



LEONARD B. KATZMAN
– member –
Portsmouth Town Council



February 5, 2019

Town Clerk – *Via: email*

Dear Clerk West: Please place on the agenda for the 11 February 2019 meeting the following two items:

1. Guidelines for Town Council Agenda Items:

Items on the Town Council agenda should have sufficient detail and backup such that Town administrative staff can properly prepare to address any issues or questions raised. Requiring agenda items to have an appropriate level of detail and backup will also greatly benefit the members of the public who have a right to know what matters are coming before the Town Council. For example, an agenda item provided to the Clerk that says simply, “Ordinances” should be held until the individual provides something more specific such as “Dog Leash Ordinance.” Likewise, since we are heading into budget season, an agenda item such as “Questions on the Budget” without any backup, should be held and the individual should be encouraged to provide as backup the specific list of questions to be addressed.

In summary, if anyone wants to place an item on the agenda, the person must:

- a. Identify specific questions and topics they want to discuss.
- b. Provide any supporting or referenced documents or facts.

This will allow town staff to research the issues before council meetings and provide the best information to the public, thereby maximizing transparency.

2. Guidelines for Public Comment on Town Council Agenda Items

Town Council meetings should be conducted in a fair, predictable, orderly manner. The Town Council has an obligation to run an efficient meeting to maximize productivity and value the public’s time. The purpose of a Town Council meeting is for the Town Council to deliberate matters before it with input from town staff and the public. Everyone who wants to speak should be allowed to do so. Allowing anyone to monopolize the podium does not serve the best interests of the public. The following guidelines are proposed:

- a. Any member of the public who addresses the Town Council may speak for a maximum of 3 minutes. This is consistent with past council practices. A timer should be used to ensure fairness and consistency. If that person wishes to convey additional or lengthy information, they should present that information to the Town Clerk in writing before the Town Council meeting and it will be forwarded to the Town Council members for consideration.
- b. A member of the public may speak a second time on the same agenda item for a maximum of 2 minutes, and only if they are presenting information not previously raised by any other persons and only after all other individuals who wish to address the council have had a chance to speak.

Very truly yours,
Leonard Katzman