

LEWISTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES



Welcome! City Council meetings are conducted to carry on the official business of the City of Lewiston. All meetings of the City Council, except Executive Sessions, are open to the public. The public is cordially invited to attend all City Council meetings, and to participate in them consistent with the provisions of this policy, and with the exception of Council workshops, which are primarily intended for the Council and staff to review and discuss items prior to their appearance at a regular City Council meeting.

Please obtain a copy of the evening's agenda and note the order that items may be taken up by the City Council. In some instances, the City Council may elect to change the order of the agenda.

The Mayor presides over the meeting. When the Mayor is not present, the Council shall select a Presiding Officer to serve that function.

Note that Consent Agenda items (if there are any) are acted upon first, voted on as a group, and generally are voted on without discussion as these items involve "housekeeping" issues (such as minor parking changes). On occasion, Consent Agenda items are separated out as stand-alone action items by the Council to allow for more discussion.

On regular agenda items, the order of Council and public action is (usually) as follows:

- 1) City Clerk reads the agenda item and possible action to be taken by the Council.
- 2) Generally speaking, a Councilor will move to accept or oppose the item. If the action is seconded, the Council will undertake some initial discussion of the item.
- 3) The Mayor will then invite public comment following the initial City Council comments. Members of the public who wish to address the Mayor and Council must either speak at the podium located to the left of the room, or at the table which is located before the City Council/Mayor seating area. Identify yourself and where you live for the record as these proceedings are recorded and will be broadcast live over the local cable system. Members of the public will only be allowed to address the Council, through the Mayor, if they are situated in front of a microphone at the podium or table. Please see section entitled Rules and Procedures Governing Public Comment Periods.

If you have prepared written testimony, a copy should be given to the City Clerk who will be responsible for providing it to the members of the City Council. If you wish the elected officials to have a copy during the meeting, please provide the Clerk with 10 copies. It is strongly recommended that such testimony not be read in full; however, the main points can be summarized in your spoken comments.

- 4) Once the public portion has ceased, the Council will again discuss the issue and then proceed to a vote.

There are a number of parliamentary procedures that can be exercised by the Council which may involve actions to amend or table certain agenda items. Though this may be confusing at times, the Mayor and the City Clerk will try to advise the public as to what actions are being taken so that all votes are clear as to their intent or impact.

If an Executive Session is conducted by the City Council, state statute prohibits public attendance. Any action taken by the Council on any Executive Session matter must be acted upon in a public meeting and may occur at the end of the Executive Session (which has no time element relative to the length of the discussion involved with the session).

RULES AND PROCEDURES GOVERNING PUBLIC COMMENT PERIODS

The intent of this policy is to allow a fair and adequate opportunity for the public to be heard, to express opinions and concerns related to the business of the City, and to provide adequate time for the City Council to obtain information and opinions on subjects before it while ensuring that the time allowed for public input does not interfere with the addressing of the scheduled agenda.

To carry out these purposes, the following rules and procedures shall govern the public comment period at all Lewiston City Council meetings:

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

A public comment period shall be conducted near the beginning of all regular City Council meetings, at which time Lewiston residents or taxpayers will have the opportunity to be heard on matters directly relating to City business that are not included on the regular agenda. Individuals addressing the Council during the public comment period will limit their comments to (3) three minutes. Up to fifteen (15) minutes will be allocated for general public comment periods. If the general public comment period exceeds 15 minutes, the public comment period will be suspended by the Presiding Officer to allow the Council to conduct its business and out of courtesy for those attending the meeting for a specific agenda item. The Council will not engage in dialogue with the public during this time. Questions posed during the public comment period may be addressed after the meeting. Individuals requesting further information should leave their contact information with the City Administrator.

No general public comment period will be conducted at workshops, emergency meetings, or special meetings of the City Council.

ADDRESSING SPECIFIC AGENDA ITEMS.

In addition, public comments will be allowed during the meeting on those items requiring a public hearing and on other items appearing on the agenda. These comments should be directly related to the specific agenda item being addressed. Public comments will not be taken during workshops unless a request is made to the Presiding Officer by an individual Councilor, the City Administrator, or a Department Director.

RULES GOVERNING PUBLIC COMMENT PERIODS

1. Since meetings are broadcast and recorded, persons wishing to speak must use the public podium located to the left side of the audience, and speakers must preface their comments by giving their full name and address.
2. Comments must be limited to issues or concerns directly related to Lewiston municipal government. Public comment on matters not related to City business will not be allowed, so as to make sure that all meetings are carried out in a productive and efficient time and in keeping with the interests of all who attend and participate in a Council meeting.
3. Per state law, found in Title 1, Section 405, complaints or charges from the public about an individual employee will not be permitted. Such complaints or charges may be addressed to the City Administrator or City Attorney for follow-up and review.
4. Comments related to the following will be ruled out of order by the Presiding Officer:
 - a. Specific situations that are in litigation, including those in which the City is a party (issues of a criminal or legal nature should be addressed with the Lewiston Police Department or other criminal justice agency). Individual employees and/or employee groups will not be permitted to discuss matters for which complaint or grievance procedures are in place;
 - b. Personal disputes between the speaker and other private residents not germane to City business; or
 - c. Support for or opposition to any candidate for political office.
5. Individuals will be restricted to speaking once during the general public comment period and once per public comment period for each specific agenda item unless requested by the Presiding Officer to offer additional comments during the meeting.
6. Individuals addressing the Council shall direct their remarks exclusively to the Presiding Officer. No person other than the Officials and the individual at the podium shall be permitted to enter into any discussion, either directly or through members of the Council. The public comment period is an opportunity for residents to express their views on matters relating to City business.
7. As a limited designated public forum, the City Council does not have the right to prohibit disparaging, rude, and other remarks of a personal nature. But, because of the potential implications, including personal liability of the speakers, we encourage any speakers to strive to be accurate in their statements and avoid making personal, rude, or provocative remarks.
8. All statements should respect the dignity and seriousness of the proceeding.
9. Persons present at Council meetings shall not interrupt, nor applaud or otherwise express approval or disapproval of any statements made or actions taken at such meeting, except for those instances that are listed on the Council Agenda under Public Recognition where the Mayor or a City Councilor are formally recognizing an individual or group for their accomplishments.

FAILURE TO FOLLOW GUIDELINES

The Presiding Officer will limit commentary that is determined not to be germane to City business or the topic at hand, or which violates any of the guidelines listed above. The Presiding Officer will direct any individual not following these guidelines to cease such action or risk being asked to be seated or removed. If such conduct continues, the Presiding Officer will call a recess, request the removal of such person(s) from the Chambers, adjourn the meeting, or take other such appropriate action. Repeated violations by any individual may result in the Presiding Officer revoking that individual's right to speak at future meetings. Should the Presiding Officer fail to take action, any Official may move that the Presiding Officer enforce the rules and guidelines and, if denied, request that the Council vote on the motion.

2024 City Council Members

Mayor Carl Sheline

City Councilor Joshua Nagine, Ward 1
City Councilor Susan Longchamps, Ward 2
City Councilor Scott Harriman, Ward 3
City Councilor Michael Roy, Ward 4
City Councilor Ryn Soule, Ward 5
City Councilor David Chittim, Ward 6
City Councilor Timothy Gallant, Ward 7

The City Council meets on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 7 pm in the City Council Chambers unless otherwise noted. City Council workshops are usually held on the second Tuesday of the month unless otherwise noted.

Meetings and workshops are broadcast live on Spectrum's local cable network on channel 7. In addition, we also broadcast live on the City of Lewiston's YouTube channel.

For more information about the City Council, please contact the City Administrator's Office at 513-3121, the City Clerk's Office at 513-3124 or visit the City's website at www.lewistonmaine.gov

Please note: Individuals requiring auxiliary aids, modifications, interpreter or translation services in order to access the City Council meetings, should contact the City's Non-Discrimination Compliance Officer, or the City Clerk, with a minimum of 72 hours notice, when possible, with their request for service.