

CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS 101



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CITY GOVERNMENT IN NEWPORT BEACH

The City of Newport Beach (City) is a Charter City governed by a seven-member City Council. Every even-numbered year, either three or four Councilmembers are elected by the voters at-large to represent their respective districts for a four-year term. Councilmembers may only serve two consecutive four-year terms. The City Charter provides for the selection of the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem by the City Council. The City Council deliberates and takes action in open session in compliance with the Ralph M. Brown Act (Brown Act).

The City Council appoints the City Attorney, City Clerk, and City Manager to carry out Council policies and to serve as executive officers for the City. Professionally qualified and experienced personnel lead the departments in providing municipal services to the public.

CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS/TYPES OF MEETINGS

Study Sessions are informational meetings where no formal action is taken. The City Council may provide information about an item on the same evening as Regular Meetings. When held, Study Sessions are on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 4:00 p.m. (subject to change), except in the months of August and December when there is one regular meeting. Please contact the City Clerk's Office at [949-644-3005](tel:949-644-3005), or visit the City's website (newportbeachca.gov/agendas) to verify the time of a particular Study Session.

Regular Meetings are held the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month, except in the months of August and December when there is one regular meeting. The City Council shall hold regular meetings at such times as it shall fix by ordinance or resolution, depending on the demand of business. If a Regular Meeting falls on a holiday, it is held on the next business day.

Special Meetings are held for a specific purpose and when action is needed prior to the next Regular Meeting. The presiding officer (Mayor) or the majority of the City Council may call a Special Meeting. The Special Meeting agenda lists all items for consideration and provides a time for public comment on noticed meeting matters.

Adjourned Meetings occur when the City Council adjourns a Regular or Special Meeting to a specific time and place to continue unfinished business.

Emergency Meetings are rare and may occur due to work stoppage, crippling disaster, or other activity which impairs public health or safety. To have an Emergency Meeting, a majority of the City Council must determine an incident qualifies as an emergency.

Closed Sessions may only be attended by members of the City Council, support staff, and/or legal counsel. The most common purpose of a Closed Session is to avoid revealing confidential information that may prejudice the legal or negotiating position of the City or compromise privacy interests of employees.

POSTING AGENDAS

Meeting agendas contain a brief description of each item of business to be transacted or discussed.

The *Brown Act* requires a brief, general description of each item on the agenda (20 words or less) and stipulates when agendas are required to be posted at a location accessible to the public 24 hours a day:

- **Regular Meetings** - Agendas are posted at least 72 hours prior to the established Regular Meeting time.
- **Special Meetings** - The City Council and media must receive notice at least 24 hours prior to the Special Meeting.
- **Adjourned Meetings** - The Order of Adjournment must be posted within 24 hours after the adjournment at or near the door of the place where the meeting was held.
- **Emergency Meetings** - The 24 hour noticing and posting requirements is waived, but we try to give at least 1 hour prior notice.

The Brown Act requires agendas to be posted on the City's website, as well as the regular posting location.

COUNCIL MEETING AGENDAS AND AGENDA PACKETS

At each Study Session and Regular Meeting, the City Council follows an agenda, which is distributed the preceding Thursday. The agenda packets are delivered to the City Council prior to the meeting and are made available to the public at the Central Library and in the City Clerk's Office at the same time. Agenda packets are also provided in the Council Chambers the evening of the meeting. The packets are also available on the City's website (newportbeachca.gov/agendas).

If you have any questions or require copies of any of the staff reports or other documentation regarding any item of business on the agenda, please contact the City Clerk's Office at [949-644-3005](tel:949-644-3005), or visit the City's website (newportbeachca.gov/agendas).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Members of the public have the right to address the City Council on any item on the agenda. The City Council also gives members of the public an opportunity to address them on non-agenda items that are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the City Council. Three minutes per speaker is allowed on agendized items and three minutes is allowed on non-agendized items. The City Council has the discretion to extend or shorten the time limit on agenda or non-agenda items.

EXPLANATION OF CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS

Motion - A motion proposes an action or decision of the City Council such as the adoption of a resolution or approval of a budget amendment.

Vote - Unless otherwise specified by the Charter or State law, a majority vote by the City Council is sufficient to pass a motion.

Ordinances - An ordinance or amendment to an ordinance is a “legislative act” and, with few exceptions, requires two readings at two separate City Council meetings after which it is published. Ordinances adopted in this manner usually take effect 30 days after adoption.

Ordinances are the most binding and permanent type of City Council action and may be repealed only by a subsequent ordinance.

Resolutions - A resolution is a formal written action of the City Council generally on ministerial, executive, or administrative matters, but occasionally represents an action on legislative matters such as a General Plan Amendment. Resolutions require only one reading, becomes effective upon adoption, and may be changed by a subsequent resolution or expire by its own terms.

Unless a higher vote is required, the affirmative votes of at least four members of the City Council is required for the enactment of any ordinance or resolution, or for making or approving any order for the payment of money.

Consent Calendar - In an effort to conduct more efficient City Council meetings, the agenda contains a “Consent Calendar” which permits routine matters or non-controversial issues (resolutions, second reading of ordinances, contracts, budget amendments, etc.) to be handled by one motion. There is no discussion of these items prior to the motion to approve the entire Consent Calendar unless a Councilmember requests that the item be removed for discussion and separate action.

AUDIO RECORDINGS

Pursuant to City Council Policies A-1 (*City Council*) and A-2 (*Boards, Commissions, and Committees*)

- All Council meetings shall be recorded.
- Board, Commission, and Committee (BCC) meetings may be recorded upon request of the chairperson or pursuant to any rule or by-law adopted by the BCC.
- Any audio recording of a Council or BCC meeting may be destroyed one-year after the meeting, excluding Planning Commission audio recordings as those are kept permanently, as adopted on May 13, 2014.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Many City residents give their time to assist and advise the City Council on issues facing the City. Service on City Boards, Commissions, and Committees is one of the principal means by which citizens may participate in City government. More information about BCCs, including an application, is located on the City’s website (newportbeachca.gov/vacancy).