



# Guide to Council and Committee Meetings

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## THE AUTHORITY OF CITY COUNCIL

City Council's authority comes from provincial legislation that gives cities the power to deliver services and write laws that govern activities within the city limits. The authority given to cities is broad in nature and designed to allow a City Council the ability to regulate in a manner that best suits individual communities.

## CITIZEN INPUT

The input of citizens that live in Prince Albert is an integral part of good governance. Each resident holds knowledge, ideas and opinions that should be considered before a decision is reached on a community issue.

As well, public participation in local decision making processes fosters pluralism and encourages an examination of issues from as many different perspectives as possible in order to find the best solution for everyone involved.<sup>i</sup>

“Cities are accountable to the people who elect them and are responsible for encouraging and enabling public participation in the governance process.”

- *The Cities Act*

## THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS

There are a number of ways that citizens can participate in the decisions of City Council. This guide is intended as an introduction to some of these options including some specific instructions on how to address City Council formally.

“The goal of civic engagement is not to produce an absolute consensus, but to ensure that the decision-making is well informed and offers citizens the chance to contribute their ideas and knowledge to policy development.”

- *Foundations for Success: A Strategy to Improve*

## City Council

City Council is made up of the Mayor and eight City Councillors. The Mayor is elected by voters from across the City. Each Councillor is elected by voters in one of eight wards (geographical area of the city). The term of office for Council is four years.

City Council acts as the governance body for the City. They pass laws, approve policies, supervise city government, and set the budget to fund various needs. Council also looks to the city's goals, major projects and infrastructure improvements ranging from community growth to land use to finances and strategic planning

All decisions of City Council must be made at an open public meeting.

Matters that are considered by City Council include:

- Public Hearings (required by law)
- Bylaw and Policy Approval
- Budgetary items
- Any report requiring a decision of City Council that is not already covered under an existing Policy.

*Both the Executive Committee and City Council meeting are made up of the same members (Mayor and Councillors), but each meeting has a distinctive purpose. City Council is the main governance and decision making body for the City and handles decisions regarding budget, bylaw approval and legally required public hearings. Executive Committee meetings deal with delegated powers of authority and are a forum for policy development and informational items from City administration.*

## Executive Committee

City Council has the ability to delegate powers and duties to a person or body subject to certain restrictions. The Executive Committee is an example of this. The Mayor and eight City Councillors make up the Executive Committee.

The purpose of the Executive Committee is to provide advice and recommendations to Council; to oversee the implementation of approved policy decisions by civic administration and supervise the City Manager, City Clerk and City Solicitor.

The following powers or duties have been delegated to Executive Committee:

- The formulation and recommendation to Council of policies, plans, and bylaws
- The receipt of all legal advice and report from the City Solicitor
- The consideration and recommendation to Council on all matters referred to by Council or the Mayor

- The approval or denial of all labour matters in regards to grievances submitted by a Union
- The referral of City matters to administration
- The approval or denial of Administration to proceed with negotiations
- The consideration of informational items related to matters of the City
- The approval of contracts or agreements that include a confidentiality clause regarding the disclosure of personnel and legal negotiations
- The overall supervision of the City's annual and long term audit plans.

## **Closed Meetings**

The Executive Committee may meet privately to discuss matters relating to the above exemptions.

Only matters that meet the exemptions of the Part III of *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* are considered during the private portion of the Executive Committee meeting. Examples include:

- Solicitor-Client Privilege
- Union Grievances
- Personnel Matters

## **City Manager and Administration**

The City Manager's responsibilities include ensuring that the municipality's policies and programs are implemented, advising and informing Council on the operation of the City, performing other duties as assigned by Council and ensuring appropriate staffing is in place. Staying out of the daily operations of the City allows City Council to concentrate on policy making and program monitoring.

## Meeting Schedules

Exact meeting dates and meeting agendas are available at: [https://www.citypa.ca/en/city-hall/Meetings\\_Minutes\\_and\\_Agendas.aspx#](https://www.citypa.ca/en/city-hall/Meetings_Minutes_and_Agendas.aspx#) or at the City Clerk's office on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of City Hall – 1084 Central Avenue.

## Meeting Agendas

Complete agendas for the City Council and Executive Committee meetings are made available by 4:00 p.m. on the Thursday before the upcoming meeting.

Agendas are available in digital format online at [https://www.citypa.ca/en/city-hall/Meetings\\_Minutes\\_and\\_Agendas.aspx#](https://www.citypa.ca/en/city-hall/Meetings_Minutes_and_Agendas.aspx#).

### Informed and Involved

#### ***10 ways to get you more informed and involved about civic issues:***

1. Attend or watch a City Council meeting
2. Review Council Agendas and read up on issues that might interest you
3. Join a City Committee or Board
4. Attend Budget Consultation Meetings
5. Sign up to get City Media Releases emailed to you
6. Prepare a letter and present to City Council about an issue you are concerned about
7. Watch/read/listen to local news routinely
8. Find out what ward you live in and call your Councillor about an issue to give feedback or ask questions.
9. Like the City of Prince Albert's Facebook and Instagram page

*Other ideas? Is there something the City can offer to help you understand how City decisions are made? Contact [communications@citypa.com](mailto:communications@citypa.com) with the subject heading: Engagement and let us know.*

## **ADDRESSING CITY COUNCIL**

City Council considers a variety of matters brought forward by the public. These may include requests for specific services, approvals for activities or simply opportunities to provide feedback on community issues.

Depending on the nature of your correspondence, your letter may be forwarded to the Executive Committee, City Council or the appropriate administrative department for review. Below is a summary of some of the options available to you. For additional guidance or assistance, please contact the City Clerk's Office, where staff are ready to help.

### **Communicating with Council**

Communication with City Council regarding an item already on the agenda can take two forms: written correspondence or an in-person presentation. In both cases letters need to be provided to the City Clerk's Office prior to the meeting. The deadline for submissions is 4:45 p.m. the Tuesday before the scheduled meeting.

Letters must be clearly written or typed outlining the issue and/or your specific request. They must include your full name, mailing address, and be signed. For electronic submissions please include your name, mailing address and email address.

If you wish to make a presentation to Council, please indicate this clearly in your letter and provide an outline of your presentation.

### **Matters on the Council Agenda**

If you wish to provide feedback to City Council on an item already listed on the agenda, you must submit a letter to the City Clerk's Office as outlined above. If you would like to make a presentation regarding the issue, please indicate this request in your letter and include an outline of your presentation.

Please note that if your letter is received after the 4:45 p.m. deadline, your communication will still be brought to the attention of City Council during the meeting. However, Council will need to vote on whether to add your communication to the agenda.

### **Matters not on the Council Agenda**

If you would like to bring a new matter to the attention of City Council, one that is not currently on the meeting agenda, you may do so by submitting a letter addressed to the Mayor and City Council to the City Clerk's Office. Based on the nature of the content your communication maybe referred to the City Council meeting, the Executive Committee meeting or to administration.

## **Speaking at a Meeting**

Members of the public who wish to speak to City Council on matters of significance to the City must submit a request to have their item placed on a meeting agenda for consideration.

For detailed information on how to get an item on the agenda and what to expect when making a presentation, please refer to: **Appendix A: Getting on the Agenda – Frequently Asked Questions.**

## **Public Forum**

The Public forum provides an opportunity for members of the public to address City Council for up to five minutes on a matter of civic relevance, without the need to submit a written letter in advance. Public Forums are held at the end of every regular City Council meeting.

Anyone wishing to speak during the Public Forum must register with the City Clerk by **12:00 noon on the day of the meeting** to have their name added to the speakers list.

## **Public Hearings**

Public hearings are a formal part of the decision making process and are required for various matters considered by City Council, most commonly those related to land use, as governed by *The Planning and Development Act* and the City's Zoning Bylaw. For example, the City's Zoning Bylaw requires both a public hearing and prior notification to the public.

Public hearings give residents the opportunity to provide feedback directly to City Council before a decision is made. Notification requirements for Public Hearings vary depending on the issue. If you have questions about public notification procedures, please contact the City Clerk's Office for more information.

If Public Notice has been given for a matter being considered at a public hearing, you may submit a letter to City Council or make a presentation during the public hearing portion of the meeting. To ensure Council has adequate time to review your submission, it is recommended that it be submitted by 4:45 p.m. on the Tuesday prior to the Council meeting.

If you plan to make a presentation at a Public Hearing, please refer to: **Appendix A: Frequently Asked Questions** for more information about addressing City Council.



## **Committees and Boards**

The City is always looking for engaged citizens to volunteer on various Committees, Commissions, and Boards. Serving on a local Committee or Board offers a meaningful opportunity to contribute to your community, provide input on civic matters that interest you, and gain valuable volunteer experience.

City Council appoints members of the public and is committed to ensuring broad and diverse community representation on these bodies and encourages residents from all backgrounds to apply.

The current Committees, Commissions and Boards with citizen appointments:

- Board of Police Commissioners
- Development Appeals Board
- Prince Albert Public Library Board
- Property Maintenance Appeal Board
- Golf Course Advisory Committee

To find out more about the Boards and Committees and how to apply please see the City's website at <https://www.citypa.ca/en/city-hall/boards-and-committees.aspx> or visit the City Clerk's office on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of City Hall.

## **Budget Meetings and Public Consultations**

Each year, City Administration prepares a proposed budget outlining expected revenues, planned expenditures, and funding allocations required for external agencies. Based on this information, a proposed property tax rate is calculated. The proposed budget is then presented to City Council for review and discussion during Budget deliberations, typically held over the course of multiple days.

As a part of this process, the public is invited to provide input at a public consultation meeting. The date for this meeting varies each year, depending on the release of the budget. To ensure residents are informed, the City promotes the dates through local media, including radio, newspaper and the City's website.

If you wish to make a presentation to the Budget Committee, the process is the same as presenting at a regular City Council meeting. Please refer to **Appendix A** for details on how to participate.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Getting on the Agenda, Frequently Asked Questions**

If you have an operational concern or a request related to services provided by the City, a formal letter may not be necessary. For instance, requests to raise a flag in Memorial Square can be directed to the Mayor's Office, while inquiries about holding a parade should be submitted to the Public Works Department. The City's website, [www.citypa.ca](http://www.citypa.ca), provides comprehensive information on municipal operations and services, and is a valuable resource for determining the appropriate point of contact.

Should your matter require formal consideration, it may be forwarded to the Executive Committee, City Council, or City Administration, depending on its nature. Before submitting a request, please review all relevant information thoroughly.

#### **To request that an item be placed on a Council agenda:**

Submit your written request to the City Clerk's Office, located on the 2nd Floor of City Hall. Address the letter as follows:

#### **Mayor & City Council**

c/o City Clerk's Office  
1084 Central Avenue  
Prince Albert, Saskatchewan S6V 7P3

Alternatively, you may email your request to Terri Mercier, City Clerk, at [cityclerk@citypa.com](mailto:cityclerk@citypa.com)

#### **What should I include in my letter?**

When submitting a letter to City Council, be sure to include the date, your full name, mailing address, and a daytime phone number. The letter must be originally signed, unless provided via email, to be accepted.

Clearly outline the details of your request, providing relevant background information or context to help Council understand the issue. You are encouraged to attach any supporting documents that may assist in the decision making process. Well organized, factual, and respectful correspondence helps ensure your concerns are effectively communicated.

**What happens to my letter once I submit it?**

Once your letter is submitted, the City Clerk's Office will review it and determine the appropriate next steps. Depending on the nature of the content, your letter may be forwarded to the Executive Committee, City Council, or the appropriate department within Administration. You will be contacted by the City Clerk's Office to confirm where your letter has been directed and if any further action is required on your part.

**Where and when are Council and Executive Meetings held?**

City Council and Executive Committee meetings take place in the Council Chamber at City Hall. The annual meeting schedule for both City Council and the Executive Committee is established each October and is made available to the public. Meetings are also live-streamed on the City's [Meetings and Minutes](#) page, allowing residents to watch proceedings in real time on the day of the meeting.

**Are meetings open to the public?**

Yes, members of the public are welcome to attend all regular City Council, Board, and Committee meetings. The only exceptions are closed sessions, which are held in accordance with *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to discuss confidential matters. You are free to stay for the entire meeting or attend only for the agenda items that interest you.

**When will my issue be discussed?**

Unless your letter has been forwarded to city administration, the City Clerk's office will contact you the Friday prior to the meeting to advise you the date and time of the meeting. Condensed agendas to be considered are available on the City's website by 4:00 p.m. on the Thursday before the Monday meeting.

**Are all requests to have an item discussed at a meeting granted?**

Not all requests submitted to City Council are granted. Depending on the nature of your request, it may be addressed directly by Administration without needing to proceed to Council. If a similar item has appeared on a Council agenda within the past six months, your request may not be considered again. Additionally, if the matter falls under existing policy where Administration has delegated authority, your submission will be referred directly to the appropriate department rather than City Council.

**Will I get a copy of the agenda before I attend the meeting?**

Agendas are made available to the public by 4:00 p.m. on the Thursday before each meeting. You can access the agenda by visiting the City's [Meetings, Minutes and Agendas](#) page, where all current and past meeting documents and video content are posted for public review.

**Will my item still be considered if I don't attend the meeting?**

Yes. If an item has been referred to the Executive or Council meeting, it will be considered.

**Do I have to speak at the meeting?**

No, you are not required to speak to your item. However, if you do wish to present to Council, you must indicate this in your letter and include either your speaking notes or an outline of your presentation. You, or someone speaking on your behalf, will be given up to five minutes to make the presentation.

**How will I know when it is my turn to speak?**

When you arrive at City Hall, please check in with the City Clerk and let them know who you are and the item you are speaking to. When your item comes forward on the agenda, the Chairperson will invite you to approach the podium at the appropriate time.

To begin your presentation, clearly state your name and, if applicable, the name of the organization or group you represent. If multiple members of a group are present, one individual should be designated as the spokesperson. You will have up to five minutes to present, so be sure to keep your remarks focused on the topic. Once you have finished, please remain at the podium until the Chairperson excuses you, as Council members may have questions.

**How do I address the Mayor?**

The Mayor should be addressed as "Mayor" and if the Mayor's delegate is Chairman of the meeting, they should be addressed as "Chair".

**How do I address a Councillor?**

When addressing a Councillor, the Chairman should be addressed first and then the Councillor, "Mayor or Chair and Councillor..."

**Can I ask Council or the administration a question during my presentation?**

No, you cannot ask questions of Council or Administration during your presentation. However, after your presentation, Council members may ask you questions related to the issue you have presented.

**When will a decision be made?**

Decisions are typically made during the meeting at which the item is presented. However, if additional information is needed to make an informed decision, the matter may be postponed to a future meeting until all necessary details are received. After the meeting, the City Clerk's Office will notify you in writing regarding the decision, any postponement, or referral of your issue. Approved minutes from all meetings are also made available to the public following their approval at the subsequent meeting.

**Where can I get more information on this process?**

The City Clerk's Office is your direct link to City Council and is available to assist you throughout the process. Staff can provide guidance and information to help ensure your issue is presented in a timely and effective manner.

For further details, you may also review the *Guide to Council and Committee Meetings*, which offers comprehensive information on procedures and expectations.

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<sup>i</sup> "Community Engagement Toolkit", sparC bc, July 2013.