

City Council Guideline Policy –

The full (PDF) City Council Guideline Policy is provided for a view of what will take place at the City Council Organizational meeting following the election on November 3rd. The Organization session will take place November 10th (week following the election) to select a Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, make committee assignments, and amend the guidelines (if appropriate).

Below is paragraph 23, Council Standing Committees. Note the committee assignments are for three each councilmembers and designation of the committee chair (subject to approval of the full council). I was not assigned to either committee for 2014/2015.

23. Council Standing Committees. Immediately after the annual Organizational Meeting of the Council, the Mayor shall appoint the following standing committees, subject to confirmation by the Council: a.) Auditing Committee, b.) Ordinance Committee. Three members of the Council shall be appointed to each committee with the Mayor designating the member who is to serve as Chair of the committee. Vacancies occurring in any committee shall be filled in like manner.

a. ***The Auditing Committee shall review all invoices paid by the City to review their appropriateness, conformance with the budget and compliance with municipal purchasing practices.*** Any questions or apparent irregularities shall first be reviewed with the City Finance Officer and then the City Manager. If the matter cannot be adequately addressed by the Finance Officer or the City Manager, the Auditing Committee shall bring the matter to the City Council as a regular agenda item.

b. Ordinance Committee. All ordinances proposed, whether by a member of the Council, City Manager, Advisory Board or Commission or the public at large shall be put in proper form and reviewed by the Ordinance Committee. The Ordinance Committee shall make a recommendation to the City Council on each ordinance reviewed, with or without modification. If the recommendation of the Ordinance Committee is that the ordinance not be approved, the person or group sponsoring the proposed ordinance may request consideration by the entire Council with the committee's negative recommendation.

c. Personnel Committee. In accordance with Section 5-6 of the Charter, the City Manager may appoint a Personnel Committee's subject to the approval of the City Council.

25. Meeting Notice. ***It shall be the duty of the Chair of any standing or special committees and advisory boards and commissions to give advance notice of the time and place of the meeting in accordance with the Open Meetings Act (minimum 18 hour notice) and to advise all members of the committee, the City Council, the City Manager, and other persons who have made known in writing their interest in the particular matters to be considered.*** Minutes shall be kept and circulated in like manner.

The Ordinance Committee has met several times this year. I've not seen advance notice of a time and place for the Audit Committee since my election to City Council. I do review invoices (payments are often part of the "Consent Agenda" and receive little if any discussion) that are attached to the Monthly Agenda and have brought some questionable items to the attention of the City Attorney (that were removed from future budgets on his review and advice), but am unaware of the Audit Committee meeting and discharging the duties described in paragraph 23.a. I'm also unaware of any advance notice of the time and place of meetings.

Fireworks Ordinance –

City Council will revisit the Fireworks Ordinance in a future meeting. Many residents have expressed an interest in confining fireworks to days surrounding a National Holiday, which is more restrictive than permitted by the State of Michigan. I'll consult with the Public Safety Director to get input on what is considered "enforceable" and practical. The last thing we want to do is enact an ordinance that can't be enforced, or catches unsuspecting visitors (who are in compliance of State Law – but in violation of a more restrictive local ordinance) by surprise. I've been told that people do call in complaints, but are reluctant to make a statement or file a complaint (mostly against neighbors) that leaves our Public Safety staff without the power to enforce the current laws (they would have to witness the event or have a complaint made by a person who was a witness). What is reasonable? It was felt by a majority of councilmembers that "public input" in an open session was not needed (concern about it taking a longer period of time). I welcome public feedback and recommendations and urge any who are interested to contact their councilperson and share their opinions and concerns.

Thank you for your support and feedback. Jim