



CITY COMMISSION MEETING

February 20, 2025

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ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE



Public Comments (Not on the Agenda) Recommendation

Presented by: City Administrator Dassinger and City Attorney Wenko

Consideration to Approve



Legal Precedent and Guidelines

- The right to access a public meeting does not include the right to address the governing body during the meeting unless a specific statute requires a public hearing
- Procedures to be followed are left to public entity's discretion
 - May take steps to control decorum of the meeting
 - Authorized to adopt reasonable rules and policies to ensure meetings are conducted in an orderly manner
 - If specific policies or procedures have not been adopted by ordinance, resolution, or bylaws, generally accepted rules of parliamentary procedure govern, i.e. Robert's Rules of Order

Legal Precedent and Guidelines, cont.

- Permitted actions to promote orderly conduct
 - Limiting comments/questions/behavior that is tumultuous, argumentative, irrelevant and overly time consuming
 - Can adopt viewpoint neutral “time, place and manner” restrictions
 - Can limit public comment section to certain topics (agenda items) and timeframes so long as the restrictions are not unreasonable, and restriction is not based on disagreement with speaker’s viewpoint
 - Ejected for interrupting Chairman repeatedly
 - Nazi salute not in itself disruptive, but approaching the podium and arguing with council
 - Words like “god damn” are not unlawful – use of profanity intertwined with political speech is protected under First Amendment
 - Imposing time limits equitably for those that support or oppose

What Other Cities Are Doing

Bismarck:

- No designated time slot for citizens to speak on a topic unless a Commissioner requests it to be on the agenda
- Time for open comment – 5 minutes
- Required to be related to City business – public comment must be related to an item on the regular or consent agenda

Mandan:

- Does not reserve time for public comments at meetings unless there is a scheduled public hearing for a topic

Grand Forks:

- Has a public comment and public meeting decorum policy
- Two Citizen Comment Sections – “Citizen Comments – Action Items” and “Citizen Comments – General”
- Five minutes to speak



Public Comments (Not on the Agenda) Rules

- Members of the public who wish to speak during this public comment period must sign-up no later than 12 p.m. the day prior to the commission meeting they wish to attend.
 - The public comment sign-up form will be available on the City of Dickinson Website.
 - No late or in-person signups immediately before or during the commission meeting will be accepted.

Public Comments (Not on the Agenda) Rules

- A public comment from a citizen during a commission meeting shall be limited to 5 minutes.
 - A commissioner may make a request to extend the time
- Comments shall pertain to matters that are within the scope of municipality business.
- May not interfere with the orderly conduct of the regular meeting
- Must be limited in frequency to one comment per individual per meeting.
- Presentations and videos will not be allowed during the comment period.



Public Comments (Not on the Agenda) Expectations

These are the expectations of the public when making public comments:

- The comments made are not to be personal in nature toward the commission nor any city employee.
- The comments shall not be defamatory, abusive, harassing or unlawful.