

# **Streamlining Council Meetings**

**May 14, 2019**



# Council Streamlining

## Overview

- In October 2018, City Council requested a report for streamlining council meetings.
- City Manager's Office, City Clerk's Office, Mayor's Office, & City Attorney's Office conducted outreach and research.



# Council Streamlining Survey Outreach

## Council Districts

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
31	35	25	36	34	8	17	16	8
14.8%	16.7%	11.9%	17.1%	16.2%	3.8%	8.1%	7.6%	3.8%

## Age

0-18	19-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80 +
0	21	39	34	36	48	27	5
0%	10%	18.6%	16.2%	17.1%	22.8%	12.8%	2.4%

- The Council Meeting Streamlining Outreach Survey launched in November 2018 and was distributed through Facebook, Twitter, LinkLB, and the #GoLongBeach City Newsletter. It ran until December 2018.
- There were 218 responses to the survey.

# Council Streamlining Survey Results

## Common public suggestions for streamlining meetings were to:

1. Limit public comment during high attendance meetings;
2. Limit Councilmember discussion;
3. Limit repetition of praise and agreement between Councilmembers;
4. Adhere to the agenda order;
5. Establish time limits for agenda items;
6. Limit presentation/ceremonies at the beginning of meetings;
7. Publish agendas and estimated times for each item at least a week in advance.

# Council Streamlining – Analysis

- The City Clerk's Office also reviewed all City Council meetings in 2018. Out of 35 total meetings, 12 meetings lasted over 5 hours.
- For each of these meetings that went over 5 hours, they found that public comment took less time than Council/Staff time.

# Council Streamlining – Staff Research

- In addition to the survey, Staff also reached out specifically to the 10 largest cities in California to find best practices for Council meetings.
- The City Clerk's Office reached out to other Southern California cities to see if they had undertaken any streamlining efforts for their Council meetings.
- This presentation contains 10 recommendations for immediate implementation, 3 recommendations for future implementation, and 5 options considered but not recommended.

# Recommendations for Immediate Implementation

## 1. Reach out to staff prior to the City Council meeting;

- Reduce the amount of time devoted to technical questions or general clarification during the City Council meeting.

# Recommendations for Immediate Implementation

## 2. Set scheduled time and time limits for ceremonials/presentations;

- A set time to conduct presentations would provide structure to this part of the meeting and limit their carryover into the general City Council meeting.
- Staff recommends setting a limit of five minutes per presentation, with a goal of limiting the number of presentations per meeting to two or three.
- The City Clerk would create a timer for presentations to help keep this part of the meeting on track.



# Recommendations for Immediate Implementation

## 3. Segment time for public comment for lengthy items;

- When more than ten speakers are identified, the allotted time should drop to 90 seconds for everyone.
- Staff recommends formalizing this practice, with Language Access and ADA exceptions.

# Recommendations for Immediate Implementation

## 4. Use of the Consent Calendar;

- Staff recommends further expanding the use of the Consent Calendar to include items such as grant applications, contracts, and receive and file reports.
- City Councilmembers would always have an opportunity to pull items from the Consent Calendar for discussion.

# Recommendations for Immediate Implementation

## 5. Adopt Consent Calendar prior to 6:30 p.m.;

- Adopting the Consent Calendar prior to 6:30 p.m. as a matter of practice would provide certainty for routine items.
- There would be some cost savings as Consent Calendar items often have lower-level staff on overtime attending the meeting and waiting to answer any questions on those items.
- If the Consent Calendar cannot be heard by 6:30 p.m., any items pulled from the agenda would be laid over to the next meeting.

# Recommendations for Immediate Implementation

## 6. Adhere to posted agenda order and more use of time certain items;

- Although the Mayor retains full discretion to reorder City Council meeting agenda items, it is recommended that the posted agenda order be followed with exception if there is a significant item needing to be advanced.
- For controversial items, or items where large crowds are expected, it is recommended that increased use of “time certain” scheduling be employed to reduce waiting time for the public and to create more certainty to the agenda.

# Recommendations for Immediate Implementation

## 7. Call for a "point of order" after discussion has gone longer than 30 minutes;

- The Mayor or any City Councilmember can call for a "point of order" after the City Council's discussion on any one item has lasted more than 30 minutes.
- Once City Council discussion has started, the City Clerk would start the 30-minute timer, and then remind the Council once 30 minutes of discussion has passed. This would require an amendment to the LBMC.
- City Council must then vote by majority to continue discussing the item, vote, or to table it for the next meeting. This would apply to City Council's discussion time, not public comment time.



# Recommendations for Immediate Implementation

## 8. Increase use of City Council Committees to hear public comment;

- Staff recommends a greater use of City Council Committees to receive public input on issues for which significant public comment is expected.
- The City Council can refer any item to Committee for discussion and debate.
- If opportunity has been provided at the Committee level for public comment, public comment on that same issue at the City Council meeting could be limited to one minute.

# Recommendations for Immediate Implementation

## 9. Refocus use of Supplemental Agenda for items of urgency only;

- The Supplemental Agenda was created by the City Council to address items of urgency that could not be handled through the Regular Agenda. The Regular Agenda provides eight days of review for routine items, while the Supplemental Agenda provides only three days of review for urgent items.
- Over time, the Supplemental Agenda has been used, primarily by the City Council, for more routine items, providing only three days of review.
- To return to the original intent of the Supplemental Agenda, staff recommends requiring supplemental items have a Statement of Urgency.

# Recommendations for Immediate Implementation

## 10. Continue Closed Sessions at the end of City Council meetings, if required.

- Closed Sessions frequently run into the 5:00 p.m. start time for City Council meetings. Staff recommends concluding Closed Sessions by 5:00 p.m.
- If Closed Session items require additional discussion, they would be continued for further discussion upon adjournment of the regular City Council meeting.

# Recommendations for Future Implementation

1. Hold a Robert's Rules of Order refresher or explore other council meeting rules;
2. Identify innovative use of technology in the new Civic Center such as:
  - Using LA Metro's technology to sign up for e-comment via kiosks or personal devices. Speakers would sign up any time prior to agenda item but once the item begins, the speakers list would be final.
  - Exploring technology for Councilmembers to show support or kudos such as emojis; and
3. Electronic board to announce the City Council meeting agenda order.

# Options Considered but not Recommended

1. Shortening public comment
2. Moving public comment to the end of the meeting
3. Adding additional meetings
4. Timing Councilmember comments
5. Stopping at a set time



# Next Steps

1. Receive Council direction on the recommendations or a combination of the recommendations.
2. The City Attorney's Office will amend the City Municipal Code as needed.
3. Prepare new technology for the new City Hall.

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