



Agenda Item E.3
DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM
Meeting Date: September 17, 2019

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Kristy Schmidt, Deputy City Manager

CONTACT: Deborah Lopez, City Clerk

SUBJECT: Streamlining of City Council Meetings

RECOMMENDATION:

Provide direction to staff on possible changes to the format or conduct of City Council meetings to help them run more efficiently and effectively while providing the public meaningful opportunities to address the Council on matters of concern

BACKGROUND:

For the last few years, City Councilmembers and staff have anticipated the possibility of moving to evening-only meetings. For this and other reasons, Council has been interested in exploring ideas about how to make its meetings run more efficiently and effectively, while still providing the public with meaningful opportunities to address the Council on matters of concern.

As approved by Council on August 20, 2019, beginning on October 1, 2019, the City will be implementing evening-only Council meetings. Closed session will start at 4:00 p.m. and the public agenda will begin at 5:30 p.m. on regular meeting days. The average duration of Council meetings, including closed session, is currently over 6 hours. Assuming that Council continues its practice of adjourning the meeting at 10:00 p.m., the new schedule leaves 4.5 hours for the public portion of the agenda. Staff has estimated that, without changes, this would fall approximately 20-30 minutes short of the average time needed. Items not completed could be delayed or continued to future meetings, but that has the potential to create a backlog of items and slow down the pace at which topics are addressed.

At its meeting of February 5, 2019, the City Council requested a report on time saving measures for streamlining City Council meetings. At that meeting the City Council was provided with statistics and recommendations to streamline recognition items, such as those provided to employees and outgoing commissioners and community proclamations that recognize a specific week or month (i.e. Public Works Week, Donor Month, etc.). Another type of presentation discussed at that meeting were the updates from agencies

that receive significant financial support from the City, reporting their program successes. Examples include presentations made by the Chamber of Commerce, Fairview Gardens and the Goleta Valley Historical Society. These presentations typically take 15-30 minutes each. Finally, the Council discussed the information-only presentations it receives from City staff and from other agencies such as the County of Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG), on topics such as emergency response, public safety and transportation demand management, to name a few. These average 30-45 minutes and in 2018, there were 10 such reports.

There are several staff efforts currently underway that may reduce the number and duration of agenda items. These include making better use of the consent calendar, proposed changes to the City's Purchasing Ordinance to increase the City Manager's contract authority in alignment with state law, and shortening or eliminating staff's visual presentations (e.g., PowerPoint) for less complex discussion items. Additional efforts incorporated in this report are a matter of process improvements and efficiency for consideration by the City Council.

DISCUSSION:

Staff have prepared recommendations based on a review of similar efforts in other cities, historical knowledge from past efforts, and concepts that staff believes would improve City Council meeting productivity. These recommendations range from just adopting a general philosophy or supporting staff efforts, to amending Council Rules of Decorum and Procedure. A worksheet is provided in Attachment 1 to assist in Council consideration of all of the options. The City Council should discuss these recommendations and provide direction to staff as to their potential implementation.

Recommendations for immediate implementation are presented below in the order of the agenda section to which they apply:

1. Adopt a Shared Commitment: Adopt a shared vision and commitment to conducting orderly and efficient meetings through prior preparation, focused staff questioning, adherence to public comment time limits, and concise and focused deliberations.
2. Ask Pre-Meeting Questions: Review the agenda and reports before agenda briefings. Ask questions in advance of the meeting. This not only reduces the amount of time devoted to technical questions or general clarification during the City Council meeting, it allows staff to determine whether the question should be addressed more generally during the staff presentation.
3. Continue Closed Sessions: With the new meeting times, Closed Sessions could potentially run into the 5:30 p.m. start time for the public agenda. Staff recommends concluding Closed Sessions by 5:15 p.m. If Closed Session items require additional discussion, they would be continued for further discussion at the end of the regular agenda. If necessary, these could even be continued to another

day, either to a noticed special meeting or to the next regularly scheduled meeting. This will allow the public portion of the Council meetings to proceed as planned.

4. **Enforce Public Comment Time Limits:** Announce public comment time limits on the agenda and adhere strictly to these limits. This not only ensures that the meeting runs smoothly, it is also fair to those commenters who make an effort to respect the established limits. Council would need to support the Mayor in enforcing these limits and using the microphone's mute button where admonishments are not effective.
5. **Limit number and duration of Ceremonial/Presentation Items:** Presentations for the community are an important part of the meeting and are valued by the community. Staff recommends limiting the number of presentations per meeting to three. Staff will make efforts to be concise in drafting items to be read aloud, such as proclamations. Staff recommends that recipients be asked to keep their comments to two minutes.
6. **Change recognition of employees and outgoing commissioners:** Staff recommend that the City Manager read significant staff anniversaries (5 years, 10 years, 15 years, etc.) into the record, inviting only those with 15 or more years to receive their pins in-person and address the Council. In addition, the Mayor or Mayor Pro Tempore could present Commissioner service recognition at the Commission meetings instead of the Council meetings.
7. **Change recognition of specific weeks or months:** Instead of taking time at the meeting for community Proclamations that recognize a specific week or months (e.g. Public Works Week, Donor Month, etc.), staff could use the Monarch Press, social media, and other publicity tools to educate the public about the nature and importance of these recognition periods.
8. **Publish visual presentations/slides with the agenda for items that do not include a full staff reports (e.g. presentation items for staff or outside agencies).** This will allow the Council to ask questions in advance that staff can address efficiently during the presentation.
9. **Increase use of Consent Calendar:** Greater use of the Consent Calendar would streamline approvals for many standard or frequent types of items, thereby reserving time for items that require more discussion. It is recommended that Council encourage staff to make use of consent calendar for routine and recurring items (grant applications, quarterly financial reports, contracts, and receive-and-file reports) and whenever deliberation is not anticipated and/or direction is not needed (status updates, annual reports). City Councilmembers always have the opportunity to pull items from the Consent Calendar for discussion.
10. **Adopt Consent Calendar prior to 6:00 p.m.:** Adopting the Consent Calendar prior to 6:00 p.m. as a matter of practice would provide the public and City staff some time certainty for routine items. Staff also believes there would be some cost

savings as Consent Calendar items often have lower-level staff, potentially on overtime, who are waiting at the meeting to answer any questions on those items.

11. Limit Applicant Comment: Set and adhere to a time limit on comments by project applicants to 15 minutes.
12. Shorten or eliminate PowerPoint presentations: Encourage staff to shorten or eliminate visual presentations (e.g., PowerPoint) for less complex discussion items if they are not necessary. Many times, the written staff report, combined with a short verbal summary of the item, or a short visual presentation (e.g. 5-6 slides), is sufficient for Council to act.
13. Move updates for City-supported agencies to committee meetings or written reports: Council receives updates from Agencies that receive significant financial support from the City reporting their program successes. Examples include presentations made by the Chamber of Commerce, Fairview Gardens and the Goleta Valley Historical Society: Council could consider having these presentations made at the committee level, and/or in writing attached to the Council's weekly update.
14. Use "Time Certain" Scheduling to increase efficiency: For controversial items, or items where large crowds are expected, it is recommended that "time certain" scheduling be employed to reduce waiting time for the public and to create more certainty to the agenda. A time certain item is announced on the public agenda to occur at a specific time and when that time comes other items on the agenda are paused while the item is heard.
15. Call for a "point of order" after extended discussion: This recommendation provides that the Mayor or any City Councilmember can call for a "point of order" after the City Council's discussion on any one item has lasted more than 30 minutes. The City Council must then vote by majority to continue discussing the item, or to table it for the next meeting. This would apply to the City Council's discussion time, not the public comment time. Once City Council discussion has started, the City Clerk would start the 30-minute timer, and then remind the Council once 30 minutes of discussion has passed and ask for direction from Council. This would require an amendment to the Council Rules of Decorum and Procedure.
16. Kudos and expressions support: A common theme reflected in the past was that Councilmembers would pull items from the consent calendar and/or spend significant time voicing their support for items or presentations. This is a very positive part of the City Council meeting but can add to the overall length of the meeting. Staff recommends that Council continue to give kudos and expressions of support for work and presentations, but briefly. Staff recommends that Council avoid pulling items from the consent calendar simply to give kudos.
17. Limit Councilmember Reports: Limit Councilmember reports to official City and regional committee work and conference attendance.

18. Limit City Manager and City Attorney Reports: Encourage City Manager and City Attorney to report only as needed.

Options Considered, But Not Recommended

Staff considered a number of other options that are not being recommended at this time, however Council can also consider them. They are as follows:

1. Shorten Public Comment: To continue encouraging community engagement, shortening the overall allotment of time for general Public Comment for items not on the agenda is not recommended at this time.
2. Move Public Comment to the end of the meeting: Moving Public Comment to the end of the meeting is not recommended, as it would add a barrier to public participation.
3. Discontinue reading proclamations: Council could discontinue reading and presentation of all proclamations at meetings. Council will instead place a notice of proclamations and other recognition efforts in writing on consent calendar, but deliver them outside of Council meeting. Staff does not recommend this as we sense that the community and Council appreciate the opportunity for in-person recognition at the meeting.
4. Move Consent Calendar to end of meeting: Council could consider moving the consent calendar to the end of the meeting, after all the discussion items and prior to Council comments. This would mean discussion items would start right after presentation items, allowing items of public interest to be heard before administrative items. This might lessen the number of instances when members of the public have to leave the meetings before the item(s) they are interested in are heard. However, it would mean those who want to make a general comment would need to stay later, and staff would be held over, some on overtime, waiting for the Consent Calendar to be approved.
5. Split items between meetings: Council could split controversial matters across two meetings when necessary. In those instances, the council would hear public comment during the first meeting and then deliberate and vote at the next regularly scheduled meeting. This is not recommended as it would confuse the public and require them to come to two meetings to view the full process.
6. Limit Councilmember comments: Councilmember comments: Setting a time limit (e.g. 2 minutes) for individual City Councilmembers to speak.
7. Add additional meetings: The City Council meets on the first and third Tuesdays of the month. Council could decide to meet weekly. However, this would place additional strain on staff resources and could inhibit community members from running for office.

8. Do not cancel summer meetings: Council could discontinue the practice of cancelling the first meetings in July and August in order to keep items on track and avoid a backlog. However, this is not recommended due to low attendance at summer meetings, and because staff and Council use this time to take their vacations and catch up on other work.

FISCAL IMPACTS:

While most of these recommendations would have no fiscal impact, making Council meetings more time efficient could produce modest overall savings in non-exempt staff overtime costs.

ALTERNATIVES:

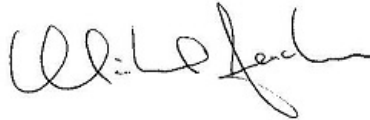
The Council could take no action, and instead ask staff to more closely monitor the duration of the evening only Council meetings, and if the meeting duration extends past the 10:00 p.m. hour than return back to Council for consideration of the recommended changes above at a future meeting after staff has obtained ample stats of havening evening only sessions.

Reviewed By:



Deputy City Manager

Legal Review By:



City Attorney

Approved By:



City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Decision Worksheet – Streamline City Council Meetings

ATTACHMENT :

Decision Worksheet – Streamline City Council Meetings

Decision Worksheet
Streamline City Council Meetings
September 17, 2019

Options are presented below, along with whether staff recommend the option or not.

	Agenda Area	Staff Rec.?	Option	Council Y/N
1	General	Yes	Identify a joint Council vision and commitment to strive for orderly and time-efficient meetings through prior preparation, focused staff questioning, adherence to established comment time limits, and concise and focused deliberations.	
2	General	Yes	Review the agenda and staff reports before the weekly briefing and ask staff questions in advance of the meeting whenever practicable to avoid delays	
3	Closed Session	Yes	Continue Closed Sessions not complete by 5:15 to the end of City Council meetings to avoid late start to public meeting	
4	Public Comment	Yes	Adhere strictly to public comment time limits. Announce time limits in advance on agenda. Judicious use of mute button.	
5	Public Comment	No	Shorten public comment	
6	Public Comment	No	Move public comment to the end of the meeting	
7	Presentation	Yes	Set a maximum number of presentation items per meeting (e.g. 3), ask staff to keep those items to be read aloud concise, and ask recipients to keep comments to 2 minutes.	
8	Presentation	Yes	Publish visual presentations/slides with the agenda for items that do not include a full staff reports (e.g. presentation items for staff or outside agencies).	
9	Presentation	Yes	Ask the City Manager to read significant staff anniversaries (5 years, 10 years, 15 years, etc.) into the record. Invite employees with 15 or more years to receive their pins in person and make comments to Council, at their option.	
10	Presentation	Yes	Discontinue the reading and presentation of proclamations to recognize general appreciation weeks/months (i.e. Public Works Week, Donor Month, etc.) and use other publicity methods recognize these instead, such as social media or the Monarch Press	
11	Presentation	No	Discontinue reading and presentation of <u>all</u> proclamations at meeting. Place notice of proclamations on consent calendar, deliver them outside of Council meeting.	
12	Consent	Yes	Encourage staff to make use of consent calendar whenever deliberation is not anticipated and/or direction is not needed (grant applications contracts, and receive-and-file reports, status updates/annual reports)	
13	Consent	Yes	Have a "time certain" to hear the consent calendar (e.g., 6:00 p.m.) to avoid holding staff over	
14	Consent	No	Move the consent calendar to the end of the meeting	
15	Hearings/Appeals	Yes	Set and adhere to a time limit on comments by project applicants to 15 minutes.	
16	Discussion/Action	Yes	Encourage staff to shorten or eliminate visual presentations (e.g., PowerPoint) for less complex discussion items if not necessary.	

	Agenda Area	Staff Rec.?	Option	Council Y/N
17	Discussion/Action	Yes	Move reports from agencies that receive financial/grant support to the Grants Review committee level, and/or to a written consent item	
18	Discussion/Action	Yes	For controversial items, or items where large crowds are expected, increased use of "time certain" to reduce waiting time for the public	
19	Discussion/Action	Yes	Call for a "point of order" and vote to continue after discussion has gone longer than 30 minutes, majority vote to either continue discussing the item, move it to the end of the agenda, or table it for a future meeting.	
20	Discussion/Action	Yes	Give kudos and shows support for work and presentations, but briefly. Do not pull items from the consent calendar simply to give kudos.	
21	Discussion/Action	No	Split controversial matters across two meetings when necessary. In those instances, the council would hear public comment during the first meeting and then deliberate and vote at the next regularly scheduled meeting.	
22	Council Comment/ Committee Reports	Yes	Report only on official City and regional Committee work and conference attendance	
23	Council Comment/ Committee Reports	No	Limit Council comments to 2 minutes each.	
24	City Manager/ Attorney Reports	Yes	Use City Manager/ Attorney Reports only as necessary	
25	City Manager/ Attorney Reports	No	Eliminate these reports from agenda	
26	Number of Meetings	No	Increase the number of meetings from 2 per month	
27	Number of Meetings	No	Don't cancel meetings during July/August	