

Council/Department Head Communication Guidelines

July 15, 2024



This document outlines steps that City of Kaukauna Department Heads and City of Kaukauna Alders will take to communicate with one another for matters regarding committee meetings and Common Council Meetings.

1. Shape and appearance of agenda memo templates.

In an effort to maintain consistency throughout the memos presented by Department Heads, every department will utilize the same memo template. The goal of having a consistent appearance is that information will be easier to find. This template will include the following sections:

- Header: including the to, from, date, and regards information
- Background information: including a brief description of the work that has been done thus far to bring us to the suggested recommended action. Be sure to include how, if at all, the proposed action is aligned with the Strategic Plan.
 - (If it is not aligned with the Strategic Plan, explain why. Ex. A roadway requires immediate updates to improve the quality – it is an emergency action that does not directly involve the Strategic Plan.)
 - If comparables are being used in the project, clearly explain how they came to be defined in the memo.
- Staff recommended action: A suggested action by staff to help shape the discussion surrounding the agenda item. *Please note: While this is a suggested action, Council has the ability to pursue a different direction if desired.*

2. Adding agenda items:

- To remain in strict compliance with the open meetings law, all items of new business should be placed on an agenda organized by the Mayor, and should not be brought to the floor prior to being noted as an agenda item. Appropriate channels for requesting an item be placed upon an agenda would be (a.) a direct request to the Council President, (b.) a direct request to the Mayor, or (c.) brought through the appropriate department head for the subject matter, i.e. Planning, Engineering, Public Works, etc.
- Critical short notice items as determined by Mayor may be added up to 24 hours prior to the meetings, and 2 hours for emergencies.

3. Sharing agenda items that require quick action or have a lot of information.

To provide Alders enough time to read agenda items prior to the Common Council Meeting, while still giving Department Heads enough time to gather information, agenda

items requiring quick action and/or have a lot of information will be shared in the afternoon the Thursday prior to a Council Meeting. The process will be as follows:

- Department Heads and Mayor meet Wednesday the week prior to a Council Meeting to discuss upcoming agenda items.
- Out of all of the agenda items, the Mayor will identify what items should be shared early during Wednesday's meeting.
- Finalized agenda items are shared with the City Clerk by noon the following day (Thursday prior to Council Meeting).
- Once shared with the City Clerk, Department Heads will then send any predetermined agenda items to the Mayor who will distribute to all Alderpersons in one (1) email.
- If Alders have a question regarding an agenda item, they are encouraged to reach out to the Department Head responsible, prior to the committee or Common Council Meeting.
 - If the conversation is likely to exceed that which could be sent in an email or a five-minute phone call, Alders are encouraged to work with the Department Head to schedule time to discuss the agenda item in more depth.
- As an elected official, it is the responsibility of every Council member to read and review the materials in their respective Committee Meeting packets, Common Council Meeting packets, and the previous meeting minutes prior to attending the meetings.

4. Meeting attendance requirements for Department Heads.

To ensure the City Staff's representation at Common Council meetings, and to help build a repertoire with Alders, the following attendance policy will be identified for Department Heads:

- If a Department Head has an agenda item, they must be present during the Committee Meeting and Council Meeting while that item is being discussed to ensure any questions can be answered.
 - If they are unable to attend, another member within the department will be cross trained to present on the Department Head's behalf.
- If a Department Head does not have an item on the agenda, they will be responsible for attending one (1) of the meetings, either the Committee Meeting held Mondays or the Common Council Meeting held Tuesdays, either in-person or virtually. This applies to each week that the Common Council Meetings are held.

5. Conducting Common Council meetings.

When a Common Council meeting is held the following expectations must be met:

- Dress code: To ensure a professional presence while in the Council Chambers, business casual attire appropriate for a professional office setting must be worn by City Staff and Council members during a Common Council meeting.
- Display screens: Someone will be present to share the meeting agenda, images, and whatever else may be necessary, to the display screens in the Council Chambers.
- To ensure accurate and transparent meeting transcriptions, everyone will follow Chapter 2 of the Municipal Code while in a Common Council Meeting. A copy of Robert's Rules of Order and cheat sheet will be made available to Alders as part of the Elected Officials Orientation Guide.

6. Conducting committee meetings

- To ensure compliance with City Code and Open Meetings Rules during committee meetings, non-committee members will step down from their council seat and will sit in the first row. This will also help attendees and the public identify the members of the various committees, while reducing the chance for side conversations to be picked up by the microphones.
- Once the committee members have had their discussion, the committee chair will open the conversation up to non-committee members for additional conversation. Discussion between committee members and non-committee members is welcomed and encouraged.
- Dress code and display screens will remain the same as conducting a Common Council meeting.

7. Reaching out to Department Heads with information outside of Council Meetings.

To ensure timely responses and resolutions, Alders are encouraged to reach out to Department Heads directly via phone or email whenever something comes up in the community that they should be made aware of.

