



RESIDENTS' GUIDE TO THE MEDFORD CITY COUNCIL

What does City Council do?

- Passing *ordinances*, zoning (land use) regulations, and resolutions
- Approve, reject, or reduce line items in the annual operating budget – it cannot vote to add funds to any line item
- Hold public hearings on select special permits

Many matters are outside of the purview of the City Council, for example: items regarding day-to-day city operations (City administration), schools (School Committee and School administration), traffic and signage (Traffic Commission), etc.

Will tonight's discussion be the Council's last word on the item before you?

- If the item is a resolution and the motion is to approve, yes.
- If the item is a proposed ordinance, it will require three readings (two City Council votes and one posting in a local publication in between the votes).
- Often, the item may be referred to a committee for further discussion. Residents can contribute at committee meetings before it returns to the Council agenda.

How to participate?

- If you wish to speak on an item already on the agenda, please line up behind the podium or sign up at the City Messenger's desk (if unable to line up).
- If you wish to speak on a topic not on the agenda, please wait for the President to call for "Public Participation."
- If you are joining the meeting on Zoom, please use the "Raise Hand" function and allow the host to unmute you.

Participation Rules

- All comments should be addressed "through the chair" (to the presiding officer, not individual councilors).
- Residents may speak on any single agenda item included *once for no more than 3 minutes*. After 90 minutes of discussion on said item, comments will be limited to one minute. (Written public comment can be sent to the City Clerk's office.)
- Banners, placards, handheld signs, or any other displays of advertising an issue are *not* allowed.
- No public participation will be taken on an item after a vote is taken on it.

Commonly used terms — and what they mean.

- *Motion to adjourn* — This ends the meeting.
- *Motion to recess* — This pauses the meeting.
- *Motion to table* — This stops discussion on the item and postpone discussion either to a specific date/time or, more generally, to a future meeting; this motion is undebatable.
- *Motion the previous question* — After a debate on whether or not to end debate on the main agenda item, a majority vote will end the main debate and require an immediate vote.
- *Motion to refer to committee* — This sends the agenda item to a specific committee for future discussion/study/development before it comes back before a regular City Council meeting.
- *Motion to amend* — This is a proposed change or adjustment the language or substance of an agenda item.
- *Resolution* — an expression of opinion, fact, principle or purpose; these are often requests to the City Administration for action.
- *Ordinance* — a local by-law

All meetings include remote participation through Zoom and accessible for viewing @[CityOfMedfordMass Youtube channel](#).

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