records by issuance of a subpoena.

Except for the purpose of inquiry, or investigation, the City Commission shall be involved with administrative and management operations solely through the City Manager.

Article III - The Office of the Mayor

Section 1- Election of the Mayor.

- a) The City of Great Falls shall have a Mayor.
- b) The Mayor shall be elected for a term of two years.
- c) The Mayor shall meet all requirements and qualifications for election to the office of City Commissioner.

Section 2 - Powers and Duties of the Mayor.

- a) The Mayor shall be recognized as the official head and representative of the City of Great Falls for the purpose of presiding at City Commission meetings and the performance of ceremonial functions. These functions of the Mayor shall not be construed as conferring upon the mayor executive, personnel, or administrative powers or functions.
- b) The Mayor shall serve as a member of the Commission with all the rights and privileges of City Commissioners. The Mayor shall possess no veto over actions taken by the City Commission.

Section 3 - Office of the Mayor Pro Tempore.

The mayor pro tempore shall serve in the absence of the elected mayor. The City Commission shall elect from among its members a Mayor Pro-Tempore no later than one month after taking office. The Mayor Pro-Tempore shall serve a term of two years, or until the City Commission has held an election. Any vacancy in this office shall be filled by a special election among the remaining City Commissioners. Any person elected to fill such a vacancy shall serve the remaining portion of the term in which the vacancy occurred.

Article IV - Elections and Vacancies

Section 1- Election of City Commissioners and the Mayor.

- a. City Commissioners and the Mayor shall be residents and qualified electors of the City of Great Falls.
- b. Elections for City Commissioners and for the Mayor shall be non-partisan.
- c. City Commissioners shall be elected for a term of four years and the Mayor shall be elected for a term of two years. Except in the case of a previous vacancy, two City Commissioners and the Mayor shall be elected every two years. City Commissioners and the Mayor shall take office the first Tuesday after January 1st in the year following the election.
- d. City Commissioners and the Mayor shall be nominated and elected at large.

Section 2- Vacancy in the Office of City Commission or Mayor.

- a) The office of City Commissioner or Mayor shall become vacant upon death, resignation, recall or forfeiture of office. Grounds for forfeiture of office shall be:
 - (1) Loss of eligibility for election;
 - (2) Violation of any express provision of this charter;
 - (3) Conviction of a felony, or of any offense involving moral turpitude, or a violation of official duties or the City Code of Ethics, Title 2, Chapter 52, while serving on the Commission;
 - (4) Absence from more than one-third (1/3) of the regular meetings in a calendar year without a health or medical excuse;
 - (5) Inability to fulfill the duties of the office as a result of physical illness or mental disorder. A determination of whether the Commissioner or Mayor has a mental disorder shall be made pursuant to MCA Title 53, Chapter 21; or,
 - (6) Neglecting or refusing to discharge the Commissioner or Mayor's duties.
- b) A majority of the City Commission shall be the judge of the election and qualifications of its members and the grounds for forfeiture of their office. A City Commissioner or Mayor charged with conduct constituting grounds for forfeiture of office shall be

entitled to notice in writing of such charges and a public hearing on demand before a majority of the City Commission.

- c) When a vacancy occurs, the City Commission, may, by majority vote of its remaining members, appoint a person, eligible to hold such office, to fill the vacancy of City Commissioner or Mayor until the next regular City election. The person elected at the next regular City election shall serve the unexpired term of the office in which the vacancy occurred.

Article V - Municipal Court

There shall be a municipal court as provided by Montana law.

Article VI - City Government Administration

Section 1 - Position of the City Manager.

The City Commission shall employ a City Manager on the basis of merit.

Section 2 - Appointment and Removal of the City Manager.

The City Commission shall appoint or remove the City Manager by majority vote of the whole number of the Commission.

Section 3 - Salary of the City Manager.

The salary of the City Manager shall be set by the City Commission.

Section 4 - Duties of the City Manager.

The City Manager shall be the chief administrative and executive officer of the City and shall be responsible to the City Commission for the administration of all City affairs required by this charter, law, ordinance or resolution. The City Manager shall:

- a) Carry out policies established by the City Commission.
- b) Perform the duties required by this charter, law, ordinance, or resolution.
- c) Enforce laws, ordinances and resolutions.
- d) Administer the affairs of the City.
- e) Direct, organize, supervise, and administer all departments, divisions, agencies, bureaus, and the offices of the City.
- f) Make recommendations to the City Commission.
- g) Report to the City Commission on the fiscal affairs and the financial condition of the City.
- h) Prepare and present the budget to the City Commission.
- i) Execute bonds, notes, contracts, and written obligations of the City Commission and the City of Great Falls subject to the approval of the City Commission.

- j) Report to the City Commission on the affairs of the City as the City Commission may require.
- k) Attend City Commission meetings with the right to take part in the discussion but not to vote.
- l) Appoint and be administratively responsible for all City employees, including their suspension or removal; including adopting as necessary an administrative and personnel code and/or policies.
- m) Appoint with the approval of the City Commission a qualified acting City Manager to exercise the powers and perform the duties of the City Manager during temporary absences.
- n) Be responsible for the administration of an employee grievance appeals procedure as adopted by the City Commission.
- o) May, without notice, cause the affairs of any department, division, office, agency or other City administrative unit or employee to be examined.

Section 5 - Administrative Departments.

Administrative departments, divisions, bureaus, agencies, offices, and other administrative entities shall be subject to the control and supervision of the City Manager and shall be established by ordinance.

Article VII - Citizen Involvement in Government

Section 1 - Initiative, Referendum, and Recall.

The qualified electors of the City of Great Falls may exercise the powers of Initiative, Referendum, and Recall as provided by Montana law.

Section 2 - Open Government.

All records of the City of Great Falls, including the City Commission and all boards, councils, and committees, shall be open to the public as provided by Montana law. All meetings of such bodies shall be publicly announced in advance and shall be open to the public as provided by Montana law.

Section 3 - Citizen Involvement.

The City Commission may establish and appoint persons to boards, councils, committees, commissions, and other bodies of an advisory or substantive nature to assist the commission in the exercise of its duties. The City of Great Falls encourages citizens to participate in these bodies by serving as members, attending meetings, and other similar methods.

Section 4 - Neighborhood Councils.

- a) Purpose: There shall be neighborhood councils. The councils shall act in an advisory capacity to the City Commission, the City Manager and to other City advisory bodies, and may contribute information, opinions, advice, suggestions and recommendations to the City Commission, City Manager and other City advisory bodies on all governmental affairs and services having an effect on the area the neighborhood

council represents, including, but not limited to, public finance, public works, public safety, planning and zoning, and public health and sanitation.

- b) Provision of Neighborhood Districts; Composition of Councils; Election: The City Commission shall, by ordinance, divide the City of Great Falls into no less than nine (9) and no more than thirteen (13) neighborhood council districts. The residents of a district shall comprise the electorate for that district. Each district shall have a council comprised of five (5) members; elected to a two (2) year term at the election held in conjunction with the City general election. Nominees for election to a neighborhood council must be residents of their designated neighborhood district.
- c) Organization: Each council shall select from its members a chairman, secretary, and an official delegate to attend City Commission meetings, and may appoint a Vice Chair or other officers as it deems necessary. The chairman must be one of the five elected council members. In the event of a vacancy on the council, the remaining members shall appoint a person eligible to hold the position to fill the vacancy until the next general election. In the event that the Council cannot agree upon the appointment of a replacement member, the City Commission shall fill the vacancy. On or before January 30, after each election, or within thirty (30) days after new council member(s) elected in a special election receive the oath(s) of, and are sworn into office, each neighborhood council shall meet to organize as provided in the section. Each council shall adopt by-laws prescribing additional duties of the council, meeting criteria and times, and such other provisions as the council may deem appropriate and which are not inconsistent with the provisions of this charter and the laws of Montana. The City Commission may provide model by-laws for use by the councils in drafting their own by-laws.
- d) Open Meetings and Right to Know: All meetings of the neighborhood councils shall be open to the public. All records maintained by the council shall be available for public inspection.
- e) Organization of a Great Falls Citizen's Council: A majority of the neighborhood councils may provide for the creation of a Great Falls Citizen's Council, consisting of one (1) member from each of the participating neighborhood councils. The Citizen's Council may determine its rules of organization and operation, except that no rules adopted shall be inconsistent with the provisions of this Charter or the laws of Montana. The City Commission may provide model by-laws for use by the Council in drafting its own by-laws. The purposes of the Citizen's Councils shall be set forth in paragraph (a) of this section.
- f) Obligations of the City Commission; City of Great Falls: Nothing in this section shall obligate the City Commission to appropriate funds to any council for its operation, or to the Great Falls Citizen's Council authorized in paragraph (e). The City of Great Falls shall not be liable for any obligations incurred by the councils or the Citizen's Council during their existence except as provided for by the City Commission.

Article VIII - Amendment, Effective Date, and Severability

Section 1 - Amendment.

This charter may be amended only as provided by Montana law. A majority of the qualified electors of the City of Great Falls voting on the question shall be required for passage of a charter amendment.

Section 2 - Effective Date.

This charter shall become effective on July 1, 1986, and as amended and approved by the electors of the City of Great Falls November 7, 2000, and November 7, 2017.

Section 3 - Severability.

If any provision of this charter is held invalid, the other provisions of this charter shall not be affected thereby. If the application of this charter, or any part of its provision, to any person or circumstances, is held invalid, the application of the charter and its provisions to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

The Work of the City Commission

Conscientious Commission members, as representatives of the community, can render better service if they know their duties, are aware of their responsibilities and are ever mindful of the best methods of carrying out their trust. Unlike some other systems of local government where the Commission exercises less than half of the municipal powers, the Mayor and Commissioners under our form of government, completely dominate the governmental establishment, select and control the City Manager and enjoy all the importance and responsibility of a board of directors. The Mayor and Commissioners are responsible for making certain that a capable City Manager administers the affairs of the City. The City Manager makes recommendations to the Commission on municipal policies.

Determination of Policy

The people elect the members of the City Commission. The City Commission determines the policies of the City government and appoints, directs and, if necessary, removes the City Manager. In determining policy, Commission members do their best to represent their constituents. All phases of the job involve, in one way or another, the determination of policy.

The City Manager can help the Commission a great deal in studying and determining municipal policies. For example, one of the most important issues facing a City government each year is the budget. The City Manager gathers the information and prepares the budget, which the Commission studies, revises as necessary, and then adopts. The City Manager puts the budget into effect and carries it out.

What is meant by the determination of policy? Basically, it is the process of deciding what is to be done. The Commission should not confuse this with how a program is to

be administered, which is the job of the City Manager. In its simplest terms, "what to do" is policy making and "how to do it" is administration.

In determining policy, the Commission must come to a decision, authorize its implementation and bear full responsibility for the results. Thus, the Commission must hold the City Manager responsible for administering policy decisions properly.

In any legislative body, the determination of policy takes the form of passing a law. City Commission laws are ordinances and policies are resolutions. An ordinance has the force of law and usually includes what remedies will be made if the law is not followed. A resolution reflects the intent of the Commission.

How does the Commission arrive at these policy decisions? Briefly, there are four steps in the process:

1. Determining what is needed. Many sources of information are available – Commissioner's observations, requests of individual citizens or citizens' groups and the recommendations of the City Manager. Increasingly, city governments have established various means for obtaining citizen input including advisory boards and commissions, citizen surveys and other mechanisms. These provide valuable guidance for Commission members.
2. Determining the will of the people. In some cases, proposed programs may have been major issues in a recent election. The view of interest groups, discussions with individuals and the Commissioner's reactions as a citizen must be evaluated.
3. Determining what can be done, financially and practically. The advice of technical experts -- the City Manager and the staff -- should be considered carefully.
4. Taking action -- passing, modifying or defeating an ordinance or resolution. The City Manager and the Commission must work as a team in a spirit of mutual confidence and cooperation.

City Commission Vision Statement and Goals

Our vision is that of a responsive local government strategically prepared for change and challenge. We will build partnerships throughout the community. We will be recognized for our efficient, effective and caring delivery of service and products. Nurtured and inspired by this vision, we will create a passion for excellence. Our core values of honesty, respect and openness will constantly guide our actions.

- Goal 1: Develop a visually appealing and culturally rich community.
- Goal 2: Manage growth to preserve our resources, environment, and sense of community.
- Goal 3: Provide excellent public services desired by the community within its financial means.
- Goal 4: Strengthen and diversify our economy to provide job opportunities.

- Goal 5: Anticipate future service needs, costs and resources, and plan ahead to address them.
- Goal 6: Form partnerships with other governments and organizations to make better use of public resources in providing services.
- Goal 7: Ensure open and accessible government.
- Goal 8: Build a stronger team of staff, elected officials, and citizens by transforming our organization to meet the changing needs of the community.
- Goal 9: Remain financially strong.
- Goal 10: Provide leisure and recreational opportunities which add to our quality of life.

Commission Agenda Procedure and City Commission Meetings

City Commission meetings are held the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers in the Civic Center, unless otherwise scheduled by the City Commission. Each meeting operates with an agenda, which organizes the topics that require action into a usable format.

The agenda is divided into the following sections: Agenda Approval; Conflict Disclosure/Ex Parte Communications; Proclamations/Presentations; Petitions and Communications; Miscellaneous Reports and Announcements from Neighborhood Councils, Boards & Commissions, and the City Manager; *Consent Agenda; Public Hearings; Old Business; New Business; Ordinances/Resolutions; City Commission Miscellaneous Reports and Announcements, and Initiatives. (*The Consent Agenda items are those upon which typically no discussion should be necessary. The Consent Agenda is used as part of the Commission meeting procedures to consolidate and dispose of routine items by one motion and vote. Items may be pulled from the Consent Agenda for separate discussion and/or vote by any Commission member.

The draft agenda is put together by the City Manager and staff. The agenda is approved by the City Commission at the beginning of a regular Commission meeting.

REFERENCE MATERIALS



- Parliamentary Procedure
- Roberts Rules of Order
- Principles of Good Governance
- Guidelines for Meeting Minutes

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

- All have equal rights, privileges and obligations
- A quorum must be present for group to act
- Robert's Rules is handbook of operation
- Use of Motions (A proposal for assembly to take a stand or take action)

FIVE TYPES OF MOTIONS

MAIN MOTION

Introduce subjects for consideration
Cannot be made when another motion is before assembly
Yield to privileged, subsidiary, incidental motions
"I move that we purchase a..."

SUBSIDIARY MOTION

Change / affect main motion for consideration
Voted on before the main motion
"I move to amend the motion by striking out..."

PRIVILEGED MOTION

Concern special matters not related to pending business
Considered before other motions
"Because of the time, I move that we adjourn..."

RENEWAL MOTION

Allow certain items to be reconsidered
Usually brought up when no business is pending
"I move to reconsider..."

INCIDENTAL MOTION

Questions of procedure
Considered before other motions
"I move to divide the motion so that the question of purchasing ... can be considered separately."

ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

Typically, organizations using Robert's Rules follow the prescribed order of business during meetings to provide a framework for conducting orderly meetings.

TYPICAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

- The Chair calls the meeting to **order**.
- A **roll is called** of all present members.
- The secretary reads the **minutes** of the last meeting.
- Each **officer** gives a **report**.
- Each **committee representative** gives a **report**.
- Special orders (by way of **motions**) are called for and consist of any **important business** that was previously set aside to discuss at the meeting.
- **Unfinished business** from a previous meeting is discussed.
- **New business** can be brought forth at this time.
- **Announcements** are made.
- The meeting is **adjourned**.

MEETING GROUND RULES

- Meetings will start and end on time
- Every member's opinion is valuable
- Avoid sidebar conversations
- Focus on the meeting
- Decisions will be criteria-based
- Address any concerns

WHEN DEBATING YOUR MOTIONS

- Listen to the other side
- Focus on issues, not personalities
- Avoid questioning motives
- Be courteous
- Keep cool
- Speak clearly and concisely

Meeting ground rules are an agreed upon list of behavior expectations for members while participating in a meeting. These are a few examples that should be established to ensure a successful meeting.

VOCABULARY

Robert's Rules of Order and other parliamentary procedures contain specific vocabulary to be used at meetings.

POINT OF PRIVILEGE	This term refers to the right of the person speaking to have the floor and not be interrupted by others.
PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY	Method to raise a point of order or to ask how to proceed when unsure of the proper motion.
POINT OF INFORMATION	This term refers to the method used to ask the speaker a question.
ORDERS OF THE DAY (AGENDA)	If the meeting is not following the agenda a member may call orders of the day to remind the assembly to adhere to the agenda. If the members would like to deviate from the agenda, "suspending the rules" is necessary.
POINT OF ORDER	Point of order is raised if a rule has been broken or a member is not using the proper meeting protocol to speak. A point of order needs to be raised right after the error occurs.
DIVIDE THE QUESTION	This term is used when a motion is split into two or more new separate motions.
CONSIDER BY PARAGRAPH	When considering adoption of a document, adoption of the full document can be postponed until each and every paragraph has been debated and if necessary amended.
WITHDRAW / MODIFY MOTION	After the question is stated; the person who made the motion may accept an amendment to the motion.
COMMIT / REFER / RECOMMIT TO COMMITTEE	Sometimes a committee is needed to research a motion. In this case, an already established committee is assigned the question or a new committee is appointed. If a new committee is necessary, the chairperson may indicate how many members are needed and how selection of committee members should occur.

EXTEND DEBATE	Calling to extend debate can be used for the question currently under debate and usually has a time limit.
LIMIT DEBATE	This term is used to refer to the time limit placed upon debate and when debate should be considered closed.
POSTPONE	If a motion or agenda item needs to be postponed, it is necessary to determine and state when it will be resumed.
OBJECT TO CONSIDERATION	Objection must be stated before discussion or another motion is stated.
LAY ON THE TABLE	This tool is used after a motion is closed to debate or is pending closure and can temporarily stop further consideration or action on the open motion.
TAKE FROM THE TABLE	If a motion has been previously “laid on the table,” it can be opened and considered again by stating the motion to “take from the table.”
RECONSIDER	If a member on the prevailing side of a debate changes their view, they can state they have reconsidered.
POSTPONE INDEFINITELY	Postponing a motion indefinitely stops the motion from proceeding forward just in that particular session, unless a motion to reconsider is made.
INFORMAL CONSIDERATION	This term refers to changing the debate to an informal format similar to that of a committee. To move to an informal consideration format a member moves that the assembly go into “Committee of the Whole.” Voting is still done formally and is still valid while the meeting is in an informal mode.
APPEAL DECISION OF THE CHAIR	The membership may appeal a decision made by the chair if the appeal does not relate to the violation of order of business or parliamentary rules. Appeals must also take place prior to other unrelated business.
SUSPEND THE RULES	This allows specific, stated rules with the exception of the assembly's constitution to be suspended.

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE



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PRINCIPLES ¹	APPLICATION AND DESCRIPTION
1. LEGITIMACY AND VOICE	<p>PARTICIPATION – all men and women should have a voice in decision-making, either directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their intention. Such broad participation is built on freedom of association and speech, as well as capacities to participate constructively.</p> <p>CONSENSUS ORIENTATION – good governance mediates differing interests to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interest of the group and, where possible, on policies and procedures.</p>
2. DIRECTION	<p>STRATEGIC VISION – leaders and the public have a broad and long-term perspective on good governance and human development, along with a sense of what is needed for such development. There is also an understanding of the historical, cultural and social complexities in which that perspective is grounded.</p>
3. PERFORMANCE	<p>RESPONSIVENESS – institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders.</p> <p>EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY – processes and institutions produce results that meet needs while making the best use of resources.</p>
4. ACCOUNTABILITY	<p>ACCOUNTABILITY – decision-makers in government, the private sector and civil society organizations are accountable to the public, as well as to institutional stakeholders. This accountability differs depending on the organizations and whether the decision is internal or external.</p> <p>TRANSPARENCY – transparency is built on the free flow of information. Processes, institutions and information are directly accessible to those concerned with them, and enough information is provided to understand and monitor them.</p>
5. FAIRNESS	<p>EQUITY – all men and women have opportunities to improve or maintain their wellbeing.</p> <p>RULE OF LAW – legal frameworks should be fair and enforced impartially, particularly the laws on human rights.</p>

¹ Principles organized and presented by, Graham, John, Bruce Amos and Tim Plumptre (2003) *Principles for Good Governance in the 21st Century*, Policy Brief No.15. Ottawa, Canada: Institute On Governance as based on United Nations Development Program "Governance and Sustainable Human Development" (1997), www.mirror.undp.org/magnet/policy. Updated 11/13

Guidelines for Meeting Minutes in Local Government



Meeting minutes recording the actions taken by your council or board are a fundamental part of the meeting process. These are our guidelines for local government meeting minutes. They refer to ordinary business and work or study meetings of councils, boards and committees. Public hearings are governed by different rules.

► WHAT KIND OF MINUTES?

1. Minutes should record what is done, not what is said. We recommend action minutes for local government.
2. Summary minutes include a summary of the key points of discussion, without attribution to individual speakers.
3. We recommend that boards and councils do not keep detailed minutes of discussion (“he said, she said”). These are generally a waste of time, effort and resources.
4. Study sessions and committee meeting minutes may include more administrative detail.

► WHAT TO INCLUDE IN MINUTES

5. Minutes should include each main motion and its disposition (passed, failed, referred to committee, postponed, etc.). Minor procedural motions such as approving the agenda or calling the question do not need to be included.
6. Include all points of order, appeals, and their result. This becomes precedent for the future.
7. If the body wants to give reasons for its actions, use a resolution with “whereas” clauses.

➡ over



► **DON'T INCLUDE IN MINUTES**

8. If a motion does not receive a second, Jurassic Parliament recommends that it not be included in the minutes. However, the Robert's Rules Association says that it should be included.
9. According to Robert, do not record the name of the seconder in the minutes. However, if a higher authority requires this, include it.
10. Keep track of amendments, but do not include each individual amendment in the minutes. Instead, include the final text of the motion. "After discussion and amendment, the following motion was approved..."
11. Withdrawn motions are not normally included in the minutes.
12. Putting something "on the record" is a privilege of the body. Personal opinions do not belong in the minutes. However, the body may vote to include anything it chooses in its record.
13. In our view minutes should not record detailed public comment. It is sufficient to say that "public comment was given."
14. Members should not be allowed to provide new material after the meeting to be included in the minutes.
15. Minutes cannot be altered to include something that didn't actually happen.

► **VOTING IN MEETING MINUTES**

16. Voice votes, if allowed in your state, may be recorded in the minutes as "the motion passed" or "the motion failed." Roll call votes and counted votes must be recorded in full detail.
17. When voting details are included, it should be immediately clear how each member voted. Do not write, for example, "the motion passed with members X and Y voting against."

► **REPORTS IN MEETING MINUTES**

18. Written reports can be received for filing separately. They do not need to be part of the minutes.
19. It is burdensome and inefficient for staff to be expected to write down summaries of oral reports. If a body wishes to include reports of committees or other bodies in its minutes, the committee should be requested to provide the summary.
20. Minutes should include the specifics of any election held and the full text of any policy adopted. Lengthy ordinances may be recorded separately.

► **PROCESSING AND APPROVING THE MINUTES**

21. It is no longer considered necessary to include the words "respectfully submitted" above the clerk/secretary's signature.
22. Draft minutes will be included in the agenda packet that is sent to the board and posted for the public. They should be clearly marked "draft." Wait until minutes are approved to post them to the website.
23. A person does not have to have been present at a meeting in participate in approving the minutes of that meeting.
24. The only proper way to object to the approval of the clerk/secretary's draft of the meeting minutes is to propose a correction.
25. Minutes are not approved at a special meeting. Rather, they are held over until the next regular meeting.
26. Minutes of executive session, if any are kept, are approved and maintained separately from minutes of regular session.
27. Once minutes are approved, the clerk/secretary must prepare a copy without the word "draft", include the date of approval, and sign or initial the approved minutes for the record.

► RECORDINGS OF THE MEETING

28. Unless state law says otherwise, the written minutes as approved by the body are the official record of the meeting. Audio and video recordings are not the official record.
29. It can be helpful to include time stamps from the recording in the minutes, so people wishing to observe what was said during discussion of a specific item do not have to review the recording from the beginning.

► CHANGING THE MINUTES

30. Approved minutes can be changed at any time using the motion “to amend something previously adopted.” The changes are noted on the minutes being changed, with signature. According to Robert’s Rules, details of the changes are not included in the minutes of the meeting at which the changes are made.

If questions arise about meeting minutes, consult your attorney. State law and regulations and your specific bylaws or rules of procedure have higher standing than Robert’s Rules of order, other parliamentary authorities, or these guidelines.

More information:

- *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 11th edition, pp. 468-480
- www.jurassicparliament.com/category/meeting-minutes/
- www.robertsrules.com

Do you have feedback on these guidelines for us? We are always eager to improve our publications. Visit our website at www.jurassicparliament.com/category/meeting-minutes/ for much more information on minutes, and contact us at info@jurassicparliament.com or 206-542-8422 with your suggestions. We look forward to hearing from you!

Guidelines for Meeting Minutes in Local Government

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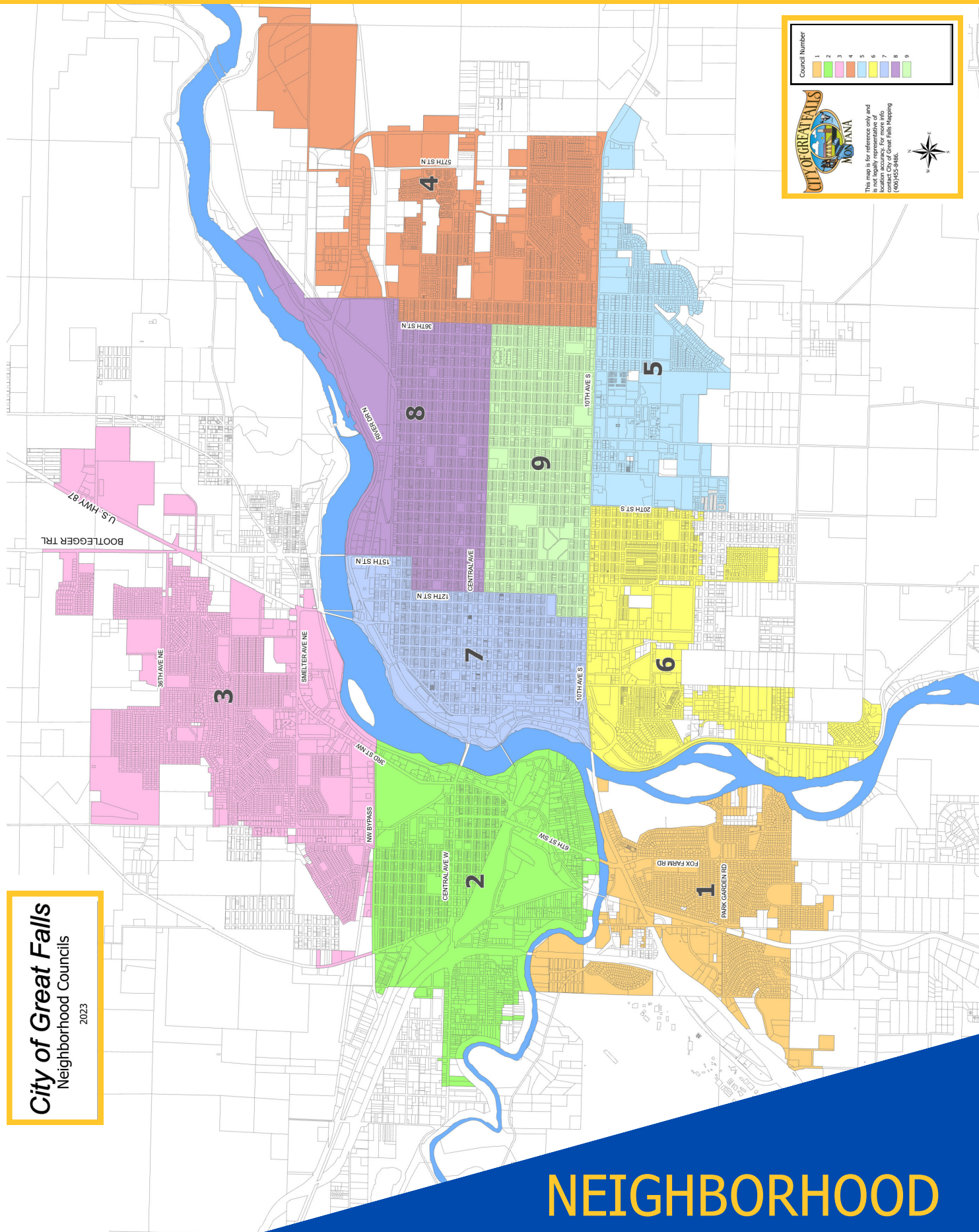
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