

# Citizen's Guide to a Summit County Council Meeting



*The involvement of citizens in the political process is an essential part of democracy.*

The basis of any constitutional republic is its citizens. In the United States, the essence of representative democracy is embodied in the Constitution, which begins, "*We the People*. . . ." This wording establishes democracy as not only a right, but also a responsibility, and establishes the foundation for public engagement and citizen involvement in governance.

## **Your County Council Members:**

**Council Chair, Roger Armstrong**

**Doug Clyde**

**Kim Carson**

**Chris Robinson**

**Glenn Wright**

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## WHAT HAPPENS AT A COUNCIL MEETING?

County Council meetings serve many of the same functions as the Legislature in Salt Lake City and Congress in Washington, D.C., passing laws and adopting budgets. Exercising their legislative powers, the County Council adopts ordinances and resolutions to establish policies and programs and to provide public services and facilities primarily for the unincorporated areas of the county. The five-member County Council consider major problems facing county government and guides the growth and development of the county in a manner that is consistent with the public interest within the bounds of the law.

## WHY SHOULD I PARTICIPATE IN A COUNCIL MEETING?

Council meetings are open to the public and citizens are always encouraged to attend. Having an *“engaged and informed citizenry”* has been a long-standing Council goal. Council meetings are typically held each Wednesday at either the Summit County Courthouse in Coalville or the Sheldon Richins Building in Kimball Junction. All Council meetings are open to the public with the exception of closed sessions, where topics such as litigation and personnel matters are discussed.

## DO I HAVE TO KNOW PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE TO PARTICIPATE?

Local government officials need a working knowledge of parliamentary procedure—how to make a motion, what is expected during debate, and how a vote is taken. The purpose of parliamentary procedure is to expedite business, maintain order, ensure justice, and make certain the will of the County is accomplished properly and fairly. However, members of the public **DO NOT** need to know parliamentary procedures in order to participate at any County Council meeting.

## WHEN CAN I ASK QUESTIONS?

**PUBLIC INPUT:** Citizens may speak during public input in Council meetings, which typically opens up at 6:00 p.m. on Council days. At this time, citizens are allowed to speak on anything **NOT ON THE AGENDA**. On rare occasions, the Council will ask for public input on an agenda topic. In this case, it will be clearly stated on the agenda.

**PUBLIC HEARING:** Citizens can provide input on a particular subject during a public hearing. Public Hearings are required by law and noticed through the Public Notice website, the Park Record and the Summit County News and serve as an opportunity to speak on particular issues, e.g., a new development.

**SPEAKING PROTOCOLS:** At both public input and a public hearing the speaker must step to the microphone directly in front of the Council and state their name for the record. Speakers are also required to sign in with their name and address. All remarks should be directed to the Council as a body rather than to any particular Council Member or any member of the staff or audience. Applauding and other displays of approval or disapproval are deemed inappropriate during Council meetings.

**YOU CANNOT SPEAK** during Council briefings, executive sessions or on items where the public hearing has been closed.

## BASIC TERMINOLOGY

**AMENDMENT** is technically a secondary motion and must be acted on before the main motion is voted upon. It must be seconded and allowed for discussion before it is voted upon.

**ORDINANCES** are "legislative acts" by the Council, are the most permanent and binding type of Council action, and may be repealed only by a subsequent ordinance.

**RESOLUTIONS** are passed to express the policy of the Council on certain items or programs or are passed to direct certain types of administrative action. They are also used to express support for a particular initiative or cause, such as cancer awareness. A resolution may be changed by adoption of a subsequent resolution.

**STAFF REPORTS** supply information to both the public and Council and may not require Council action. The Council may wish to ask questions or otherwise briefly discuss a staff report placed in this section. If the Council decides to discuss a matter in detail or to take action, the matter may be considered under the regular Council agenda.

**WORK SESSION** provides information to Council, does not require action.

**REGULAR SESSION** is where Council is asked to provide approval or direction.

## INFORMATION RESOURCES

Agenda's and supporting information can be found here:

[www.summitcounty.org/agendacenter](http://www.summitcounty.org/agendacenter)

Published notices can be found here:

[www.utah.gov/pmn/index.html](http://www.utah.gov/pmn/index.html)

Meeting dates can be found here:

[www.summitcounty.org/calendar.aspx?CID=14](http://www.summitcounty.org/calendar.aspx?CID=14)

**Council staff contact:**

[asingleton@summitcounty.org](mailto:asingleton@summitcounty.org)

**County Council email address (goes to all five members):**

[countycouncil@summitcounty.org](mailto:countycouncil@summitcounty.org)

**Social Media**

[www.facebook.com/SummitCountyUT](https://www.facebook.com/SummitCountyUT)

[www.twitter.com/SummitCountyUT](https://www.twitter.com/SummitCountyUT)

[www.instagram.com/SummitCountyUT](https://www.instagram.com/SummitCountyUT)