



**TOWN OF DEWEY-HUMBOLDT
ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION**

AR No 10-08

**Subject: *Town Council Agenda Process
Reference Guide***

Effective Date: Sept. 12, 2010

**Date distributed to Council:
Sept. 2, 2010.**

1. **Scope.** This policy applies to all Town Employees.
2. **Purpose.** The purpose of this reference guide is to establish standards and provide general guidelines for staff involved in preparing and transmitting Town Council Reports, Council Agenda Action Request forms, and other backup materials related to Town Council meetings. The information provided in this guide will help ensure the timely and accurate preparation of Town Council agendas and backup packets, and offers suggestions for ensuring complete information on current Town issues is available to Town staff, Town Council, and the citizens.

2.1. Guidelines are provided to assist staff with identifying the type of Council action they require, along with helpful hints on the content of requests to ensure the Town Council has all of the information they may require to act on an item. Timeliness, accuracy, and completeness of Town Council Minutes and Council Agenda Action Request forms will facilitate the timely preparation and delivery of council packets and agendas to Town Council members and staff.

2.2. The information contained on the following pages is provided for use by Town staff, as a quick reference for those experienced in requesting Council action, and as a useful training tool for incoming staff that may be new to this process.

3. **Overview of Council Process.**

- 3.1. **Council-Manager form of Government.**

3.1.1. The Town of Dewey-Humboldt municipal government operates under a Council-Manager form of government, as established by Town Code § 30.001. Under this form of government, the Council provides legislative direction, sets Town policy, and monitors its execution by Town Staff. The Town Manager serves as the Town's Chief Administrative Officer and is responsible for directing the day-to-day operations of the Town. Policy is set by the Town Council, whose members are elected by the people; and is carried out by the Town Manager, who is appointed by the Council. This separation of policy-making and policy-administration is considered the most economical and durable form of municipal government.

3.1.2. As such, staff is responsible to ensure that the Council has adequate information to make sound policy decisions, presented without passion or prejudice, fairly describing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with any proposed Council action. That said, staff is also responsible to recommend a course of action that most closely aligns with staff's professional judgment and Council's vision for the future of the community.

- 3.2. **Consent Agenda.**

3.2.1. The Consent Agenda is made up of items that are routine in nature. This agenda is placed weekly as a separate item on the Agenda for Special or Regular Meetings. The items on the Consent Agenda usually have unanimous Council support and are voted on as a "package" in the interest of saving time on non-controversial issues. However, any Council member may remove an item from the Consent Agenda to be voted on separately. If a citizen desires separate consideration of an item, he or she should approach a Council member prior to the meeting and ask that the Council member request that the item be removed.

3.2.2. This is typically where minutes, routine IGAs, plats, and already-considered ordinances (i.e., “second reading” ordinances) go.

3.3. **Town Council Study Sessions.** Study Sessions (aka “Work Sessions”) of the Town Council are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 3:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers to allow for a detailed review of important matters. They may be held at a different time, day, or location for special purposes, in which case the meeting is a “Special Study Session.”

3.3.1. Study Sessions may be conducted jointly with another Town Board, Commission, Committee, or another governmental agency. Formal action is not taken at a Study Session unless the agenda indicates that action may be taken, in which case the Study Session is reclassified as a “Special Meeting.” All Study Session meetings are open to the public, and the public may speak.

3.3.2. Typically only 2 or 3 items are scheduled for these 2 hour meetings. At these Study Sessions, the Council discusses general issues. These meetings provide the Council with an opportunity to hear presentations by Staff on topics that may or will later come before the Council at the Regular Meetings. Although no ordinances or resolutions are adopted and no formal action is taken, the Study Session allows the Council to give general direction to Staff for future Town policies.

3.3.3. During the Study Session, the Council may also publicly request information from Staff, follow-up on issues of interest to the public, ask questions about an upcoming Regular Agenda, and hear reports from the Town Manager.

3.4. **Town Council Regular Meetings.** Regular meetings of the Town Council are held on the first and third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. They may be held at a different time, day, or location for special purposes, in which case the meeting is a “Special Meeting.” All regular Council meetings are open to the public, and the public are invited to address Council on any item. Ordinances and Resolutions, the laws of the Town of Dewey-Humboldt, and all other official legislative actions are enacted or rejected at these meetings.

3.4.1. The meeting may appear to proceed quickly with important decisions reached after very little discussion. However, since Council members receive the agenda no later than the previous Friday, they have usually reviewed every item on the agenda prior to the meeting. If no additional facts are presented at the meeting, they often act on matters without further discussion.

3.4.2. The agenda for all Council Meetings is available to the public, Town Council, and Town Staff no later than the Friday prior to each Council meeting (unless a Council member adds an item later than regularly scheduled).

3.4.3. Any Council member may suggest an agenda item for the next regular Council meeting and the item shall be placed on the agenda, but with little or no staff analysis expected. Any person may request placement of a matter on the Council agenda by submitting a written request to a Council member, who may then place the item on the agenda with the written agreement of a sponsoring Council member. Ordinarily, this request will be routed through the Mayor, but a member may unilaterally place an item on the agenda as late as 24 hours before a meeting. Normally, no item will be placed by Council on Council’s agenda for discussion unless submitted ten days prior to the next regular Council meeting using the “Council Agenda Action Form,” in order to give staff time to prepare the Council Packet. In an emergency, additional items may also be “added-on” to the printed agenda up to 24 hours prior to the meeting. However, in order to allow the public and the Council sufficient time to review agenda items, it is preferred that Council Agenda Action Request Forms be properly planned and processed to ensure their timely placement on the printed agenda.

3.4.4. The meetings are audio/video recorded and a written synopsis of the meeting is prepared. The synopsis (minutes) constitutes the Official Record of Council and are reviewed by the Council and approved at a subsequent meeting. The Minutes are retained in the Town Clerk's office as a permanent Town record.

3.5. **Executive Sessions.** Executive Sessions are Council meetings not open to the public, and are very rare: state law allows only very few occasions on which an Executive Session is allowed. No legal action may occur in Executive Session. All written materials and verbal information regarding Executive Session items must remain confidential. Written reports and exhibits or materials furnished to members of the Council as part of an Executive Session must not be copied or saved and must be returned to Staff at the conclusion of the Executive Session. No member of the Council, employee of the Town, or anyone else present should disclose to any other person the intent or substance of any discussion that takes place in an Executive Session, unless authorized by the Council. Staff will be invited to Executive Sessions only when necessary to the discussion.

4. **Council Communication (CC).**

4.1. The Town Manager is responsible to discern and plan, in consultation with the Mayor and in accordance with the Town Code, which items are ready or need to be placed on the agenda and the timing for scheduling such items.

4.2. The Town Manager ordinarily prepares a memorandum of **Coming Agenda Items** every month after the last regular Council meeting of the month, which is distributed to staff. All Town staff agenda requests should be made as far in advance as possible. Staff should review the Coming Agenda Items memo and immediately advise the Manager if the memo is missing items or if the required Council Communication cannot be completed in time for the Agenda. If the Manager does not receive any contrary communication from staff within a couple hours, the Coming Agenda Items memo will be distributed to the Town Council. The agenda items will be listed in abbreviated form; however, in the Council Communication the agenda items must be complete and contain the specific matters to be discussed, considered, or decided at the meeting. The agenda item must specify if any action is planned or reasonably possible on a particular item (i.e., "discussion and possible action...").

4.3. Staff reports are to be in the form of a "Council Communication" (form attached hereto as **Exhibit A**). Town Council Communications (CCs) are used to provide written information to the Town Council. The report should be concise, void of technical or complex terms, and presented with subheadings (i.e., The Issue, Other Information, Alternatives, and Recommendation). These reports are created to provide Council (and the public) with adequate technical detail to make a policy determination, as a response to a Council inquiry, or are provided as information reports to be included in the weekly Town Council Packet.

4.4. Council Communications must be approved by the department director and the Town Manager prior to being forwarded to the Town Clerk. Department directors should ensure that all Council Communications, reviewed and approved by the director, are delivered for the Town Manager's review by no later than **8 days** before the meeting at which they will be considered (and longer if significantly complicated).

4.5. They should ordinarily be delivered to the Town Clerk, with all necessary approvals, by no later than **7 days** prior to the meeting at which they will be considered.

4.6. Complete staff work is critical to earning the public's confidence, and necessary for the Council to be fully informed. The CC should discuss who benefits, who pays, who performs, what, where, when,

why, how, and how much, critical steps to complete or follow-up actions expected, and total cost. In preparing analyses, ethics and cost are always relevant criteria.

4.7. Additionally, all CCs should include an analysis of how the proposed action furthers the goals of the Council's Vision 2028. Whenever appropriate, frequent reference should be made to existing reports, plans, or policies (e.g., the Principles of Sound Financial Management, the General Plan, the Drainage Study, the General Plan's Implementation Program, the Capital Improvement Program, Town Code, etc.). Further, use of studies and standards from the professional organizations of which staff are members is encouraged.

4.8. Study Sessions are ideal for case studies, pictorial demonstrations, and data-heavy regressive analyses. The CC for a Study Session items is the most comprehensive of any prepared by staff for Council, aside from master plans. Accordingly, much more detail should be provided, analysis should be thought fully through, and staff should have a range of answers and options available regarding who benefits, who pays, who performs, what, where, when, why, how, and how much. That said, these items are often presented to Council at an early stage, so the detail should focus on the differences between broad alternatives, not on fully developed sole solutions.

TOWN MANAGER APPROVAL	Initial: _____
Notes: _____	

Exhibit A



TOWN OF DEWEY-HUMBOLDT
P.O. BOX 69
HUMBOLDT, AZ 86329
Phone 928-632-8562 ▪ Fax 928-632-7365

TOWN COUNCIL [REGULAR MEETING, SPECIAL MEETING, STUDY SESSION, OR SPECIAL STUDY SESSION]

[Date of Meeting] – [time of meeting] Town Council Meeting Chambers [or other location]

Agenda Item #[___].

To: Mayor and Town Council-members

By: [___], Town Manager

From: [___], [Department] Director

Date submitted: [date the CC was submitted to the Town Manager]

Agenda Item: [Short Agenda Title]. [More complete statement of action contemplated].

Recommended action: [recommendation].

Summary:

...

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Vision Criteria:

Active Citizenship – each Dewey-Humboldt citizen has the right and responsibility to participate in the governance of the Town.

Sustainable Development – the land regulated by the Town should be developed such that it remains at least as valuable in future generations as it is today, *ceteris paribus*, with no additional external resources.

Creating Community – Town activities should tend to create mutual respect and understanding between citizens; shared resources like air, the river, the mountains, and the feeling of openness should be preserved by governance, public investment, and celebration.

Self-Reliance – whenever civil, each person should earn the benefits and bear the burdens of his or her own actions.

Efficient Public Services – the few services of the Town should be delivered as efficiently and fairly as possible, with strong fiscal discipline.

Limited Public Services – the Town should only deliver those public services that cannot be efficiently provided by the private sector.

Durable Public Improvements – the Town should deliver public services with the understanding that the Town will live for as long as the State of Arizona exists.

Budget: [budget book reference, allocation, and estimated cost].

Attachments: [e.g., Proposed ordinance; maps, when relevant, are always welcome].