



City of West Chicago

Boards and Commissions Handbook

City of West Chicago Boards and Commissions Handbook

Contents

Public Meeting Rules of Decorum	2
General Guidelines	2
Rules of Decorum	2
Enforcement of Public Meeting Rules of Decorum	2
Reporting a Rules of Decorum Violation	3
Boards and Commissions Appointed Member Roles and Expectations	3
Applicable City Code	3
Chair	4
Vice Chair	4
Members of Boards and Commissions	4
Relationship to City Staff	5
Aldermanic Liaison	5
Staff Liaison	5
Annual Reports	6
Fiscal Planning	6
Annual Elections and Contact Information Update	7
Term Lengths	7
Agendas	7
Minutes	7
Meeting Attendance	7
Legal Considerations.....	8
Open Meetings Act (OMA).....	8
Recording of Meetings	8
Ethics.....	8
Conflicts of Interest.....	8
Communication Guidance.....	9
General Guidance	9
Social Media Conduct.....	9
City Of West Chicago Boards and Commissions Handbook Acknowledgement Form.....	10

Thank you for your interest in joining a Board or Commission in the City of West Chicago. We value public service and the important role that volunteers play in helping the City channel public feedback. This document serves as a guide for appointed members and other participants in Boards and Commissions for the City of West Chicago.

Public Meeting Rules of Decorum

General Guidelines

In order to encourage participatory democracy in West Chicago, participants in Board and Commission Meetings should strive to:

- treat others respectfully;
- listen to others actively;
- consider all viewpoints and keep an open mind;
- avoid personalizing debate and focus on issues; and
- embrace respectful disagreement and dissent as democratic rights that are inherent components of an inclusive public process and tools for forging sound decisions.

Rules of Decorum

- No person attending a Public Meeting shall engage in disorderly or boisterous conduct— including but not limited to applause, whistling, stamping of feet, booing, or making any loud, threatening, profane, abusive, personal, discriminatory, or slanderous comments or utterances— that disturbs, disrupts, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the Meeting.
- All remarks by Members of the Public shall be addressed to the Chair (hereinafter “Presiding Officer”) and not to any other member of the public or to any single Board or Commission member unless in response to a question from that member.
- Signs, placards, banners, or other similar items shall not be permitted in the audience during a Public Meeting if it is determined by the Chair that the presence of such item disturbs, disrupts or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the Meeting.
- All persons attending a Public Meeting shall remain seated in the seats provided, unless addressing the body at the podium or entering or leaving the Meeting.
- All persons attending a Public Meeting shall obey any lawful order of the Presiding Officer to enforce the Rules of Decorum.

Enforcement of Public Meeting Rules of Decorum

- The Presiding Officer (Chair or Vice Chair in their absence) shall be responsible for maintaining the decorum at the Public Meeting and uniformly enforcing the Rules of Decorum.
- In the event that any person violates the Rules of Decorum in a manner that disturbs, disrupts, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the Meeting, the Presiding Officer shall order that person to cease the offending conduct.
- If any person continues to be in violation of the Rules of Decorum in a manner that disturbs, disrupts, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the Meeting following an order from the Presiding Officer to cease the offending conduct, the Presiding Officer may order that person to leave the Public Meeting.

- If any person refuses to leave the Public Meeting following an order from the Presiding Officer to do so, the Presiding Officer may direct any law enforcement officer on duty to remove that person from the Public Meeting.
- If a member of the Board or Commission violates the Rules of Decorum, they will be given a verbal warning by the Chair.
- In the event that any member breaches the Rules of Decorum in a manner that disturbs, disrupts, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the Meeting, the Presiding Officer shall order that member to cease the offending conduct.
- If any member continues to breach the Rules of Decorum in a manner that disturbs, disrupts, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the Meeting following an order from the Presiding Officer to cease the offending conduct, the Presiding Officer may order that member to leave the Public Meeting.
- If any member refuses to leave the Public Meeting following an order from the Presiding Officer to do so, the Presiding Officer may direct any law enforcement officer on duty to remove that member from the Public Meeting.
- In the event that removal of a member causes the loss of a quorum, the Meeting will end.
- All Boards and Commissions and City Staff shall promote adherence to the guidelines for behavior at all Public Meetings of the City.

Reporting a Rules of Decorum Violation

- Any member may report a Rules of Decorum violation to the Chair, during or outside of Meeting hours. The Chair must report the violation to the Staff Liaison. In the event that the Chair is the source of the violation, condones the violation or ignores the violation, the conduct should be reported directly to the Staff Liaison. If the Staff Liaison is the source of the violation, condones the violation or ignores the violation, the conduct should be reported directly to the City Administrator who will determine whether to involve the Mayor and/or City Council.
- The Staff Liaison may keep a record of observed or reported violations of the Rules of Decorum. If a member has violated the Rules of Decorum so as to be detrimental to conducting the business of the Board or Commission, a formal report of the violations shall be made to the City Administrator, who will report such behavior to the Mayor.
- Following this report, the Mayor will evaluate the evidence and determine the correct response. If a member of the Board or Commission violates the Rules of Decorum repeatedly and becomes detrimental to conducting the business of the Board or Commission, they may be removed from service at the discretion of the Mayor, with the concurrence of the City Council, where such appointment requires it.

Boards and Commissions Appointed Member Roles and Expectations

Applicable City Code

- All members shall familiarize themselves with the City Code provisions on their Board or Commission, which establishes its role and authority, as amended from time to time. The City Code may be accessed through the City's website at the following link:
https://library.municode.com/il/west_chicago/codes/code_of_ordinances

Chair

- Appointed by the Mayor, unless the appointment is prescribed by State Statute.
- The Chair shall serve a one year term and may not serve consecutive terms as chair unless the appointment is prescribed by State Statute, or the appointment is extended by the Mayor.
- Advise Staff Liaison on agenda items and approve agendas at least 48 hours before the Meeting.
- Work with Staff Liaison to resolve attendance issues.
- Ensure smooth operation of Board/Commission Meetings; make certain that discussions do not get side-tracked; keep the focus on the agenda.
- Maintain order and enforce the Rules of Decorum.
- Identify and draw on interests, expertise and perspectives of individual members.
- Foster an environment of open discussions, consensus, and cooperation among members.
- Encourage and schedule participation in training opportunities (Open Meetings Act).
- Encourage and schedule attendance and/or partnerships at area Meetings, events, and activities when appropriate and relevant.
- Encourage and schedule ongoing partnerships and activities with schools and programs for youth and other community groups when appropriate and relevant.

Vice Chair

- Elected annually by the Board or Commission members through majority vote.
- Serve as Chair in the absence of the Chair.
- Support the Chair in their duties.

Members of Boards and Commissions

- All members serve at the convenience of the Mayor, who appoints members to Boards and Commissions with the concurrence of the City Council, where such appointment requires it.
- Members may be removed from service at the discretion of the Mayor, with the concurrence of the City Council, where required.
- Members should understand the role and scope of their responsibilities as well as be informed of the individual Board or Commission's purpose and of its operating procedures.
- Members should be careful to represent the majority views of their individual Board or Commission. Individual "opinions" to the public and press should be identified as such (see Communication Guidance section).
- Members should represent the public interest and not special interest groups (see Legal Considerations section).
- Good communication is essential. Members serve as a liaison between the City and its citizens and can help to reconcile opposing viewpoints and to build a consensus around common goals and objectives. Members are a communication link between the community, staff, and City, representing recommendations and providing a channel for citizen expression.
- Members are encouraged to read the agenda packet before Meetings in order to be prepared for the business of the Meeting.
- Members are encouraged to develop good working relationships with their fellow members, follow the Rules of Decorum and allow other members time to present their views fully before commenting. Members should be open and honest, as well as welcoming to new members.

- Member appointments are made without regard to political party affiliation, unless dictated by State Statute. Members are not restricted from participating in political activities; however, members shall not use or involve their membership in a Board or Commission in the conduct of political activities.
- Members shall not take action on behalf of their Board or Commission or the City unless the action has been approved by a majority of the relevant body in a public vote.

Relationship to City Staff

- Board or Commission members do not have authority over the work programs of City Staff and may not direct City Staff, or assign projects or provide direction without the prior approval of the City Administrator, City Council or City Council Standing Committee, as appropriate.
- Proposed instructions and requests directed to the Staff Liaison shall be made by the Board or Commission as a whole via a vote at a Public Meeting. The proposal shall then be recorded in the minutes and be subject to prior approval from the relevant body. If modifications to the initial proposal are required, the Board or Commission as a whole will need to vote on the modified proposal at a Public Meeting.
- Appointed Board and Commission members should deal with City Staff only through the staff member designated to their appointed body as the Staff Liaison. If the Staff Liaison is out of the office and the Board or Commission needs immediate assistance, they may contact their Staff Liaison's Supervisor. If the Liaison's Supervisor cannot be reached, members may contact the City Administrator.
- All staff shall be treated in accordance with the established Rules of Decorum.
- City Staff should not be expected to respond to questions or requests for information outside of normal business hours, except in emergency situations.

Aldermanic Liaison

- The Mayor may appoint an Alderman to act as liaison to a Board, Commission, Committee or other body that advises the Council; the Mayor may also appoint another Alderman to serve as an alternate when the primary liaison is unable to participate in a particular Meeting or event.
- When attending a Meeting of a City Board, Commission or Committee as liaison, the Aldermanic Liaison will:
 - Not attempt to lobby or influence the Board, Commission or Committee on any item under its consideration. It is important for the advisory body to make objective recommendations to the City Council on items before them. However, nothing in this section precludes the Alderman from explaining what the Council expects from the Board, Commission or Committee, or explaining Council policy.
 - Not vote at the body's Meeting on any item.

Staff Liaison

- Provide administrative support and facilitate the flow of information between the Board/Commission, the City Administrator, and the City Council (or one of its Standing Committees).
- Support the Chair in facilitating productive Meetings.
- Ensure that the work of the Board or Commission is on target with the mission, goals, and direction of the City Council (or one of its Standing Committees).

- Communicate recommendations of action approved by a majority of the Board/Commission in a formal Meeting of the City Council (or one of its Standing Committees).
- Assist with recruitment and orientation of new members.
- Conduct research and provide professional advice and analysis on issues under consideration.
- Review, approve, and process financial transactions connected with approved work.
- Develop and deliver an annual report to the City Administrator and the City Council on the Board or Commission's activities. The Report must be approved by a majority of the members of a Board or Commission.
- Ensure compliance with the Open Meetings Act by drafting, distributing, posting, and maintaining Meeting agendas and minutes for all Meetings.
- Send a record of minutes to the Executive Office Manager within ten days of the Meeting when the Board or Commission approves the minutes to ensure that minutes may be properly filed and posted to the City website.
- Keep attendance records.
- Produce audio or video recordings of Board or Commission Meetings, if deemed necessary.
- If the Staff Liaison is unable to attend the Meeting, an alternate may be selected at the direction of the Staff Liaison's supervisor.

Annual Reports

- Some Boards and Commissions shall deliver an Annual Report to the City Council or other relevant body. This Report shall inform the relevant body of the Board/Commission's activities in the previous year and offer a preview of priorities for the year to come. This Report shall be submitted to the City Administrator by the end of each February, who in turn will provide the Annual Reports to the City Council. The City Council or any of its Standing Committees may request that the Annual Report be presented at one of its Meetings.
- The Staff Liaison will prepare the report and will send to members for feedback before final approval.
- The following Boards and Commissions shall deliver an Annual Report to the City Council or one of its standing committees:
 - Civil Service Commission; (special timing applies – see 5/10-1-21 of the Civil Service in Cities Act.)
 - Cultural Arts Commission;
 - Economic Development Commission;
 - Environmental Commission;
 - Historical Preservation Commission; and
 - Police Pension Fund Board (special timing applies – see Sec. 2-405 of City Code).

Fiscal Planning

- Boards and Commissions should produce plans for the next Fiscal Year that can be presented to City Council (or one of its Standing Committees) for consideration. This will assure that funding can be allocated and plans can be implemented by City Staff in an efficient and effective manner.
- Plans for the next Fiscal Year requiring budgetary approval should be relayed to City Staff for consideration before August 15th in the current Fiscal Year. The Staff Liaison will send appropriate items to City Staff.

Annual Elections and Contact Information Update

- At or before the first Meeting of each year, each Board or Commission shall elect a Vice Chair and any other rules-created roles.
- Members should provide updated contact information that includes phone numbers and emails.

Term Lengths

All Board and Commission members shall hold office until a successor has been appointed. Note that some commissions have staggered appointments which may change the term lengths for some members.

- Building Board of Appeals – members serve four year terms.
- Civil Service Commission – members serve three year terms.
- Cultural Arts Commission – members serve four year terms.
- Economic Development Commission – members serve three year terms.
- Environmental Commission – members serve three year terms.
- Historical Preservation Commission – members serve three year terms.
- Planning Commission/Zoning Board of Appeals – members serve five year terms.
- Police Pension Board – members serve two year terms.

Agendas

- An agenda shall be prepared by the Staff Liaison with the advisement of the Board or Commission Chair.
- The agenda should always be prepared before the Meeting and copies distributed to all members of the Board or Commission.
- Extra copies of the agenda shall be available for the public.
- The Staff Liaison for the Boards and Commissions, in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, will post the agenda publicly at least 48 hours prior to the Meeting.

Minutes

- Minutes will be taken by the Staff Liaison.
- Must be provided to the Executive Office Manager within ten days of the Meeting when the Board or Commission approves the minutes.

Meeting Attendance

- Every Board or Commission member is expected to maintain a suitable attendance record.
- If a member cannot attend a Meeting, they should notify the Staff Liaison at least 48 hours in advance of the start of the Meeting.
- There will be two types of absences from Meetings:
 - Excused Absence – will be granted by the Chair or Vice Chair when the member cannot attend the Meeting due to extenuating circumstances such as: illness, injury, personal medical care or medical care for a loved one, death of a loved one, child care matters, pregnancy, religious holidays, planned vacations, and work related matters.
 - Unexcused Absence – will be noted when a member is not attending a Meeting and fails to notify the Staff Liaison or does not have an extenuating circumstance to justify their absence, or if a member has excessive tardiness.

- The term “Meetings” includes all Meetings of the Board or Commission and all Meetings of any subcommittees on which the members serve. When a majority of a quorum is present and discussing business, this is also considered a Meeting in accordance with the Open Meetings Act (see Legal Considerations).
- The Staff Liaison is responsible for keeping track of members’ attendance.
- If a member has three or more unexcused absences in a row, this may be viewed as a voluntary resignation from the Board or Commission.
- Failure to follow the attendance policy set for the Board or Commission may result in the member being removed from service at the discretion of the Mayor with the concurrence of the City Council if the appointment required such.

Legal Considerations

Open Meetings Act (OMA)

- Members should be aware of the State Statute that governs Public Meetings, the Open Meetings Act.
- Members should work with their Staff Liaison to ensure compliance with this law.
- The Open Meetings Act can be found at:
<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=84&ChapterID=2>

Recording of Meetings

- At times, the Board or Commission members may benefit from audio or video recording of Meetings to help ensure accuracy of minutes, compliance with State Statutes, and City policies.
- Recordings will be produced by the Board or Commission’s Staff Liaison if needed.

Ethics

- All Board and Commission members shall follow the City’s Ethics Ordinance, which is located in the City’s Code. The City Code may be accessed through the City’s website or at the following link: https://library.municode.com/il/west_chicago/codes/code_of_ordinances

Conflicts of Interest

- Members should familiarize themselves with the conflict of interest provisions outlined in the Illinois State Law, specifically the Public Officer Prohibited Activities Act, as well as the City Ethics Ordinance. It is important to understand that if a member finds themselves in a situation that creates a conflict of interest, they should refrain from participating in any decisions made by the body of which they are a member. The Public Officer Prohibited Activities Act can be accessed at the following link: <https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=689&ChapterID=11>
- Members who find that a decision of the body of which they are a member will create a conflict of interest as defined by Illinois State Law in the Public Officer Prohibited Activities Act and the City’s Ethics Ordinance should not attempt to influence the decision and should not participate in official or unofficial discussion with other Board/Commission members, City Staff, or others about the decision. Such member may not participate in Meetings, hearings, or vote on the item and should be absent from the Meeting room during the deliberation of the item.

Communication Guidance

The guidance offered here is not intended to limit or restrict the rights of any member engaged in speech or communications that are concerted or protected under the law. The intent is to help members effectively message in their public facing role in a manner that will decrease their risk of violating State Statutes and City policies.

General Guidance

This guidance applies to all communications when volunteering on a Board or Commission, which includes public comments, publications, and social media.

- Public statements should not knowingly and/or willfully misrepresent the City, Board or Commission.
- Members should not publicly attack or criticize fellow Board or Commission members or City Staff.
- All publicly stated personal opinions should be clarified as such.

Social Media Conduct

- Members of Boards and Commissions are prohibited from identifying themselves as connected to or speaking on behalf of the City of West Chicago when responding to or commenting on websites with personal opinions or views.
- If a Board or Commission member chooses to identify themselves as such and posts a statement on a matter related to City business, a disclaimer similar to the following must be used: "These comments are my own personal comments and not those of the City".
- A member may establish their affiliation with City of West Chicago in their personal profile; if they choose to do so, placing a link to the City website in their profile bio is recommended.
- A member shall not release confidential or private data; if there are questions about what constitutes confidential or private data, contact the Staff Liaison.
- A member shall not engage in inappropriate use of the City's name, logo or their position or title.
- Members should avoid discussing issues of commission business with each other over social media; if a quorum is established, even on social media, the discussion could count as a Public Meeting and would thus be subject to and potentially in violation of the Open Meetings Act.
- Continued social media conduct detrimental to the City and/or the Board or Commission may result in that member being removed from service at the discretion of the Mayor with the concurrence of the City Council if the appointment required such.

Each situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis because the laws in this area are complex. If there are any questions about what types of activities might result in discipline, a member should discuss the type of usage with the Staff Liaison or the City Administrator.

City Of West Chicago Boards and Commissions Handbook

Acknowledgement Form

Thank you for your interest in joining a Board or Commission in the City of West Chicago. We value public service and the important role that volunteers play in helping the city channel public feedback. The City of West Chicago Boards and Commissions Handbook serves as a guide for appointed members and other participants in Boards and Commissions for the City of West Chicago.

It is important that all members adhere to the guidance outlined in The City of West Chicago Boards and Commissions Handbook. These principles will ensure that the Board or Commission is productive and able to best serve the interests of the public in the City of West Chicago.

Sign below to indicate that you have read and agree to adhere to the rules and expectations laid out in this Volunteer Boards and Commissions Handbook.

Signature: _____

Date: _____