



City of Philomath Citizen Advisory Groups Member & Staff Manual

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OUR MISSION

To promote ethical and responsive
municipal government
which provides its citizenry
with high quality municipal services
in an efficient and cost effective manner.

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Introduction to Philomath's Citizen Advisory Groups

Philomath's community members may choose to participate in City government through serving on one of Philomath's standing or ad hoc advisory boards, commissions, or committees. Philomath has several standing Citizen Advisory Groups (CAGs). State law requires that the City maintain certain advisory groups, such as a Planning Commission and Budget Committee, while special ad hoc advisory committees or work groups may be created by the council or mayor for a particular purpose to study a certain area of interest or concern.

These advisory groups provide guidance and expertise on important policy issues that affect the City government and the community as a whole. Advisory group members provide an invaluable service to our community by interacting with people of all ages, interests, and backgrounds and providing elected officials and City staff with greater understanding of community concerns, values, and perspectives.

This manual is intended to function as both a guideline and a governing framework for the City's standing and ad hoc advisory groups.

Philomath's Form of Government

Council/Manager System: By charter, the City of Philomath adopted a council-manager form of government on January 8, 1962. The charter provides that the city manager is the administrative head of the City, serves at the pleasure of the council, and is charged with administering the policies as established by the council.

Mayor: The mayor is elected on a nonpartisan ballot for a two-year term. The mayor is chair of the council and presides over deliberations. The mayor enforces the rules of the council and determines the order of business under the rules and reads proclamations. The mayor is a voting member of the council. The mayor is also the ceremonial head of the City and is frequently asked to preside at ceremonies and events.

City Council: Councilors are currently elected on a nonpartisan ballot for two-year terms, with that changing to four-year terms at the November 2022 general election. The council sets goals, enacts legislation, adopts a budget, develops policies, and determines the services the City provides. Councilors have no authority as individuals but only as members of the collective legislative body.

City Manager: The council appoints a city manager who manages the City's staff and departments. The city manager is responsible for implementing the council's policies and Strategic Plan, managing the day-to-day operations of the City, and hiring department directors to assist in providing City services and enforcing city council policies, resolutions, and ordinances.

Philomath's Standing Boards, Commissions, and Committees

Standing committees are not legislative bodies and cannot establish policies or enact law; they serve to make recommendations to the city council. The council can accept, reject, or modify any recommendations of the committee. The council relies on various committees to increase the variety of viewpoints on City issues. By concentrating on specific areas, committee members can expand the level of expertise from which to address an issue and can conduct detailed analyses that the council itself may not have the time to pursue.

Budget Committee: Seven committee members, each serving a three-year term of office. The city council serves on the Budget Committee, along with a counterpart member (lay members) appointed by the council. This committee is an advisory group created by Oregon law to take public comment and testimony on the proposed budget and to recommend approval with any changes of the proposed budget to the city council. The committee is active in April and May of each year and reviews each department's proposed budget and citywide budget policies.

Inclusivity Committee: Three appointed members of the council and four committee members serving two-year terms. This committee is established by the city council for the purpose of supporting City leadership in fostering an inclusive, just and equitable community that honors its past while creating a diverse and accessible city for future generation. This committee is a long-term ad hoc committee.

Park Advisory Board: A minimum of five and maximum of seven committee members, each serving a three-year term of office. This board advises the Public Works Committee and council regarding any matter pertaining to city parks as referred by the Public Works Committee or council. The Park Advisory Board is established and governed by [Philomath Municipal Code Chapter 2.55](#).

Planning Commission: Seven commissioners, each serving a four-year term. This commission oversees implementation of the City's development code and the comprehensive plan. The commission reviews and approves or denies applications for various types of land use. In addition, the commission oversees updates to the City's comprehensive plan as part of the state-mandated periodic review process. There are limits on the number of commissioners engaged in the same form of employment. The Planning Commission also serves as the Committee for Citizen Involvement as defined in the Philomath Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission is established and governed by [Philomath Municipal Code Chapter 2.30](#).

Tree Advisory Board: The three members of the Public Works Standing Committee and at least one, but no more than two citizen members, each serving a three-year term of office. This board advises the city council about matters involving trees in the community, especially trees in public spaces and in public rights-of-way. The board recommends policies for planting, removal, and care of public trees; and other duties as established and governed by [Philomath Municipal Code Chapter 2.40](#).

Ad Hoc Committees

Ad Hoc Committees: As authorized by the city council, ad hoc groups may be formed for a particular purpose to study a certain area of interest or concern. The duration of the committee and scope of work are limited to a specific assignment. After the completion of the assignment, the committee is disbanded. This manual serves as a functioning guideline for ad hoc committees, but it is not always applicable to them. The city manager or city attorney can provide more information.

Ad hoc committees are not legislative bodies and cannot establish policies or enact law; they serve to make recommendations to the city council. The council can accept, reject, or modify any recommendations of the committee. The council relies on various committees to increase the variety of viewpoints on City issues. By concentrating on specific areas, committee members can expand the level of expertise from which to address an issue and can conduct detailed analyses that the council itself may not have the time to pursue.

Committee Membership

It is the policy and intent of the city council that for every committee position, every applicant will be considered on an equal basis for all positions without regard to race, ethnicity, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, disabilities, or other protected status or activities in accordance with state and federal laws.

Recruitment and Appointment: Recruitment for most advisory groups occurs at the end of each calendar year, with new appointments to be confirmed by the council in January. Public advertising of all current or anticipated vacancies are generally made during December and posted on the City's website. Applicants must complete an application and submit it through the City's website by the posted deadline. The council makes appointments at a January council meeting, and subsequent regular council meetings, if needed. Vacancies are also advertised and filled as they occur throughout the year.

Membership Rosters: The City Manager's Office maintains an official membership roster for each committee. Rosters include all relevant contact information for each member and staff liaison, as well as term of office information for each committee position. **Members are responsible for notifying the City Manager's Office and their committee's staff liaison as soon as possible should any of their contact information change.**

Terms: Term lengths vary depending on each committee; term expirations are staggered to ensure adequate membership at any given time.

Number of Meetings: Most committees will meet once per month, with the exception of on-call or seasonal committees such as the Budget Committee. Committees may meet more frequently, as needed to conduct their business, but shall comply with public notice requirements.

Member Eligibility Requirements: For nearly all committee positions, committee members must reside within the Philomath city limits. Specific exceptions to the residency requirement or additional specifications may be designated by council policy or state law.

Committee Membership (continued)

Serving on Multiple Committees: Applicants should evaluate carefully whether they can meet the availability requirements and workload of all committees being considered before applying to multiple committees.

Reappointment: Members on standing committees may be reappointed unless there is a term limit restriction, but incumbents shall submit application materials in the same manner as any new applicant. The City Manager's Office notifies members whose terms are expiring in order to provide them an opportunity to apply for reappointment.

City Staff Support for Committees

When assigned to support a committee, City staff will perform administrative and housekeeping functions as necessary to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the committee in accomplishing City goals. If staff regularly attends meetings or otherwise supports a standing or ad hoc committee, they remain under the direction of the department director and the city manager, not the committee or committee chair.

Staff's primary responsibilities are to assist the committee in its functions and to represent the City of Philomath. Other responsibilities may include:

- Provide professional assistance and technical advice.
- Provide clerical assistance for the preparation, duplication, and distribution of committee letters, minutes, and reports.
- Assist in the preparation, publication, and distribution of the committee agenda in consultation with the chair.
- Notify committee members and the City Manager's Office of upcoming meetings and post the agenda to the City's website.
- Maintain a current copy of the advisory groups manual and bring it to the committee meetings.
- Secure meeting rooms for committee meetings.
- Take minutes, unless the committee designates a member to take minutes.
- Record and post meeting audio to the City's website.

Requests for City staff support to perform specific work, projects, or reports need to be approved by the relevant department director or city manager to ensure that the resource allocation is in accordance with overall priorities and does not impose an undue hardship on the City's financial resources.

Members' Roles, Relationships, and Communication with Elected Officials

Advisory groups provide communication to the city council through status reports or other materials included in the committee's agenda packets, committee meeting minutes, written findings or recommendations submitted to council, and occasional presentations at city council meetings.

Committee Reports and Presentations at Council Meetings: Should a committee wish to submit a report to the council, a memo outlining the status report, findings, or recommendation, along with any supporting documents, needs to be provided to the City Manager's Office in advance of the meeting so that it can be included in the meeting agenda packet. The committee chair, or other committee person as approved by the committee, may choose to give a presentation at the meeting, in which case a copy of the presentation should also be provided in advance with the other materials. The committee needs to contact the City Manager's Office at least two weeks in advance of the meeting to inquire about availability and deadlines for submitting materials.

Committee Work Plans: Any standing committee may choose to develop a scheduled work plan outlining specific goals, functions, or projects they aim to accomplish within a specified time period. Committees may submit their work plans to the council to serve as a briefing of the committee's desired direction. The council may receive this information and provide feedback, but they are not required to do so.

Joint Meetings: On rare occasions, it may be appropriate to consider a joint meeting between a committee and the city council. Requests for joint meetings are submitted to the City Manager's Office stating the reasons for and anticipated outcomes of such a meeting.

It is expected that committees will provide advice related to their specific spheres of interest. However, the council's role is to take into consideration the many varied and sometimes conflicting public needs and render its judgment as to what will best serve the public. The council must weigh the effect of any given recommendation, not only on the particular area of interest, but on all other City goals, programs, and finances.

Committee Member Responsibilities

Committee Chair: A chair is elected by the committee at the first committee meeting of the calendar year that follows council approval to fill the majority of vacancies, or at the first meeting of a newly established ad hoc committee (organizational meeting). The chair performs the following duties:

- Presides at all meetings of the committee.
- Approves the agenda prior to distribution.
- Signs correspondence on behalf of the committee.
- Represents the committee before the city council with the approval of the committee.
- Performs other duties necessary or customary to the office.

The most important duty of the chair presiding over a meeting is to ensure that the work of the committee is accomplished. To this end, the chair must exert sufficient control to minimize irrelevant, repetitious, or otherwise unproductive discussion. At the same time, the chair must ensure that all viewpoints are heard and are considered in a fair and impartial manner.

Committee Member Responsibilities (continued)

Vice Chair: This position is chosen by the committee at the organizational meeting. The vice chair performs all the functions of the chair in their absence.

Temporary Chair: In the event that the chair and vice chair are both absent, the remaining members shall elect one of the present members to act as temporary chair.

Individual Committee Members: Unless authorized by the committee, an individual committee member may not represent the committee before any other committee, outside agency, the media, the general public, or the city council. When an individual committee member is appearing in a private capacity before other committees, outside agencies, the general public, or the city council, the committee member must clearly indicate that the appearance is as a private individual, not as an official representative.

Members are responsible for notifying the City Manager's Office and their staff liaison immediately should they no longer meet applicable residency or other membership requirements or if any of their contact information (email address, phone number, or physical address) changes.

Each committee member also has the obligation to work cooperatively with other committee members. Members should exercise self-discipline and always strive to be objective, fair, and courteous with each other as well as with staff and the public. Respect for the time of other committee members, staff, and the public is of critical importance.

Committee members are expected to read and study agenda packet materials prior to each meeting in order to be prepared for discussion.

Use of the City logo or City stationery: A committee or committee member shall only use the City logo or City stationery with direct and prior consent of the city council.

Ethics and Conflicts of Interest

Ethics: State law defines a code of ethics for public officials, including conflicts of interest, in ORS 244. A link to the Ethics Manual, along with ORS 260.432 – Restrictions on Political Campaigning for Public Employees, is provided under “Additional Resources” on the last page of this manual.

Statements of Economic Interest (SEI) Forms: ORS 244 requires certain public officials to file SEI forms with the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (OGEC) by April 15 of each year. This applies to members of the Planning Commission. Members will receive reminders from OGEC.

Ethics and Conflicts of Interest (continued)

Conflict of Interest: Committee members need to provide objective advice to the city council. All members of committees should be aware of the need to avoid any instance or appearance of conflict of interest. Conflict of interest standards are generally applicable to all committees. In general, committee members should not vote when they have any kind of direct or indirect financial benefit in the action or recommendation proposed. If a committee member is unsure of whether they have a possible or actual conflict interest, they should contact the city manager for direction. State law requires that public officials may not use their position for financial gain.

Absenteeism: It is the City's expectation that all members take an active role in their committees, including regular attendance at meetings. It is the committee member's responsibility to notify the City if they will be absent; this includes notice to the staff liaison, support staff person, and the committee chair. Absences will be recorded in minutes as either excused (notified prior to meeting of one's absence and the reason) or unexcused. **Excessive absences are not acceptable and may be cause for a member's removal from the board, commission, or committee.**

Resignation Procedure for Committee Members: A committee member wishing to resign or who no longer meets the residency or other requirements to serve shall submit a letter of resignation (email notification is satisfactory) to the City Manager's Office and their staff liaison; verbal notifications are not sufficient.

Committee Meeting Requirements

Open Meetings: Meetings of standing and ad hoc committees of the governing body are open to the public in the State of Oregon. [ORS 192.620](#) establishes Oregon's policy of open decision-making by governing bodies. In addition to the basic requirement that meetings be open to the public, meetings must not be held at a place where discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, gender, age, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, religion, or disability is practiced. All meeting places must be accessible. In general, meetings may not be held outside the City limits without the city manager's approval.

Quorum: A quorum is established when more than half of the members of a committee are present, without regard to vacancies or absences (except for the Budget Committee, which has unique quorum requirements). A quorum of members must be present to proceed with a meeting. If a quorum is not obtained within 15 minutes of the scheduled start time, the meeting cannot take place, and the meeting room must be vacated. No minutes are produced. The minutes-taker should mark the agenda with a "No Quorum" watermark and forward it to the City Recorder's Office. This is archived instead of minutes and officially documents for the record why the meeting did not take place.

General Public: The purpose of committee meetings is to permit open discussion on specific topics in a setting that is more informal than a council meeting, to hear public expression on issues, and to inform the public of what the committee is doing. Committee members have an obligation to consider the welfare of the entire city; and to be fair, objective, and courteous.

Public Notice, Agendas, and Minutes

Public Notice of Meetings: State law requires that the City provide public notice of all meetings. The City Manager's Office and/or designated City staff are responsible for providing notice of the meeting and the agenda. Public meetings law requires that committees provide at least 24 hours' notice to the news media and interested persons before conducting a meeting. If 24 hours' notice cannot be provided, the meeting needs to be rescheduled. **Although state law requires 24 hours' notice, note that the City's policy is to provide notice and post meeting agendas at least three business days in advance of the meeting.**

In rare circumstances, committees may hold an emergency meeting without providing 24 hours' notice. This may only be done in a genuine emergency and with the knowledge and concurrence of the city manager and city attorney. Typically, committee business would not be urgent enough to justify an emergency meeting.

Agendas: Whenever possible, agendas will be made available at least three days in advance of the meeting and must include, at a minimum, the committee name; date, time, and location of the meeting; principal purpose of the meeting, and any items that will be discussed. Additionally, it is best practice to include supporting documents such as memos, staff reports, or presentations as part of the agenda packet.

Minutes: Written minutes or audio recordings of all committee meetings are required by Oregon state law. Philomath provides both and has designated the minutes as the official record. All minutes and audio recordings are public records and must be archived in accordance with City policy and Oregon state law.

The record of a meeting must, at a minimum, contain the following information:

- Names of members present;
- All motions, proposals, orders, and measures proposed and their disposition;
- Results of all votes by name of each member;
- The substance of any discussion on any matter; and
- Any reference to any document discussed at the meeting.*

*Documents presented by staff, members of the committee, or the public during the public meeting, and that are not already part of the agenda packet, are public records. **Such documents must be clearly identified, and a copy of each item must be provided to the minutes-taker so that they can be referenced in the minutes and archived with the agenda packet.** The documents are available to the public through the public records request process.

Minutes must be made available to the public within a "reasonable time" after each meeting. Members may vote to approve minutes for meetings that they did not attend. Committees may, by motion, make corrections to the proposed minutes in order to conform to fact. It should be noted that "the minutes were approved as amended" and those changes should be outlined in the minutes of the meeting at which the correction was proposed and approved.

Inadvertent Public Meetings and Public Records

Inadvertent Public Meetings: If committee members willfully violate public meetings law, they can be held personally liable for attorney fees. An inadvertent public meeting may occur when a quorum of a committee meets outside of a public meeting, whether in person, via email, or using social media platforms.

Public meetings laws provide guidance for other times a quorum of members may meet, such as while attending the meetings of other public bodies; social gatherings; trainings sessions; and field trips. For this reason, any time a CAG would like to meet outside of a properly noticed public meeting, the CAG contact should consult with the city manager or city attorney.

Serial Communication: Committee members and staff must take care not to participate in communications that could turn into a serial meeting (such as using email, texting, or instant messages). If a series of communication among what turns into a quorum is used to reach a decision, it could be a violation of the public meetings laws. Staff should be cautious of being an intermediary in a serial communication that, taken as a whole, turns into deliberation and, thus, an inadvertent public meeting.

Here are some tips on how to steer clear of an inadvertent serial meeting:

- Avoid using “reply all” in emails.
- Avoid conversations, regardless of format, where views of fellow members are shared.
- Avoid sharing opinions or views about items that the CAG will be voting on, in email, on social sites, or in other venues where other members may participate.

Remember, the point of Oregon’s public meetings laws to ensure that the deliberations of the governing body take place in a properly noticed public meeting.

Public Records: Oregon law addressing public records is divided into two parts: retention and access. Retention is assigned based on a records’ content, regardless of its format. Access, or disclosure, applies to most records unless specifically exempt by law. As appointed officials of a public body, it is the duty of members to maintain the public records they create.

Emails and agendas are two areas where CAG members might create records requiring retention and/or disclosure. Members may use privately owned email accounts or electronic devices for sending and receiving emails related to the conduct of City business. By including or forwarding the email to City staff, it is archived in the City’s system for two years.

If a CAG member makes notes on a meeting agenda, that agenda becomes part of a record series under Oregon law that has a retention of five years. CAG members have been assigned custody of this record series; so, if a member does take notes on an agenda, regardless of format, they should be prepared to retain it for five years in case there is a public records request. When the member’s term ends, forward those records to the CAG contact, and the City will assume custody for the duration of the retention period.

It is also important to note that whenever City business is done using personal email accounts or personal equipment, there is no expectation of privacy.

League of Oregon Cities (LOC) Training Videos: The LOC has training videos on public meetings and public records. Refer to the link on the last page, under “Additional Resources.” Contact staff for more information.

Parliamentary Procedures

Philomath's CAGs are guided by Robert's Rules of Order.

Motion: "I move that . . ." or "I move to . . ." not "so moved."
Once made, a motion belongs to the whole council.

Vote: "aye" means **yes**
Silence means **yes**

Abstain: councilor announces the reason, stays in the meeting, and does not vote. The status of the abstention is determined after all councilors have voted.

Recuse: councilor announces conflict, leaves the meeting, and does not vote.

Amend a motion: needs a second
can be debated
can be amended
must be voted on before the main motion can be addressed.

Table a motion (usually to a certain date):
To put something aside temporarily until the council has dealt with another item
needs a second
cannot be debated
cannot be amended

Postpone a motion indefinitely:
needs a second
can be debated
cannot be amended

Withdraw a motion: if no objections, a motion can be withdrawn.
if any councilor objects, withdrawal requires a vote.

Call the question: A request to stop debate and vote immediately on the pending motion.
needs a second
cannot be debated
cannot be amended
requires 2/3 vote to pass

Point of order: A claim that something procedural is being done wrong.
does not need a second
no debate
no amendment
no vote. The presider rules on points of order.

How to Conduct a Successful Meeting

The chair reviews the following steps with the membership annually after new appointments (usually February).

Five Steps to a Better Meeting:

1) Plan

- Set the agenda in advance and state the purpose of the meeting.
- The agenda must include the date, time, subject, and estimated length of the meeting.
- State the goal for each agenda item: information, discussion, or direction.

2) Inform

- Send out the agenda with enough lead time to prepare members for the discussion and include appropriate background material with the agenda.
- Make sure the agenda items accurately convey the subject and action.

3) Prepare

- Structure the agenda so that the most important issues are covered first, with adequate time for discussion.

4) Structure and Control

- Define the issues and stay focused on them; avoid “spinning your wheels.”
- Keep the meeting within reasonable time parameters.

5) Plan the next steps

- Assign follow-through – who does what and by when.

Tips for Chairing a Meeting:

- 1) Use Robert’s Rules of Order as a guide for conduct of your meetings.
- 2) Follow the agenda and state clearly which item is being considered.
- 3) State the purpose of each agenda item and the time allotted to it.
- 4) Recognize persons to speak in the order in which they have sought recognition.
- 5) Keep participation balanced – discourage domination by one or two committee members.
- 6) Keep participation respectful; stop abusive and belittling communications.
- 7) Solicit input from those who have not spoken on an issue.
- 8) Halt side discussions among one or two members while another person has the floor.
- 9) Clearly restate the motion before the vote.
- 10) **Outside of the meeting**, confront cases of persistent late arrival, early departure, or absenteeism.

Tips for Virtual Meetings:

- 1) Identify yourself. Please put your name and position on the tag line associated with your picture.
- 2) Use your camera. These are public meetings, and in that spirit the public expect to see who is participating.
- 3) Don’t eat on camera. If you need to take a break, turn your camera off for a few minutes.
- 4) Use your mute button. When unmuting, allow a few seconds before you start talking.
- 5) Seek the chair’s recognition. Use the “raise hand” feature or wave a pen.
- 6) Be sure roll call votes are clear. Give the minutes-taker time to verify the results if necessary.
- 7) Do not use the chat features; the public has a right to see deliberations take place. Using chat features may also create a public record and could create requirements for retention and/or disclosure.

Additional Resources

- The Guide for Public Officials is posted on the state of Oregon’s website:
<https://www.oregon.gov/ogec/Pages/Guide-for-Public-Officials.aspx>
- ORS 192 – Records; Public Records and Meetings:
<https://www.doj.state.or.us/oregon-department-of-justice/public-records/public-records-and-meetings-law/>
- ORS 244 – Government Ethics: https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws/ors/ors244.html
- ORS 260.432 – Restrictions on Political Campaigning for Public Employees:
<https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/hayden/Documents/Restrictions%20on%20Political%20Employees%20and%20Campaigning.pdf>
- Robert’s Rules of Order: www.robertsrules.com
- League of Oregon Cities Training Videos (<https://www.orcities.org/education/training/elected-essentials>):
 - Public Meetings in Oregon – Legal Requirements & Best Practices
 - Ethics Awareness – Understanding Your Legal Obligations
 - Public Records in Oregon – What City Officials Need to Know