

Billings City Administration Weekly Report

August 16, 2019

- 1) **City Council Order of Business** – During Monday’s City Council Work Session, we will be discussing Sec. 2-214 - Order of Business for regular meetings. I want to discuss items (8), (10), (13) and consider adding Special Presentations immediately after (9) Administrator Reports.

(8) Council Reports – Over the past year we have not had Council Reports on the agenda. This is an opportunity for Councilmembers to report on the boards they represent on behalf of the City. Recently, the Council discussed the benefit of improving communication in this way. Several Councilmembers have also expressed concerns on the length of city Council meetings; therefore it is important to keep the reports brief.

(10) Public comment - on "non-public hearing" items on the published agenda. This section of the agenda is used for public comment on any item on the agenda that is not listed for an individual public hearing. Speakers are requested to indicate their desire to speak and which item or items on which they wish to offer comment by filling in their name, address and agenda item number or subject on a prepared "sign in" sheet. The length of time a speaker may speak is limited and is set by the Mayor or presiding officer of the meeting.

New language for consideration to replace items (10) and (13) - Public Comment - **Comments are limited to three (3) minutes.** Please sign the roster located on the cart at the back of Council chambers or at the podium. This is the time to comment on any matter falling within the scope of the Billings City Council. There will also be time for public comment relating to each agenda item, but you may only speak once per item. Please note the City Council cannot take action on any item that does not appear on the agenda. All persons addressing the City Council shall speak in a civil and courteous manner and members of the audience shall be respectful of others.

I see three primary benefits to the proposed change:

- a. The public is provided an opportunity to make their public comment at the time that the item is being discussed by the Council (whether it is a public hearing or action item). Currently, our rules require public comment on non-public hearings be made during item (10). Occasionally, hours separate public comment from the Council’s discussion and action.
- b. If citizens are not available to stay at the meeting for an extended period of time, the new approach provides an option to be heard early in the meeting and then they can leave. However, they cannot comment on the same item twice in the same meeting.
- c. Public comment on non-agenda items comes at the end of the meeting (13). The new approach eliminates (13) and simplifies when public comments are taken. All comments are made during the time that the specific agenda item is being discussed or during item (10) early in the meeting.

Additionally, I advise the Council not to engage in a dialogue with individuals making public comment. After all public comments are completed on each item, the Mayor and Council should determine if they want fellow Councilmembers or the staff to provide additional

information pertaining to the public comment. This approach improves decorum and minimizes being perceived as arguing with citizens making public comment.

Special Presentations – On several occasions during my tenure, individuals have had brief presentations that did not require any Council action. To date, I've added this item occasionally but it is not specifically identified in Sec. 2-214. Not every agenda will include Special Presentations.

My goal is to improve efficiency, transparency and build trust through our meetings.

- 2) **Franchise Fee Lawsuit** – The Mayor, Councilmember Gibbs and I spent a couple of hours with five (5) of the franchise fee lawsuit litigants this week. The meeting was productive and we agreed to meet again in two (2) weeks.
- 3) **Meeting with Mustangs owner Dave Heller** – Dave and I walked Dehler Park and discussed ideas on how to enhance the ballpark and neighborhood park located on the northeast corner of the block. I believe there are opportunities to enhance both properties to the benefit of the neighborhood and patron's experience when at a game. I'll discuss these ideas with our Park leadership and the Park Board to see what creative ideas they have to improve both assets.
- 4) **Next Week's Meetings/Task Forces/Presentations etc.**
 - a. West End Task Force – Tuesday, August 20th 7:00 PM, Faith Evangelical Church, 3145 Sweet Water Drive, Room 130/131.
 - b. Southwest Corridor Task Force – Thursday, August 22nd 7:00 PM, Amend Park Community Room, 5101 King Avenue East.

Have a great weekend.

Thanks!