



CITY OF MANITOWOC

WISCONSIN, USA

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May 9, 2024

TO: Members of the Public Safety Committee
Members of the Public Infrastructure Committee

FROM: Eric Nycz, City Attorney

Re: Streamlining Procedures – Committee Agenda Items

Issue Presented

Procedures are the backbone of any municipality, serving as the essential framework that guides its functioning and ensures efficient governance. In the complex web of municipal operations, procedures provide clarity, consistency, and accountability. They delineate the steps to be followed in various processes, from budgeting and planning to service delivery and regulatory compliance. Moreover, procedures uphold transparency, enabling citizens to understand how decisions are made and services are administered. By establishing standardized protocols, municipalities mitigate risks, minimize errors, and foster public trust. In essence, procedures form the cornerstone of effective municipal management, facilitating the smooth operation of local government and the advancement of community welfare.

There is no current written procedure that articulates how or whether “citizen complaints/requests” (“Correspondence”) reach the Agendas for the Public Safety and Public Infrastructure Committees. This has caused “fat” Agendas.

Discussion

On May 6, 2024, multiple representatives from the Department of Public Infrastructure, Community Development, the Police Department, and the City Attorney’s Office met to discuss and, ultimately, outline a standard operating procedure to address the City’s handling of citizen complaints/requests.

Generally, a consensus was reached that will involve multiple departments’ input in every written Correspondence received by City staff, whether the Correspondence is received directly, through an elected official, or by an elected official. Staff will review and weigh in on the elements where their department’s expertise applies. A group recommendation will be made and the author of the Correspondence will be notified of the City’s response/determination/recommendation.

This will affect the Committee is as follows:

- If staff believes **action should be taken** on the Correspondence, the Committee will see the item on its Agenda if, and only if, funding in excess of a budgeted expense is required or Committee and Council approval is required to action (i.e. – an ordinance revision is required).

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- If staff believes action **should not be taken**, the Committee will not see the item on the Agenda.

In practice, this will likely reduce the items on the Committees' respective Agendas. But there will, occasionally, be a citizen that contacts his/her Alderperson noting that the City has rebuffed their correspondence. When that occurs, staff encourages Alderpersons to contact the appropriate City staff, who will then provide the Alderperson with the reason(s) for staff's position. Should the Alderperson wish to further pursue the matter after reviewing the staff's reasoning, the item will be placed on the appropriate Agenda.

Staff strongly believes this procedure will greatly benefit the City. This Agenda item is here for informational and discussion purposes and no action is requested. Though we welcome any questions or concerns members of the Committees may have and will be happy to address them at any time.