



CITY CLERK'S OFFICE MEMORANDUM
#19-2019

DATE: October 28, 2019

TO: Honorable Mayor Antonio B. Esquibel and City Council Members

THROUGH: Heather Geyer, City Manager 

FROM: Johanna Small, City Clerk 

SUBJECT: City Council Orientation Program

PURPOSE:

To obtain input from City Council on the Council Orientation Program to better prepare incoming and current members of Council for their role as elected officials.

BACKGROUND:

Newly elected officials need information to perform their duties within a legal framework of local and state government. With minimal qualifications for becoming a member of City Council (live and be a registered voter in the City of Northglenn), effort must be made to help prepare incoming Council members for the significant task they will face for the next four years.

Objectives of the Council orientation:

- To educate Council members on the multiple facets of municipal government, including the City's form of government, organizational structure, and services provided to residents.
- To help Council members understand their authority, legal responsibilities, and expectations regarding conduct.
- To provide Council members a first-hand look at key City facilities to better understand the operations and infrastructure.
- To make Council members feel welcomed, and to develop relationships to ensure good governance.

Council members have expressed concern about the timing of previous orientations and the type of information included in the prior onboarding session. As a result, staff is making improvements to the City Council orientation to ensure the program is educational, open, and welcoming to interaction. Staff will: 1) establish an orientation for all members of the Council to occur prior to the start of their terms of office; and 2) provide a comprehensive and complete orientation to assist Council members in serving the residents of Northglenn.

To determine the issues that need to be a part of the orientation, staff will:

- Ask for specific feedback from Council members
- Survey the Leadership Team to understand what types of issues are anticipated to need action in the near future
- Consider lessons learned from previous terms, and plan how to approach challenges
- Review information, current policies, and best practices

The Council Handbook will be updated to include all of the pertinent information supporting the orientation sessions, as well as any other information Council members may need to review. Electronic copies of the handbook will be loaded onto the computers on the dais and study session Chromebooks for easy access during meetings.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. Prioritize orientation for all members of Council.

Staff recommends that veteran members of Council participate in orientation activities alongside newly-elected members to provide guidance, share experience, and support a positive group dynamic. Participation by everyone will allow all members to be seen and to be at the table with their new colleagues.

2. Conduct orientation meetings/events on multiple days to maximize opportunities.

Staff proposes to keep the sessions simple and relatively short, and recommends scheduling at least 2 sessions so that Council members are not overwhelmed with information.

3. Provide a mix of learning and interactive exercises, which may include:

- Mock meetings or interactive role-playing
- Videos to demonstrate best practices
- Jeopardy style game on city government
- Tours of municipal facilities
- Opportunities for ride-a-longs
- Departmental “speed dating”
- Teambuilding exercises to build trust and comradery

4. Keep the most important information the most important information.

Staff’s objective is: Strong content, strong Council. Council members’ perspectives and input will help guide the prioritization of information provided during the orientation process. Staff is seeking input from all members of the Council to improve meeting the needs of the group. Realizing there may be competing priorities and multiple perspectives, staff will be available for follow-up as needed, and will focus on providing a foundation of information to provide a smooth transition and begin supporting the Council in the early stages of their terms.

While the overall goal is for all Council members to participate in the orientation session(s), staff understands that individuals have family, career, and other commitments. To provide flexibility, activities such as facility tours could be optional or could be provided for smaller groups to accommodate Council members’ schedules.

To assist staff with content planning, please consider the following questions in advance of the discussion on October 28:


| |
|--|
| After you were elected, what information would have helped you? |
| What types of information would you find useful in an orientation? |
| Provide one topic of training that you would most like to see. |
| What are your likes and dislikes about previous orientation sessions? |
| How much time would you be willing to commit to orientation? <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 2-3 hours (make it quick)○ 8 hours (knock it out in 1 day)○ 8 hours (scheduled on 2-3 different days/evenings)○ Other: |


| How would you rank the following orientation items by importance? | |
|---|---|
| <i>Ranking</i> | <i>Topics</i> |
| | City policies – financial/purchasing policies, travel/training policies |
| | City services & departmental operations |
| | Legal issues – i.e. quasi-judicial hearings, open meetings law, City Charter & Code provisions |
| | Logistics – i.e. how do I get into the building, where is my mail, how do I login to email? |
| | Media relations |
| | Mock Council meeting practice – i.e. how is a motion made, how do I vote, what does public participation look like? |
| | Protocol – i.e. how do I contact the City Manager, how do I add items to the agenda, who can I contact if I have questions? |
| | Team building among Council |
| | Tours of City facilities |
| | Other: |


BUDGET/TIME IMPLICATIONS:

The budget impact is anticipated to be minimal. Staff anticipates that the results of the November 5, 2019 Election will be certified on November 27, and has tentatively scheduled the swearing-in and organizational meeting of City Council to occur at the regular meeting on Monday, December 9. Staff prefers to schedule the orientation session(s) to occur prior to December 9. Please share any dates/times you are unavailable for orientation with staff.

| November | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| December | | | | | | |
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |

 Election Day

 Election Results Certified (last day)

 Tentative Swearing-in/Organizational Meeting

Depending on the date of the swearing-in/organizational meeting and Council, Mayor-elect, and Council-elect's availability, an orientation schedule will be developed and distributed to all members.

STAFF REFERENCE:

Please contact Heather Geyer, City Manager, at hgeyer@northglenn.org or 303.450.8706, or Johanna Small, City Clerk, at jsmall@northglenn.org or 303.450.8757 with any questions or comments.