



Citizen Participation in City Council Meetings

December, 2018

CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOPS/WORKSESSIONS

The purpose of a City Council workshop/work session is to provide a forum for City Council and City staff members to discuss various subjects related to City operations, projects, and planning. Members of the City Council, Boards, and/or Committees may also be present to discuss various subjects with City Council and City staff. Citizens are welcome to attend; however, there will be no public comment opportunity at the Workshops/Work sessions. If citizens have comments or questions for City Council or City staff, they may attend a Regular City Council meeting and sign up to speak during the Citizen Communications section of the agenda. Citizens are also welcome and encouraged to communicate with City Council members and/or City staff outside of public meetings by contacting City Hall.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Anyone wishing to speak at a public hearing must sign their name and address on the approved form available at each public hearing. Each person, other than a Council Member or City staff member, speaking at a public hearing will be allotted three (3) minutes to make their comments. Such allotted time may be extended at the sole discretion of the presiding officer; however, no person may speak more than twice at each public hearing. No person may donate their time to another person.

REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

The City of Fitzgerald believes our citizens have every right to participate in Regular City Council meetings, and we encourage citizens to do so. Time is set aside at each Regular City Council meeting for Citizen Communications near the beginning of the meeting. Please remember that during Citizen Communications, in accordance with the Georgia Open Meetings Act, Council Members are prohibited from answering questions (other than to make statements of fact or to recite existing policy), discussing issues raised by citizens, or taking any action on an item that is not on the agenda for that meeting. Issues raised may be referred to staff for research and possible future action.

SIGNING UP TO SPEAK

Citizens wishing to speak during a Regular City Council meeting must complete and submit the Citizen Request to Address Council form PRIOR to 6:00 PM (when the meeting begins). Such form will be available in the Council Chambers on the podium by the entrance prior to the meeting. Only those individuals who properly complete and submit said form shall have the opportunity to address the meeting. Citizens shall not speak unless first recognized by the presiding officer (typically the Mayor). When the presiding officer recognizes the Speaker. All comments shall be made in accordance with the rules set forth hereinafter.

RULES FOR SPEAKING DURING COUNCIL MEETINGS

1. Members of the public may address the City Council at the following times during a Regular Meeting: (a) During the Citizen Participation section of the agenda after being recognized by the presiding officer (provided a request form has been completed and submitted prior to the beginning of the meeting); (b) During the Public Hearing section after being recognized by the presiding officer (provided a request form has been completed and submitted prior to the beginning of the meeting); and (c) When invited to speak by the presiding officer.
2. Speakers must state their name and address for the record prior to making their comments. Please speak clearly so everyone in the room can hear you.
3. Speakers must address all comments to the presiding officer, not to the audience or staff members.
4. Speakers shall be allotted three (3) minutes to address the meeting. A speaker may not yield or donate time to another speaker.
5. Speakers must not employ tactics of defamation, intimidation, personal affronts, profanity, yelling, or threats of violence. Anyone who is violation of this requirement shall be removed from the Council Chambers by law enforcement.
6. Members of the audience are not permitted to speak without first being recognized by the presiding officer or to interrupt the Mayor, Council Members, staff, or other speakers when they are speaking. We welcome and encourage citizens to participate during the Citizen Communications and/or Public Hearing sections of the meeting; however, out of respect for everyone in attendance, any disruptions will result in the offending party being removed from the Council Chambers.
7. Any digital presentations must be submitted and checked for content prior to the meeting.

PROVIDING WRITTEN COMMENTS/DOCUMENTS TO CITY COUNCIL

If you wish to bring hard-copies of documents to the meeting of Mayor and Council, you must bring fourteen (14) copies and provide the same to the City Clerk PRIOR to the start of the meeting for distribution. This ensures the Mayor, Deputy Administrators, City Attorney, City Clerk, and the Council Members each receive a copy. If fewer than fourteen (14) copies are provided to the City Clerk, the document shall not be provided to Council Members until after the meeting when sufficient copies can be made for each member.

REMINDER TO MEETING ATTENDEES

Please remember to mute or turn off your cell phones or other devices BEFORE entering the Council Chambers. If you need to have a conversation with someone during the meeting, please STEP OUTSIDE in order to avoid disrupting the meeting or preventing others from being able to hear the proceedings.

Contact Us

If you have any questions or special requests regarding City Council meetings, please contact the City Clerk:

Cristina Evans
302 East Central Avenue
Fitzgerald, Georgia 31750
Phone: 229-426-5060
Email: fitzcityclerk@mchsi.com
Web: www.fitzgeraldga.org