

**City of Tumwater
City Council – Mayor – Staff
Working Agreements**

Courtesy Norms

I agree:

- To promote and require respect and civility in dialog between Councilmembers, Mayor, staff and the public while still allowing for healthy disagreement.
- To be courteous and professional at all times in recognition that Council communications and behaviors set the tone for the organization.
- To allow the public to respectfully present information and opinions at appropriate meeting times and Councilmembers, the Mayor, and staff will not engage in debate with the public during the meeting.
- To authorize the presiding officer at a Council meeting, when complaints are raised by the public or an elected official, to take the contact information and make a follow up contact with the speaker to obtain resolution; alternatively, if the item can be easily resolved or answered, the presiding officer may provide the answer or ask staff to provide the information. The presiding officer will acknowledge the speaker's comments.
- To not consume food at the dais.
- To help ensure that everyone who wants to speak gets a chance to by limiting individual comments so as to not be repetitive, argumentative, and/or off-topic.
- To be recognized by the meeting's presiding officer before speaking.
- To not have side conversations, cell phone calls, on-line activity, or texting during the meeting when not in support of the business before the Council.
- To include, when possible, in regular Council meetings a positive note or celebration of community accomplishments, recognition of staff achievement, or presentation of an award or commendation for the City, an employee, or other official.
- To use formal titles (Councilmember Jones, Mayor Anderson, etc.) during regular Council meetings, but it is not required and shall be left up to each individual's discretion at informal meetings and work sessions.
- To be respectful of Council time, as staff, by scheduling full and complete meetings and not having work sessions when there are insufficient agenda items.
- To honor and respect disagreements and differences as an important feature of policy making and governance.
- To not criticize those who vote against your position on any issue.
- To respect the decision once a policy is passed or defeated by the majority vote.
- To strive to honor time limits on the meetings.

- To provide Councilmembers with sufficient information prior to meetings and Councilmembers will review the meeting materials and come to the meeting prepared.
- To strive to attend the applicable meetings and assignments or inform the Mayor or City Administrator if unable to attend. If possible and applicable, notice will be in time to provide an alternate meeting time.
- To carefully research the facts, the other organization's perspective, and potential damage to organizational relationships before criticizing another partner agency or organization. If possible, criticism and concerns will be delivered to the agency directly.
- To support the success of City staff in their role as experts and advisors. Concerns about performance of staff will be raised to the City Administrator or Mayor.
- To come to meetings prepared and having read the materials.

No Surprise Rule

I agree:

- To make every attempt, as an elected official, to notify staff in advance of public meetings about key questions and discussion points that the officials would like addressed during regular meetings or work sessions.
- To make every attempt, as staff, to notify the Mayor and/or City Administrator of key issues, events, and other emerging issues in advance of public notices of these issues and events that would be of interest or concern to the City Council.
- To strive not to surprise other Councilmembers, while honoring the boundaries of the Open Public Meetings laws.
- To make every attempt to avoid having elected officials, the Mayor, or City Administrator read about significant City issues, comments, etc. in the paper first, before being advised in person, by phone, or email.
- To be inclusive in policy making. Seeking just a majority leaves out Councilmembers with whom you may need a positive relationship later.
- To regularly check email, if available, in order to use it as an efficient tool for communicating City news.

Role of Council, Mayor, and Staff

I agree:

- To strive for a partnership, as Mayor and City Council, in the governance and operation of the City while respecting the necessary responsibilities for checks and balances.
- To seek to involve, as Mayor, the Council in civic events and celebrations.

- To use the Council Committee structure to flesh-out issues, develop and review alternatives, make recommendations to the full Council, and provide input to the Mayor and staff.
- To empower staff to give input and challenge the potential ideas and direction of Council provided it is done respectfully, professionally, and in the appropriate setting (such as in private, in a work session, or committee meeting). Similarly, staff is clear to help ensure that all perspectives and alternatives are represented prior to action. Council will be clear in asking if they are seeking facts/data or opinions.
- To report, as the Mayor and City Administrator, to Council in the following frequency as appropriate:
 - At council meetings and work sessions
 - In biweekly City Administrator's Reports
 - Quarterly financial reports
 - Council meeting minutes
 - Additional reports and City Attorney memos that may be submitted at the request of the Council or prerogative of the Mayor or City Administrator
- To understand that City staff will be asked to inform the City Administrator and Mayor of their contacts with the City Council in the interest of keeping the entire leadership team informed on key issues, requests and other City business related to their interactions.
- To empower City staff to advise City Councilmembers of the need to seek the approval of the City Administrator and/or Mayor before responding to requests from the City Council.
- To employ, as Mayor, a collaborative process that includes representatives of the City Council in the process of reviewing candidates for key positions within the City, whenever possible.
- To understand as the Mayor, City Administrator, Senior Staff, and City Council that an informed policy body is the most effective means to establishing sound public policy and therefore shall strive to both ask and answer any question that is relevant to creating and managing public policy.
- To learn about the actions and/or processes that occurred in meetings during an individual Councilmember's absence and take individual responsibility for obtaining the information. The City Administrator will make staff available for individual make-up briefings as time permits.
- To strive for unanimous votes from the City Council on decisions affecting key issues (e.g., bond issues, personnel issues, etc.).
- To strive to make decisions on pending issues at the appropriate time, respecting the deadlines of others, and staff will strive to allow adequate time for Council to make decisions.
- To strive to celebrate the accomplishments of the City at all levels of the organization.

The Council Initiative Process

I agree:

- To make inquiries, request information and studies, and initiate policy actions as Councilmembers, as follows:
 - At any time, specific department directors may be approached directly by a Councilmember to answer operational questions about specific departments' delivery of services, etc.
 - The City Administrator should be approached with questions that involve more than one department or cross-over into all aspects of City operations and require no action.
 - The Mayor or City Administrator shall be approached for all requests for actions, studies, or policy initiatives that involve additional City resources.
 - The City Administrator may be able to accommodate the request or may request the entire Council review major requests for studies and policy initiatives in order to determine the level of priority before assigning or reallocating resources.
 - Councilmembers may initiate a request for a study or policy initiative as a part of the budget development process, ideally at goal-setting meetings. The initiative would be considered as part of the overall budget and either be approved or not approved.
 - Councilmembers may also initiate requests for studies or policy initiatives at committee meetings or at Council meetings. Councilmembers should strive to alert the Mayor or City Administrator that such a request is being submitted prior to the meeting.

Media Relations and Protocols

I agree:

- If members of the media make personal inquiries concerning other City elected officials (Mayor and Council), the recipient (staff or Council) of the inquiry will not respond to the inquiry until they have an opportunity to talk directly with the Mayor or City Administrator.
- To, whenever possible, not make a formal comment on issues that are currently in the process of being addressed but have not yet been resolved.
- To speak only for ones own particular point of view on an issue and clarify to the reporter that you are only speaking for yourself. Do not speak for the entire Council or the City unless specifically authorized to do so.
- To utilize the Executive Department as a resource to assist with media contacts or notify others of media contacts.

- To not comment on issues of pending or potential litigation, referring those media contacts to the City Attorney or City Administrator.

Approved by consensus_____