

# Guidelines for Citizen Participation at Assembly Meetings



## General Information

The Assembly welcomes citizen participation at its meetings and provides opportunities for citizens to address the Assembly during all meetings which are open to the public and noticed in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. Assembly meetings are livestreamed through the City's website. In addition, regular meetings are aired live on KCAW FM 104.7. To receive Assembly agenda notifications, subscribe with GovDelivery on the City's website.

Regularly scheduled Assembly meetings are the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month. Dates may be modified to accommodate holidays or other events. Meetings begin at 6:00 p.m. at Harrigan Centennial Hall Assembly Chambers (330 Harbor Drive). The meeting schedule and agenda packets are posted on the City's website at <https://sitka.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>. Agenda packets are also available for review at the Municipal Clerk's Office and Sitka Public Library.

## Rules of Decorum for the Audience

- Meeting attendees in the audience are respectfully asked to:
- Refrain from commenting, clapping, shouting, booing, whistling, side conversations, and other loud or disruptive behavior.
- Silence cell phones and electronics.
- Take noisy children into the hallway.

## Assembly Work Sessions

An agenda is not required for an Assembly work session and binding action may not be taken. Work sessions allow staff, organizations, or other government agencies to present material to the Assembly. This allows the Assembly time to consider issues in detail before taking action.

Work sessions are designed for discussion among the members of the Assembly, so public comment is not warranted unless the Mayor recognizes a citizen. If so recognized, the same rules of decorum for Assembly meetings will apply.

## Regular Assembly Meeting Overview

### Persons to be Heard

There are two "Persons to be heard" sections on each agenda; 1) near the beginning of the meeting for citizens to address items not on the agenda, and 2) near the end of the meeting to speak on items on or off the agenda.

### To address the Assembly, speakers will adhere to the following procedures and rules of decorum:

- Be recognized by the Mayor.
- Clearly state your full name for the record.
- Speak into the microphone in a civil and respectful manner.
- Individual comments are limited to 3 minutes in length. The Mayor, or a majority vote of the Assembly, may allow extra time for a speaker, depending upon the circumstances.
- If you have supporting documents to share with the Assembly, you may provide a copy to the Municipal Clerk for distribution.
- Refrain from: using profanity; using language likely to incite violence or outbursts from the audience; making comments of a personal nature not germane to City business; using language that is disruptive to the orderly process of the meeting; shouting, yelling, or screaming.
- In some cases, a citizen may be directed to meet with staff to resolve an issue or get their questions answered.

- All persons testifying shall immediately cease speaking when notified by the presiding officer that the allotted time has expired.
- A member of the public shall not engage in the Assembly debate or deliberations.
- Citizens are encouraged to exercise their First Amendment rights. In extreme cases, however, the Mayor may have to ask a citizen to stop speaking and take a seat in the audience. If the individual does not comply with the Mayor's request, they may be asked to leave or, if necessary, they may be escorted from the meeting.

### **Public Comment on Agenda Items During the Meeting**

- The Assembly meeting is designed for the Assembly to discuss and make decisions on agenda items. The procedure for agenda items is as follows:
- Each agenda item is read into the record.
- The Mayor will call for a motion and second.
- The Municipal Administrator introduces an item, if applicable.
- The Mayor will ask if there are any citizens wishing to comment. Individual comments are limited to 3 minutes in length. Note that discussion / direction / decision items will have an opportunity for public comment if a formal motion is made, or when authorized by the Mayor or a majority vote of the Assembly.
- The Assembly will discuss and make a decision.

### **Telephonic Participation by the Public**

Any member of the public may request to provide comment by telephone on any agenda item or "Persons to be heard" which allows for public participation under Section 2.05.130(A). To participate by telephone, the person shall provide the Municipal Clerk with a telephone contact number and indicate which agenda item(s) they wish to provide comment on by 5:00 pm on the Monday before the Tuesday regular meeting, at least 24 hours before any special or emergency Assembly meeting, when such notice is reasonably practical.

The Municipal Clerk will call that phone number during the public participation section on the agenda item or during "Persons to be heard." If the person is not available at the time of public comment for the item, the presiding officer will move to the next person. A person participating by telephone must be able to hear and engage in discussion and be audible to all persons participating in the meeting.

Any member(s) of the public who participates by telephone shall not be charged for any costs associated with telephonic participation.



#### **For an effective telephonic testimony, please:**

- Mute your radio, TV, or livestream.
- Do not have your phone on speaker.
- Limit ambient noise, and if you are on a cell phone, be sure you are in a location with good cell service.
- Use a headset, if possible, to provide a consistent signal and reduce room noise.

### **Contacting Assembly Members Outside of Meetings**

You may contact your Assembly members at any time. The Mayor and Assembly member's individual contact information is on the City's website at [www.cityofsitka.com](http://www.cityofsitka.com). To send an email to include the Mayor and all Assembly members as a group, use [assembly@cityofsitka.org](mailto:assembly@cityofsitka.org).