

**UNALASKA CITY COUNCIL
POLICY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT
AT MEETINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Adopted by Resolution 2021-03 on February 9, 2021

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for public comment at meetings of Unalaska City Council.

SCOPE: This policy applies to all regular meetings, special meetings and work sessions.

BACKGROUND: City Council meetings are designed for the Council to discuss and make decisions on issues before the Council. A meeting of the City Council is held in public to provide transparency in the decision making process. Opportunities for public input are provided and the City Council takes the input into consideration in making decisions.

For regular meetings, the Unalaska Code of Ordinances provides numerous opportunities for public comment:

- a) Community Input & Announcements - § 2.20.020(A)(9) & (14): This is a time for members of the public to provide general information to council and to make announcements of interest to the community. This opportunity occurs twice, once early in the meeting and a second time immediately before the meeting adjourns.
- b) Public Testimony on Agenda Items - § 2.20.020(A)(10): This is a time for members of the public to provide information to Council regarding items listed on the agenda if the speaker does not wish to wait until the specific item comes up on the agenda.
- c) Public Hearing - § 2.20.020(A)(11): When an item requires public hearing by statute or ordinance, the presiding officer will open the public hearing for members of the public to provide comment.
- d) Public Comment during Council Discussion - § 2.20.020(B): A period for public testimony for each agenda item shall occur during the City Council's discussion of the item. Members of the audience wishing to testify on an agenda item during a regular meeting must notify the City Clerk.

Opportunities for public comment at special meetings will be provided in accordance with the agenda for that special meeting, which shall include public comment during council discussion.

During a work session, members of the audience wishing to testify may raise their hand and be recognized by the Mayor.

STATEMENT OF POLICY: The purpose of public comment is for citizens to provide information and inform the City Council about their opinions. The Mayor and City Council value community input and encourage participation in public comment opportunities at meetings of the City Council.

Public comment opportunities are not a time for members of the public to ask questions of, or engage in dialogue with the Mayor, City Council Members or City Staff. Community members are encouraged to contact City Staff during normal business hours, or to contact the Mayor and City Council members directly.

These guidelines apply to all types of public comment opportunities described above.

- 1) Public Comment by spoken or written word is limited to three (3) minutes per person. Persons may not give their time to another person and may address a single topic or agenda item only once during a meeting.
- 2) If you wish to speak when an item appears on the regular agenda during council discussion, § 2.20.020(B), notify the City Clerk.
 - a) In person, the City Clerk may be notified by signing up on the public comment sign-up sheet available in chambers.
 - b) For telephone or online platforms, the City Clerk may be notified as described in 4(a) below.
- 3) **PUBLIC COMMENT IN PERSON**
 - a) Wait to be recognized by the presiding officer.
 - b) Use the microphone provided.
 - c) State your name.
 - d) Address all comments to the Mayor and City Council as a body.
- 4) **PUBLIC COMMENT BY TELEPHONE OR ONLINE PLATFORMS**
 - a) In order to promote an orderly meeting, all persons participating by telephone or online platforms must notify the City Clerk using notification features available in the online platform (i.e. in ZOOM, the “raise your hand” feature or a chat notification; or *9 by telephone). Participants may also choose to notify the City Clerk during regular business hours before the start of the meeting. By necessity, this requirement applies to all opportunities for public comment for persons participating by telephone or online.
 - b) At the appointed time, the speaker will be allowed to un-mute.
 - c) Wait to be recognized by the presiding officer.
 - d) State your name.
 - e) Address all comments to the Mayor and City Council as a body.
- 5) **WRITTEN COMMENT**
 - a) Written comment is accepted by e-mail, regular mail, fax or hand delivery.
 - b) The name of the person providing written comment must be included.
 - c) Written comment shall be submitted to the City Clerk’s Department no later than one hour prior to the start of the meeting, to be read into the record by the City Clerk or presiding officer’s designee.
 - d) A person submitting written comment may request that it be read at any one of the points on the agenda where public comment is allowed. If the person does not request otherwise, the written comment will be read during Community Input & Announcements.