



Oelwein Guidelines for Citizen Participation at City Council Meetings Adopted by Council Resolution #####-####

Citizen Comments at Council Meetings

1. Council Workshops / Work Sessions.

The committee chair runs the work session. The purpose of work sessions is to allow staff to present material and for the Council to have time to discuss and consider issues in greater detail before they might take action on them.

Citizen Comments:

Because the Workshop/Work Session is designed for discussion among the members of the City Council and for them to gain information from the staff, public comment is not warranted unless the chair recognizes a citizen or interested party or if a Council member requests that a citizen be recognized. If so recognized, the same rules of decorum as listed below for Council meetings will apply.

2. Regular City Council Meetings

A. Citizens Public Comments

The first opportunity for citizen comment is listed on the agenda as "Citizens Public Comments". This time is set aside for citizens to address the City Council on issues not scheduled on the agenda. It is not to be confused with a public hearing, which is a formal proceeding conducted for the purpose of discussing a specific topic, such as the city budget.

Anyone wishing to address the City Council must adhere to the following "Rules of Decorum":

- Be recognized by the Mayor or Mayor Pro Tem.
- State their name and address.
- Speak from the podium in a civil, non-argumentative and respectful manner.
- Whenever a group wishes to address the City Council on the same subject, the Mayor may request that a spokesperson be chosen by the group.
- Comments are to be limited to 3 minutes in length.
- Should the Mayor or Council ask for clarification, the Mayor may provide additional time to the speaker
- Speakers should speak into the microphone and speak clearly and succinctly.
- All remarks should be directed at the City Council as a body rather than to any particular Councilmember or any member of the staff or audience and should refer to staff by title and/or department.
- If the speaker has documents or papers they wish to share with the City Council that support their comments, they must provide a copy to the City Clerk.
- The Mayor may allow more time for a speaker or make other judgments or limitations about this portion of the agenda, depending upon the circumstances.





- Speakers will refrain from using; profanity; language likely to incite violence or outbursts from the audience; language that is disruptive to the orderly process of the meeting; engaging in conversations with individual council members; making comments of a personal nature regarding others; shouting, yelling or screaming.
- In many cases, the speaker will be directed to meet with staff to resolve the issue or to get their questions answered.
- Other than asking a question to clarify a statement, Council members should refrain from entering into a dialogue with the speaker. This time on the agenda is not intended for a discussion between the City Council and the speaker and should not be used for that purpose.
- Speakers will not continue to address the City Council once they have left the podium and will not engage in conversation with Council members from their seat.
- The Mayor is responsible for maintaining order and decorum and will not allow the speaker to make personal attacks or inflammatory comments and can ask the speaker to be quiet and sit down. If the individual does not comply with the Mayor's request, the speaker may be asked to leave, or if necessary, be escorted from the meeting. The Mayor may call for a break or recess to allow for the speaker to leave the meeting.

B. Citizen Comments on Agenda Items during the meeting

The City Council meeting is designed for the City Council to discuss and make decisions on the various issues on the agenda. The procedure for agenda items is as follows:

- Each agenda item is introduced by the Mayor
- The Mayor asks for a staff presentation or clarification of the staff report.
- If dealing with an issue with an applicant, the Mayor may ask for comments from the applicant.
- The Mayor asks if there are any citizens wishing to comment on the item.
- The Mayor will call for a motion and second.
- Once a motion has been made and seconded, no additional comments will be heard from a citizen and only the City Council will discuss the issue from that point on.

The rules for addressing the City Council at the designated time during this portion of the meeting are:

- The speaker must be recognized by the Mayor.
- Other than asking for clarification by the Mayor or a Council member, discussion is limited to among the members of the City Council after a motion has been made.
- At no time will members of the audience be allowed to enter into the City Council discussion from their seats in the audience. If recognized by the Mayor, a citizen may only be allowed to speak at the podium during the City Council discussion if the Mayor believes their comments are germane and necessary or helpful for the City Council to continue their discussion or make their decision.





- Each speaker should only speak once unless clarification is requested by the City Council.
- The City Council has the minutes of that public hearing so they can take those comments into consideration during their deliberation. Comments are not allowed on an item due to the possibility of new information being presented outside the official public hearing which could open the door to potential litigation.
- The rules of decorum explained in “Citizen Concerns” above also apply to comments for an agenda item.

C. Public Hearings

When an item requires a public hearing by statute, the Mayor will open and facilitate the public hearing. Public comments can be made in the same manner as the public comment agenda item. Reasonable limitations on the number of speakers and time allowed to speak may be imposed by the Mayor in order to keep the meeting moving. Public hearings are held to gather data and opinions from the citizenry that facilitate the decision-making by the City Council. The rules of decorum explained in “Citizen Concerns” above also apply to comments for a public hearing.

3. Rules of Decorum for the Audience

Meeting attendees (the audience):

- Will refrain from commenting, clapping, shouting, booing, or other inappropriate and/or disruptive behavior.
- Will refrain from private conversations during meetings.
- Should not address Council members in individual conversation or make comments to individual Council members.

4. Contacting City Council Members outside of Meetings

You may contact your City Council member at any time. Their contact information is on the City’s website (<https://www.cityofuelwein.org>) at the button marked Government then City Council. Phone numbers may be provided City Hall should permission be given by the elected official.

