

Suggestions for a total re-write of Title 2.40.150 Committees

Karen Colligan-Taylor

February 1, 2025

The following suggestions distinguish between committees of the city council (a subset of the council) and citizen advisory committees. I have served on many different types of committees since 2004, none of which has been clearly and consistently defined in ordinance and policy. This is a good opportunity to prevent further misunderstandings. It is important to understand how we arrived at the present point in order to guide the scope of change. Thinking more broadly about the configuration of committees at the council and citizen advisory levels may provide a range of options that will better serve the public as the city evolves and faces new and unforeseen needs.

2.40.150 Committees

(a) Committees, generally.

- (1) The mayor may establish committees of the city council and citizen advisory committees.
- (2) Each committee member shall be a qualified voter residing in the City of Gustavus.
- (3) Committee membership shall be approved by motion by the city council.
- (4) Committees may be standing, dealing with a subject of continuing concern, or special (ad hoc), to conduct research on an immediate or discrete issue of concern, and formulate recommendations to the council regarding proposed action.
- (5) Standing committees shall be established and dissolved by resolution.
- (6) Special committees shall be established by resolution and automatically terminate upon completion of the committee's assignment as defined in the resolution.
- (7) Resolutions shall stipulate the committee structure, and the scope of duties and operating responsibilities.
- (8) Committees shall comply with the Open Meetings Act and adhere to Roberts Rules of Order.
- (9) Committee meeting schedules shall be made available in the office of the city clerk and at least two other public locations in the City of Gustavus at least five days prior to the meeting.
- (10) A committee may, at the call of its chair or vote of its membership, take up any matter within the scope of its charge established by resolution. Matters that fall within the scope of more than one committee shall be assigned by the mayor.
- (11) Quorum of committees. For committees with seven (7) or eight (8) members, four (4) of the membership shall constitute a quorum; for committees with five (5) or six (6) members, three (3) of the membership shall constitute a quorum. For committees with four (4) or fewer members, two (2) of the membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, save that council liaisons serving on citizen advisory committees shall not count in the constitution of a quorum.
- (12) Voting. The minimum vote required to take an action for which the committee is authorized or make recommendations to the council shall be the same as that constituting a quorum. Majority

and minority recommendations may be submitted.

(13) Committees shall report to the council quarterly, or as requested by the mayor.

(b) Standing committees of the city council [= City council committees]

(1) The Mayor may appoint standing committees of two or three sitting council members to address subjects of continuing concern to the council. [sitting = currently on the council]

Example 1: a Code Review Committee—a committee that reviews consistency among the various elements of the code, including consistency with state and federal laws. The committee may focus on changes to specific ordinances, or on the relationship of ordinances to each other or to policy, or on regulations, fines, or fees. Over time, a city's ordinances and policies may develop conflicts, redundancies, and inconsistencies, or become obsolete. As a city's needs and profile change, regular review keeps ordinances and related policies updated and prevents problems from arising.

Example 2: a Marine Facilities Committee (to fulfill the functions of CoG 8.02.040 (c)(3), or to review fees and fines as listed in 8.03.020 and Section 8.05.020, or to assist in marine facilities issues in the absence of the part-time harbor master.

Example 3: a Public Works Committee. (Road maintenance, formerly overseen by the Roads Committee [CoG 6.04.030], is now a contracted service under the city administrator.) Other Public Works tasks might include monitoring maintenance issues for city facilities, gravel pit issues, septage issues, etc. One type of operational need is assistance in managing capital projects.)

(2) Standing committees of the council shall serve as an advisory body to the council as a whole in reviewing policy matters referred to them by the mayor within their respective areas of responsibility and formulating recommendations to the council as a whole regarding proposed action.

[Note: *Policy* is used here in the broad sense of the word: a law, regulation, procedure, administrative action, etc.]

(3) With approval of the mayor, standing committees may include citizens with expertise in the area of responsibility for participation in research, work, and discussion. Citizen appointees shall not have voting powers.

(4) Membership of standing committees shall be approved by motion by the city council.

(5) Standing committees may be retained from one mayoral term to the next, though membership may change with the election cycle.

Note: Large cities list standing committees in ordinance; small cities tend to use resolutions. In large cities council committees may be established to actively manage specific aspects of governance. They have decision-making authority in designated areas.

(c) Special (ad hoc) committees of the city council

- (1) Special (ad hoc) committees of two or three council members may be formed to conduct research on an immediate or discrete issue of concern and formulate recommendations to the council as a whole regarding proposed action.
- (2) With approval of the mayor, special committees of the city council may include citizens with expertise in the area of responsibility for participation in research, work, and discussion. Citizen appointees shall not have voting powers.
- (3) Membership on special committees of the council shall be approved by motion by the city council.
- (4) Special committees of the council shall be dissolved when the work to which they were assigned is completed.

Similar examples from the past that included both council members and citizens: the Special Borough Committee to evaluate the pros and cons of joining any one of the neighboring municipalities; the Annexation Committee (a change of mission for the Special Borough Committee) to work with the council/LBC for the annexation of Falls Creek and part of Icy Passage.

A future need: a committee to review and update the city's Hazard Mitigation Plan. Input from related staff as well as council members and citizens (including representatives of state and federal agencies) with expertise in this area will be needed. This is a situation in which you would need a truly hybrid committee.

Another use for a special committee of the city council would be to serve as a harbor appeal panel per CoG 8.08.050 (cf. 8.01.040 – Definitions, *Harbor appeal panel*).

The Endowment Fund Working Group mentioned in P&P for Awarding Grants from the Endowment Fund Earnings would be a Special Advisory Committee of the City Council.

(d) Citizen advisory committees

- (1) The mayor may appoint standing citizen advisory committees dealing with a subject of continuing concern, or special (short-term) citizen advisory committees, to conduct research on an immediate or discrete issue of concern, and to formulate recommendations to the council, through their council liaison(s), regarding proposed action.
- (2) Up to two city council members may be appointed to a citizen advisory committee to serve as council liaisons. Liaisons shall not have voting privileges or count for a quorum, but may participate in deliberations and provide guidance on the Open Meetings Act and Roberts Rules of Order.
- (3) Volunteers interested in filling a vacancy on a citizen advisory committee shall submit an application for appointment to the city clerk's office on the form provided by the clerk.
- (4) Nominations for committee appointments and for the position of chair of each committee shall be made by the mayor from applications received and shall be subject to ratification by the city council.

e. Conflict of interest. No member of a council or citizen advisory committee may vote on any question upon which the member has a substantial financial interest. [AK Stat § 29.20.010 \(2023\)](#); [CoG 2.20.090](#); [CoG P&P conflict of interest and competing interests \(2008\)](#).

Further notes:

This document does not address employee search committees.

Committees listed in Title 6 and Title 8:

Title 6, City Departments and Contracted Services, lists the following committees:

Library Section 6.01.030 - Library advisory committee. This committee once helped with the administration and operations of the library. It is no longer operative.

Roads Section 6.04.030 - Roads advisory committee. This committee once had quasi-departmental functions, but is no longer needed specifically for road maintenance. The City does have other Public Works needs—particularly attention to the maintenance of city facilities and the management of capital improvement projects.

Disposal and Recycling Center Section 6.03.050 - Staff. (c) The DRC is authorized to accept the labor of unpaid volunteers for the acceptance, processing, and resale of donated reusable items at the community chest site under the supervision of the community chest advisory subcommittee. There is no cc advisory subcommittee. This used to be a subcommittee of the DRC Committee, which served quasi-departmental functions to assist in the operations of the DRC. Volunteers of the Community Chest now work under direct supervision of the DRC manager/operator.

Section 6.08.040 - Environmental advisory committees. This was implemented to give the city, through its committees, the authority to deal with a variety of environmental concerns, ranging from PFAS to septage issues. In larger cities environmental issues might be handled by a number of departments, including Public Works, Parks&Rec, and Public Health and Safety. Whether implemented as a council or a citizen committee, this authority should be retained.

Title 8 Marine Facilities

Section 8.02.040 - Marine facilities advisory committee

This section is very specific about committee structure, but this might be handled most appropriately by resolution. There are no members of such a citizen advisory committee at present, which shifts obligations to the council: 8.02.040 (c) (3) If the marine facilities advisory committee falls below three (3) members, the Gustavus City Council shall assume the responsibilities of the committee while recruiting members.