

# Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

[www.ci.norfolk.ne.us](http://www.ci.norfolk.ne.us)

December 15, 2011

## “Attending a City Council Meeting”



At some time a citizen might want to attend a city council meeting. If so, it's good to know the common protocol at these meetings.

The Norfolk City Council meets in the Council Chambers at 309 West Madison Avenue the first and third Mondays of every month at 5:30 p.m. The agenda, along with a packet of documentation, is prepared on the Thursday preceding the Monday council meeting. The packets are available online for

the general public at [www.ci.norfolk.ne.us/administration/meetings.htm](http://www.ci.norfolk.ne.us/administration/meetings.htm). There are also printed copies of the agenda, as well as one printed copy of the agenda packet, available at the meeting,

The council members and mayor sit at designated chairs at the front of the room. The media are at one side of the room and the general public sits in chairs that fill the rest of the area.

The mayor conducts the meetings and begins by calling each meeting to order and informing the public that the Open Meetings Act is posted on the wall in the chambers. All who are attending then stand for a moment of silence and then say the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America which is at the front of the room.

The city clerk does the roll call of the council members. The mayor then asks that the council approve the consent agenda. The consent agenda enables the council to approve all of the routine items of business in one motion to save time rather than voting on each item in separate motions.

The mayor then asks for approval of the full agenda.

Following the approval of the agenda are special presentations by city staff, the mayor or members of the public who have requested to be placed on the agenda. More recently, the Norfolk City Administrator has been using that time to give an update on the recreational projects going on in Norfolk.

After the special presentation section of the agenda, public hearings can be held. A public hearing is a formal process intended to solicit public comment. A public hearing is structured, in part, to meet legal requirements. After a brief presentation on the item, public comments are heard and then the city council takes action on items related to the public hearing, such as an ordinance or resolution. Citizens wishing to speak during a public hearing are requested to sign in and state their name and address for the record. Citizens are generally requested to limit comments to five minutes or less.

At the conclusion of public hearings, regular agenda items are considered by the city council. Regular agenda items require a separate motion and vote on each item. The City of Norfolk uses an electronic voting board, instead of roll call vote, for voting on items at city council meetings.

The final item of business on a council agenda can be administrative reports by city staff. However, the council agenda does have a public comment period listed on the agenda at the end of each quarter. No action can be taken on any topic discussed at this time.

Once all items on the council agenda have been considered and acted upon, the meeting is adjourned.

For those who would like to watch a city council meeting from their home, each meeting is broadcast live on Cable One and on the Internet at [www.ci.norfolk.ne.us/Live\\_City\\_Council\\_Meeting.htm](http://www.ci.norfolk.ne.us/Live_City_Council_Meeting.htm). Recordings of the council meetings are also published on the city's website at [www.ci.norfolk.ne.us/administration/meetings\\_archive.htm](http://www.ci.norfolk.ne.us/administration/meetings_archive.htm).