

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor & Village Council  
FROM: David Fieldman, Village Manager  
DATE: January 21, 2017  
RE: Council Governance Discussion

The January 24, 2017 Village Council meeting will be dedicated to discussing **roles and responsibilities** of Council members and staff, the **structure of meetings and interactions** and **expectations** (knowledge of what is expected of each team member and what they can expect from other team members). This type of discussion is sometimes referred to as a governance meeting or a Council retreat. The objective of the meeting is to **establish how the Council and staff team will go about doing our jobs** and making sure that the Village has continued exceptional performance and continual improvement.

How Council members and staff go about doing their jobs varies greatly among municipalities. There is not necessarily a *right* or *wrong* way to do things. Because of this, we expect that there will be a variety of opinions on the subject discussed at the meeting. We do not plan to draft a set of rules at this meeting. We do expect to listen to all Council member opinions to understand each member's individual preferences and expectations, and the rationale thereof. Understanding these preferences and expectations will assist the Mayor, Council members and staff as we go about doing our jobs for the benefit of our community.

Mayor Tully and staff have identified a list of 10 council, community and staff interactions (see below).

### **Council, Community and Staff Interactions**

1. Council Meetings
2. Informal Council Meetings in Committee Room/Standing Committee Meetings
3. Board & Commission Meetings
4. Other Government/Agency Meetings
5. Coffee with the Council
6. Communicating with the Public
7. Responding to Press Inquiries
8. Responding to Resident Inquiries & Requests for Service
9. Neighborhood Meetings
10. Groundbreakings, Ribbon Cuttings, Etc.

Below is a summary of the current practices for each of the ten topics. The plan is to discuss roles & responsibilities, structure and expectations as they are applied to each of the items on the list. The discussion will be facilitated by Mayor Tully.

## **Council Meetings**

The discussion of Council Meetings has been separated into nine topics.

### *Friday Mayor Meeting*

The Village Manager and Deputy Manager meet with the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem on most Friday mornings. The purpose of the meeting is to let the Mayor and MPT know what items have been placed on the upcoming Council meeting agenda and to discuss other issues that may be of interest. Per the Village Code, the Village Manager creates the Council meeting agenda. During the Friday Mayor Meeting, the Manager seeks input and opinions about the placement and order of the agenda items (Consent, First Reading, Mayor's Report). Sometimes adjustments are made to the Council meeting agenda based on the group discussion. Other items of general interest identified by all meeting participants are discussed. The Manager prepares the agenda for the Friday meeting and sends it to participants on Thursday. The general interest items are discussed with the Council members during the Monday Morning Phone Calls.

### *Publication of Council Meeting Agenda Materials*

Staff publishes all Village Council meeting agenda materials on the Village website by 5pm on Fridays preceding Council meetings. This is done to increase transparency as the Council and the public receive the same information at the same time and to minimize time spent producing and distributing agenda materials.

### *Monday Morning Phone Calls*

Each Monday morning preceding a Village Council meeting, the Manager calls each Council member. The calls are intended to:

- Provide a regular, predictable one-on-one interaction between Council members and the Manager
- Establish and maintain a strong, effective working relationship between Council members and the Manager
- Provide Council members with information about Council meeting agenda items
- Identify and respond to Council member questions about agenda items
- Improve the staff presentation of information at the Council meetings and facilitate an effective Council meeting
- Identify and respond to non-agenda issues or concerns (These items are usually the same items discussed at the Friday Mayor Meeting and items identified by Council members)

### *Responses to Council Questions*

By 4pm on Council meeting Tuesdays, staff publishes written responses to Council member questions about Council meeting agenda items (also some non-agenda items) on the Village website. This process:

- Allows Council members to formulate questions about agenda items
- Allows the Manager & Council member to discuss the questions individually to make sure that the questions are understood
- Allows staff sufficient time to prepare responses to questions
- Enhances exchange of information among Council members and staff as questions and responses are sent to all Council members and department heads

- Enhances transparency as the questions and responses are posted publicly

#### *Three Council Meetings Per Month*

The Village Council holds regular meetings on the first, second and third Tuesdays of each month. This schedule is to allow staff to use the time preceding the 4th and occasional 5th Tuesdays of each month to focus on completing project-oriented work instead of preparing Council agenda materials. It also allows the Council to hold topic-specific meetings on the fourth Tuesdays, if necessary or desirable.

#### *Placement of Items on Consent, Active & First Reading Agendas*

Each Council meeting agenda item is placed on the Consent, Active or First Reading Agendas (occasionally items are placed on the Mayor's or Manager's Reports). This allows the Council to complete a variety of types of work (legislative, administrative and general discussion) in an efficient manner at each Council meeting.

The Consent Agenda contains matters, except ordinances, deemed by the Village Manager to be suitable and of a non-controversial nature. This is expected to include, but is not necessarily limited to approval of bids, bills payable, resolutions and miscellaneous motions as well as matters on which a preliminary vote or recommendation, awaiting the drafting of final documents, has been taken by the Council. Any Council member may remove any item from the Consent Agenda for separate consideration and vote by the Council.

The Active Agenda contains items for Village Council action that are not suited for the Consent Agenda. Items placed on the Active Agenda have usually been discussed by the Council at a previous meeting under the First Reading Agenda.

The First Reading Agenda contains items that are suitable for discussion by the Council, members of the public and the staff. This allows for an informal discussion of items.

#### *Council Member New Business*

The Mayor and members of the Village Council, or any of them, may direct the Village Manager to place an item on the New Business Agenda. The Council member must notify the Village Manager regarding the content of the proposed item no later than the Wednesday prior to the meeting at 9:00 a.m. A summary of the proposed item must be provided in writing by the Village Council member to the Village Manager in sufficient time to be included in the Council meeting agenda materials. The maximum amount of time that staff may work on a proposed new business item prior to obtaining direction from the Village Council is four hours.

#### *Council Member Reports*

Each Council member is offered the opportunity to inform the community about items of general interest or to report on activities of other governments or agencies.

#### *Public Comment*

At each Council meeting, members of the public are offered the opportunity to address the Council. Currently public comment appears on Council meeting agendas prior to the Consent, Active and First Reading agendas. This practice allows members of the public to address all Council members at the same time in person without having to wait for the Council to address other agenda items.

### **Informal Council Meetings in the Committee Room/Standing Committees**

The Council frequently meets in the Committee Room to discuss certain agenda items which may benefit from an in-depth discussion in an informal environment. Examples of this include Long Range Planning, priority action items such as facilities planning and considering changes to the stormwater utility. This practice allows all stakeholders (Council members, staff and the public) to engage in a meaningful in-depth discussion at the same time.

This informal meeting process has replaced the use of Standing Committees. Pursuant to Village Code, three standing committees exist (Finance & Administrative, Public Safety and Public Services) to “investigate, evaluate, recommend and generally consider matters as referred by the Village Council or the Mayor.” Each committee consists of two appointed Council members with one member serving as the Chair. In recent years the standing committees have not been used because the structure results in two Council members having more information about certain topics than the other five Council members, often creating redundant work as the topic matters would be discussed multiple times; at the standing committees and at Council meetings.

### **Board & Commission Meetings**

The Village has 15 boards and commissions on which residents volunteer to serve. There is a Council liaison assigned to each board or commission. The role and responsibilities of the Council liaison are not formally defined. Council liaison have not traditionally attended meetings of the board or commission.

### **Other Government / Agency Meetings**

There are many other government organizations and agencies which the Village works with in varying capacities from time to time including but not limited to:

- Downers Grove Park District
- School District 99
- School District 58
- Downers Grove Sanitary District
- Downers Grove Library (Component Unit of the Village)
- DuPage Water Commission
- DuPage County
- Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation
- Downtown Management Corporation
- Chamber 630
- DuPage Mayors & Managers Conference
- Illinois Municipal League
- National League of Cities
- US Conference of Mayors
- Metropolitan Mayors Caucus

Council members are assigned as liaisons to or serve on committees within some of these organizations. The role and responsibilities of the Council liaison are not formally defined.

### **Coffee with the Council**

On the third Saturday of each month, the Village hosts Coffee with the Council, an opportunity

for members of the public to engage with Council members informally on topics of their choosing. Coffee with the Council meetings are scheduled as follows:

- January through April; November and December- Downers Grove Public Library
- May through September - Downtown Market
- October - Fire Station #2 (Budget Discussion)

### **Communicating with the Public**

The Village communicates with the Public using a variety of tools to reach various audiences, depending on content and time-sensitivity of the message, including:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Website</li><li>• Twitter</li><li>• E-News (weekly e-newsletter)</li><li>• Community-wide Notification System</li><li>• Printed Notices &amp; Brochures</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facebook</li><li>• Next Door</li><li>• YouTube</li><li>• Village Corner</li><li>• Printed Newsletter</li></ul> |
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### **Responding to Inquiries from the Press**

Council members will receive and respond to press inquiries from time to time verbally and in writing. After being contacted by the press, Council members are encouraged to notify the Village Manager or the Communications Director. The Communications Director handles all press inquiries directed to the attention of staff.

### **Responding to Resident Inquiries and Requests for Service**

Council members receive resident inquiries and requests for service in a variety of ways (face to face conversations, phone calls, emails, social media, etc.). There are multiple ways in which Council members currently respond to inquiries and requests for service from residents:

1. Inquiries/requests are forwarded to staff for response to the resident
2. Inquiries/requests are forwarded to staff and responses are provided to Council members to respond directly to the resident
3. Inquiries are handled by Council members on their own

### **Neighborhood Meetings**

Village staff conducts meetings with residents in the community, primarily in advance of public infrastructure improvements within their neighborhood. These meetings are generally held for street reconstructions, new sidewalk construction and stormwater capital projects. This step of the process comes after Council approves the Community Investment Plan (CIP) as part of the annual budget. The scope of the project is defined in the CIP based on established Council practices and policies. The purpose of the neighborhood meetings is to make residents in the affected area aware of the project scope and planned schedule, and allow them to make staff aware of specific concerns or issues affecting aspects of the project, particularly direct impacts to their property. While minor design changes are made based on comments at neighborhood meetings, changes in the scope of the projects are not. Council members have not traditionally attended neighborhood meetings.

### **Groundbreakings, Ribbon Cuttings, Etc.**

Council members are notified about upcoming events individually via invitation from sponsoring

organizations or by event information entered into a shared calendar maintained by staff. Council members are typically responsible for notifying the organization whether they plan to attend. For certain events, staff or partner organizations, such as the EDC, will coordinate and confirm attendance and speaking responsibilities of the Mayor and Council.