

City of Stanwood



Stanwood City Council Workshop Packet

Thursday, February 13, 2025



CITY OF STANWOOD CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP

Stanwood-Camano School District
Administration Building Board Room
26920 Pioneer Highway, Stanwood, WA 98292

Thursday, February 13, 2025 | 5:00 p.m.

AGENDA

1. City Council Meeting Time Discussion



CITY OF STANWOOD COUNCIL AGENDA STAFF REPORT

ITEM NUMBER: 1

DATE: February 13, 2025

SUBJECT: City Council Meeting Time

CONTACT PERSON: David Hammond, Finance Director

PURPOSE

The purpose of this agenda item is for Council to discuss alternative meeting times.

BACKGROUND

At the December 12, 2024 council meeting, Councilmembers directed staff to gather information regarding regular meeting times and present options to the City Council for their consideration. Staff has evaluated options, which are discussed below. Because of meeting time conflicts a decision about moving to an earlier start time necessarily leads to a discussion of the city's standing committees and their meeting times.

For reference, the current Stanwood City Council rules of procedure set regular council meetings on the second and fourth Thursday at 7:00 pm. Stanwood's council has met at 7:00 pm for at least 25 years. Stanwood currently has four standing committees that meet monthly on various evenings with three of the meetings immediately prior to the council meetings.

ANALYSIS

Staff prepared the summary of other jurisdictions meeting times and committee structures (See Table One below). Review of these other jurisdictions demonstrates that there are generally two structures: a bi-monthly council meeting in the evening, with multiple three member committees, or a schedule with two evening business meetings, and one or two evening "work sessions" with the entire council meeting as a "committee of the whole" (see definitions below.)

The current city council committee structure is intended to allow deeper discussion of policy issues in advance of the council regular meeting where business is approved. Delegating these deeper dives to three council members is intended to save time for the other council members as not all of them have to devote this much time. This doesn't always play out because it is not uncommon for the full council to want the same deep

dive at their regular meeting, so the same topic is discussed twice, or even three times if the policy matter was discussed by two committees.

The option to discontinue the standing committees and move to one or more monthly “committee of the whole” work sessions does away with this disadvantage.

Staff spoke with several peer city officials about their experience, who uniformly asserted that moving away from the three member committees and taking policy matters to regularly scheduled or ad-hoc “committee of the whole” work sessions has decreased their overall amount of meeting time.

If the council moved to a committee of the whole work session, for example on the first Thursday of each month, and discontinued the current standing committee structure, then a decision to move to an earlier regular meeting time would not conflict with the standing committees and council could consider any start time.

In speaking with peer agencies, staff did not hear that the earlier start times created difficulty for citizens to participate.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommendation:

The Council should consider revising its meeting time and also its current structure from four standing committees and instead convene a committee of the whole work session once per month. Further, the currently scheduled of four annual workshops should be discontinued, instead allowing the mayor to schedule workshops on an as-needed basis.

DEFINITIONS

General types and descriptions of city council meetings:

WORK SESSIONS

During Work Sessions City Council Members are able to discuss topics, receive briefings, reports and memorandums from City staff as well as hear presentations from City staff and outside organizations. During a Work Session, no formal decisions can be made by the Council. The Council follows Robert's Rules of Order during their meetings to allow for courtesy and orderly flow of the meetings. During Work Sessions there is not an opportunity for public comments. Work Sessions are referred to as “Workshops” or “Study Sessions” by some jurisdictions.

BUSINESS MEETINGS

Business Meetings follow a very formal and specific format. During a Regular Business Meeting City Council Members make a formal vote on items that were discussed at a previous Work Session, adopt previous meeting minutes, and present proclamations and

resolutions. During Regular Business Meetings members of the public have an opportunity during the 'Citizen Comments' portion of the agenda to make a comment to the Council on any topic.

OTHER MEETINGS

Periodically the City Council holds other meetings such as Special Work Sessions and Special Business Meetings. During these meetings, only the items listed on the agenda may be discussed.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public Hearings may be held during Regular Business Meetings or Special Business Meetings, and allow the public to attend and make a comment regarding the specific topic of the public hearing.

Table One—Comparison to other city meeting schedules:

City	Meeting Dates/Times	Committee structure/schedule
Blaine	Business Meetings held on the second and fourth Monday of each month at 6:00pm. Study Session/Committee of the Whole scheduled as needed.	Two Councilmembers serve on a Public Works and Park Advisory Board that includes several citizens and meets monthly at 9:00am.
Burlington	Business Meetings held on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month at 7:00pm.	Audit & Finance Committee meets second and fourth Thursday at 4:00 pm. Land Use Committee meets as needed. Public Safety Committee meets second Tuesday at 4:00 pm. Public Works Committee meets Third Tuesday at 4:00 pm.
Duvall	Business Meetings held on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 7:00pm. Committee of the whole meets before the meeting at 5:30 pm. (sometimes cancelled.	No committees
Lake Stevens	Business Meetings held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 6:00pm. Work Sessions held on the first and third Tuesday, as needed.	No committees

City	Meeting Dates/Times	Committee structure/schedule
Ridgefield	Business Meetings held Second and fourth Thursday of each month, the first and third Thursday in November and December at 6:30 pm. Study Sessions at 5:30 pm prior to council meeting as needed.	No committees
Sequim	Business Meeting held the second and fourth Mondays at 6:00 pm.	Often hold work session before regular meetings at 5:00 pm.
Snoqualmie	Business Meetings held on the second and fourth Monday of each month at 7:00pm.	Community Development Committee meets prior to each council meeting at 6:00 pm. Finance Committee meets on the Tuesday prior to each Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m. Parks and Public Works meets on the Tuesday prior to each Council Meeting at 5 p.m. Public Safety meets on the Monday prior to each Council Meeting at 5 p.m.
Snohomish	Business Meetings held on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 6:00pm..	No Standing Committees *Note, Snohomish adopted an ordinance in 1996, requiring review of committees every two years.
Arlington	Business Meetings held on the first and third Mondays of each month at 6:00pm. Workshops held on the second and fourth Mondays of each month at 6:00pm.	No committees
Marysville	Regular Meetings are held on the second and fourth Mondays of each month at 7:00pm. Work Sessions are held the first Monday of each Month at 7:00pm.	Finance Committee second Thursday at 11:30 am.

City	Meeting Dates/Times	Committee structure/schedule
Sultan	Regular Meetings 7:00 pm the second and fourth Thursday of the month from January through October, and the first and third Thursday of the month from November through December at 7:00pm.	No committees
Monroe	Business Meetings held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 7:00pm. Study Sessions held on the third Tuesday. The first and fifth Tuesdays are reserved for Special meetings, such as workshops or retreats.	Finance/HR-6:00pm third Thursdays. Public Safety-6:00 pm Second Tuesday of February, April, June, September, and December. Legislative-6:00 pm Second Tuesday of January, March, May, July, and October. Transportation/Planning, Parks & Recreation, and Public Works-6:00 pm Fourth Tuesday of each month.
Edmonds	Regular meetings the first, second and fourth Tuesday at 7:00pm.	Committees meet the third Tuesday each month: Parks & Public Works – 1:30pm. Public Safety, Planning, Human Services & Personnel – 3:30pm. Finance - 5:30pm.
Lynnwood	Business Meetings held on the second and fourth Mondays of each month at 6:00pm. Work sessions on the 1st and 3rd Mondays and 3rd Wednesdays of the month at 6:00 pm.	Finance Committee meets on the 3 rd Wednesday of the month at 3:30, except August and December. Three Councilmembers serve on the committee.