

SUBJECT: MEETING NOTICES

Subsections (2) and (3) of Section 3.71 of the Madison General Ordinances read as follows:

- “(2) Place of Meetings. All boards, committees, subcommittees, commissions and authorities of the City of Madison shall hold all their meetings at some room in the City-County Building, the Madison Municipal Building, or at some other place of business accessible to the general public, including but not limited to restaurants and hotels. No such meeting may be held in a location which is not accessible to persons with disabilities.
- (3) Notification of Meetings. All boards, committees, subcommittees, commissions and authorities of the City of Madison shall give public notice of all their meetings by sending to the City Clerk, the official newspaper and those news media who have filed a written request for such notice, a statement as to the time, date, place, and subject matter of all meetings. This may be done by providing a copy of the meeting agenda. The City Clerk shall make such notices available to the public.”

In order to satisfy the requirements of Madison General Ordinance Sec. 3.71(2) and (3) the following procedures have been implemented.

1. The official notice of all meetings of City of Madison governmental bodies is an agenda that includes the name of the governmental body, the date, time and place of the meeting and the subject matter to be considered at the meeting.
2. These agendas are posted on the bulletin board maintained for official meeting notices.
3. The City Clerk is the custodian of the bulletin board and is responsible for posting agendas for all meetings of Madison governmental bodies.
4. Meeting notices must be posted at least 24 hours before the start of a meeting. Saturdays and Sundays are excluded in calculating the 24 hour notice. Thus, all Monday meetings should be preceded by the proper posting on Friday. In order to allow sufficient time for the City Clerk to post the notices, it is the responsibility of staff and/or the Chair of each governmental body to provide the City Clerk with an adequate agenda in sufficient time to allow for timely posting. Prior to commencement of the meeting, staff should verify that the agenda has been properly posted.
 - a. Legistar bodies shall submit a link in an e-mail to CL Meetings.
 - b. All others shall submit an electronic document in an e-mail to CL Meetings.
5. In addition to providing the City Clerk with a copy of the agenda, the staff or chair of each governmental body must also notify the official City newspaper and any other news media representative who has made a written request for notice. This notice can be provided by placing a copy of the agenda in the files maintained in the Mayor’s Office.
6. Appearances by Telephone - Whenever a City body anticipates that a member will appear by telephone/teleconference or that a person shall be testifying or appearing by telephone/teleconference, staff shall ensure that the meeting notice/agenda specifically and conspicuously identifies which persons or members shall be appearing by such means. A member so participating shall count towards the official quorum of the body. Staff shall be responsible for coordinating the use of appropriate equipment so that the attending public can readily observe such person’s participation in the meeting. No person shall be allowed to participate in any meeting where the meeting notice failed to state the person would appear by telephone/teleconference means or where such equipment is unavailable or unusable at the time of the meeting.

In addition, all meeting notices will include information on how to obtain an interpreter in order to assure that individuals with hearing impairments or limited English proficiency may participate fully in City government. The City's Affirmative Action Division, as part of the Language Assistance Program, shall be responsible for determining the wording for this notification as well as the languages that the notice shall appear in. The notification will automatically appear on all meeting notices that are prepared using the Legistar system. Agency staff for committees whose meeting notices are not prepared using the Legistar system may obtain the appropriate wording for the notice from the Affirmative Action Division. This notice shall appear at the top of agendas and will include a contact person's name and telephone number.

The Affirmative Action Division will review necessary census and other data periodically to determine whether the languages used should be modified and will be responsible for obtaining necessary translations of this notification.

Agencies staffing meetings for which an interpreter is requested will bear the financial burden of providing the interpreter. If an interpreter cannot be obtained, the matter should be postponed until an interpreter can be provided, if at all possible.

The staff for each governmental body should also review the ordinance creating their board, commission or committee to determine if any other posting requirements are specified.

Besides posting agendas, each week the City Clerk prepares a list of meetings for the following week. In order for meetings to appear on the list, they must be reported to the City Clerk no later than noon on Friday for meetings being held the following week. In the event that a meeting is cancelled or a meeting room changed, the City Clerk should be notified immediately. Failure to do so results in confusion and inconvenience for committee members and the public and may result in an unlawful meeting.

The City Clerk shall retain copies of the weekly meeting lists, along with any changes. The City Clerk need not retain copies of agendas after the meeting is over. The governmental body shall retain copies of agendas, along with attendance, minutes, copies of documents supplied to members at the meeting, and other records of the body.

Employees who staff the various governmental bodies shall see to it that these records are kept as required by statute and ordinance. In addition, employees who staff governmental bodies should review procedures to make sure that no meetings are conducted without the necessary notice. If an employee discovers that, by mistake or otherwise, a meeting has not been publicly noticed as required by law, the employee should immediately inform the presiding officer of that fact and advise that the meeting be postponed to a later date.

If the governmental body contemplates a closed session, staff should review the issue in advance with the City Attorney's Office. The review should include the permissible reasons for the closed session and the correct procedure for the notice and for the vote to close the session.



Paul R. Soglin
Mayor

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