



## Council Agenda Item

Meeting Date: July 21, 2026

Agenda Item: Addressing Citizen Complaints Made to Council Members

Staff Contact (name, email, phone): Steven T. Chesebro, [schesebro@whitewater-wi.gov](mailto:schesebro@whitewater-wi.gov), 262-458-2780

### BACKGROUND

(Enter the who, what, when, where, why)

I have been asked to draft a memo advising the Common Council on how to address complaints they may receive from Residents, through public comment, emails, letters, or in person meetings. The Common Council has a number of options for responding to complaints they receive.

1. Refer them to the Citizen Complaint or Request form available on the City of Whitewater website. <https://www.whitewater-wi.gov/forms/33631>. Or the Police Department Complaint form if it involves a police department employee. <https://www.whitewater-wi.gov/forms/26206>.
2. Advise them to file an ethics complaint with the City Clerk.
3. Request a closed session meeting regarding the complaint be placed on the next Council Agenda. This could be done by sending a request to the City Manager or during the Request for Future Agenda Items during a council meeting. This request could be phrased as adding a closed session meeting to discuss a complaint received by \_\_\_\_\_ and filed against \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Report the matter to the Police Department or suggest the Citizen does.
5. Forward the complaint to the District Attorney's office for review and potential charges.
6. Take no action.

### FINANCIAL IMPACT

(If none, state N/A)

In general rumors or unofficial complaints will have no impact on the City regardless of how Council members choose to respond to the complaint. However, if there is a serious credible complaint that you receive, you should strongly advise them to file a formal complaint or speak with the City Attorney or Police Department regarding the alleged violation.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The vast majority of complaints council members are likely to receive should be referred to the City's website for filing. Complaints received from the website are routed internally to the relevant departments for addressing the issue. For complaints that allege an ethics violation a referral to the ethics board is appropriate. For complaints that allege a felony violation referral to the police department, City Attorney, or District Attorney is strongly recommend.

### ATTACHMENT(S) INCLUDED

(If none, state N/A)

N/A