
STAFF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO CITY COUNCIL

PURPOSE: It is the purpose of this policy to establish guidelines and standards regarding secretarial assistance and other staff assistance provided routinely to the City Council. This policy is supplementary to and in no way intended to conflict with the City Ordinance regarding such matters. This policy is not intended to apply to relations with or communications between City Council and the City Attorney, nor to the City Clerk except to the extent specified herein.

DEFINITION: Guidelines and Standards Regarding Staff Assistance Provided to Support City Council.

POLICY:

I. Council Staff and Resources: City Council, through the annual budget, allocates staff and other resources to support directly its legislative and intergovernmental activities. The City Manager, after consultation of each potential employee's qualifications with the City Council and City Clerk, shall be responsible for appointing such employees. Such employees shall provide staff support in accordance with this policy. The City Clerk is the designated Department Head, and shall supervise employees assigned to support the Council. Council staff and City resources shall not be used for personal business.

II. Council Staff Assistance: In order to effectively discharge responsibilities of elected officials, the Mayor and Councilmembers are entitled to receive clerical/secretarial services from staff who are assigned to provide such support to City Council. The support provided is specified as follows:

A. Preparation of correspondence relating to official City business within the resource constraints of the adopted budget. Each Councilmember is to be given equal consideration. Correspondence in support of a Councilmember's pursuit of a political office, or in support of someone else's pursuit of a political office, is not to be prepared using City secretarial resources.

It is Council's determination that it is the Mayor's assigned responsibility to correspond with persons or organizations when it is appropriate to represent adopted Council policy and/or coordinate Council's response. Such correspondence shall receive high priority for timely preparation and distribution.

B. Assistance shall be provided to Councilmembers in arranging for business meetings, except for meetings related to political campaigns or other personal business. Normal scheduling methods shall be used.

C. Assistance shall be provided to Councilmembers in obtaining information and copies of records, to the extent limited by City Ordinance 2.08.070 Relations with Council. The Ordinance states:

The City Council and its members shall deal with the administrative services of the City only through the City Manager, except for the purpose of inquiry, and neither the City Council nor any member thereof shall give orders to any subordinates of the City Manager. For purposes hereof, "inquiry" means any and all communications short of giving orders, directions or instructions to any member of the administrative staff. Such members shall give all information reasonably requested by any Councilmember. The city manager shall take his or her orders and instructions from the city council only when sitting in a duly convened meeting of the city council and no individual councilmember shall give any orders or instructions to the city manager. The city council shall instruct the city manager in matters of policy. Any action, determination or omission of the city manager shall be subject to review by the city council. The city council may not overrule, change or modify any such action, determination or omission except by the affirmative vote of at least three members of the city council.

(Ord. 3 § 1, 1984)

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- D. Assistance shall be provided to Councilmembers in completing staff report(s), resolution(s), and/or ordinance(s) for all motioned pursuant to Ordinance 1008.

The Executive Assistant to Mayor/City Council will assist the motioner and seconder to ensure the staff report(s), resolution(s), and/or ordinance(s) are prepared and completed to their liking before they are brought back to council for consideration.

- E. A monthly calendar shall be prepared and maintained for all Councilmembers. Councilmembers shall be notified of upcoming events to determine their respective interest, with appropriate arrangements made for such events and meetings.
- F. Unless otherwise requested by a Councilmember, Council mail is to be opened daily (except for that marked, "personal" or "confidential.") Notices and correspondence to Councilmembers, in particular to the Mayor, of an administrative nature or of critical timing, shall be copied and sent to the City Manager. A notation that such copy was sent shall be noted upon the original. Correspondence that is intended for the City Manager rather than Council may be referred directly to the City Manager.
- G. Correspondence directed to the City's chief elected official shall be routed to the Mayor and in the Mayor's absence, the Mayor Pro Tem. Should both be absent, such correspondence shall be directed to the acting Mayor selected by Council.
- H. Council staff shall keep updated files relating to the business of each Councilmember.
- I. Council staff shall ensure that copies of all correspondence to and from staff are provided to all City Councilmembers and City Manager, except for correspondence of a confidential nature.
- J. Council staff are assigned for the purpose of providing routine clerical/secretarial support as specified above. Requests for research and/or policy work/studies are to be directed to the City Manager and performed by staff in operating departments at the direction of the City Manager.

III. Staff Assistance Provided by Other Departments: It is recognized by Council that a Councilmember's work is not only carried out at Council meetings. It is also recognized the City Ordinance places responsibility of the City Manager to conduct the day-to-day affairs of the City consistent with established Council policy; requests for staff work and/or direction to staff are to be channeled to the City Manager. The following policy regarding staff assistance is established by the City Manager to comply with City Ordinance and assure that the staff support needs of City Councilmembers are met.

- A. Intergovernmental Assignments. Reasonable staff assistance shall be provided to Councilmembers serving on intergovernmental bodies when the Council has approved or recognized the appointment of a member to that body. For purposes of this policy, intergovernmental bodies are broadly defined to include committees of intergovernmental agencies or organizations. Use of staff shall be consistent with the following guidelines:
1. Staff assignments will be made by the City Manager.
 2. If the intergovernmental body has its own professional staff, such staff should be utilized to the greatest extent practical, rather than City staff.
 3. Assigned City staff need not attend the intergovernmental meeting unless a Councilmember requests such attendance from the City Manager, and the City Manager approves. Such approval may be given as a "blanket" approval for attendance.

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4. The primary responsibilities of assigned staff are to review issues for the intergovernmental body as they may affect the City and advising a specific Councilmember presenting issues before the full Council.
 5. Councilmembers shall not direct staff to conduct major research or studies. Such work shall occur only upon the direction of the City Manager.
- B. Other Meeting Assignments. From time-to-time it may be appropriate to provide staff support to a City Councilmember who is attending a meeting with constituents or others. Such requests for staff support shall be made of the City Manager. Except for routine follow-up on complaints, assignments arising from such meetings shall be approved by the City Manager.
- C. Public Complaints. Complaints dealing with administrative affairs of the City should be directed by the Councilmember to the City Manager for appropriate information and follow-up.
- D. Speech Preparation. Staff assistance for speech preparation for City business is available to Councilmembers. Such assistance shall be requested of the Public Information Officer. The outline of issues to be covered as well as available supporting material is to be provided by the requesting Councilmember, and adequate advance notice for the due date shall be provided. The Public Information Officer shall resolve with the City Manager any conflicts regarding such requests.
- E. General. The direct provision of routine, easily retrievable information to a requesting Councilmember by a staff member regarding issues pending before Council, or for which a member desires to bring to the Council, is permitted in compliance with the City Ordinance.
- IV. Correspondence to Councilmembers: Correspondence sent to City Councilmembers from staff shall be copied in all cases to all City Councilmembers and the City Manager, unless such correspondence is of a confidential nature.