



**CITY COMMISSION
OPEN MEETING PUBLIC COMMENT POLICY**

I. **PURPOSE:** To adopt a reasonable, flexible policy for receiving public comment during open meetings to encourage public participation, to comply with the Open Meetings Act, MCL 15.261 et. seq., and to allow the City Commission to efficiently conduct business with respect for all persons present.

II. **DEFINITIONS:**

"Action Item" shall mean a topic or item before the City Commission for consideration or action, whether or not formally listed on a meeting agenda. Action Item shall not include an item being considered as part of the Consent Agenda.

"Consent Agenda" shall mean a section of the agenda where routine or noncontroversial items are placed and considered for approval with a single motion. Items will be removed from the Consent Agenda at the request of any City Commissioner at the time of the approval of the agenda, in which case such items will be considered as Action Items immediately following the approval of the Consent Agenda.

"Consent Agenda Item" shall mean an item included on the Consent Agenda.

"Mayor" shall mean the Mayor of the City of St. Joseph or a St. Joseph City Commissioner acting in the place of the Mayor as presiding officer of a St. Joseph City Commission meeting.

"Public Hearing" shall mean an Action Item required by city ordinance, state or federal law, or other regulation to be a Public Hearing or which is voluntarily set as a Public Hearing by the City Commission.

"Regular Meeting" shall mean a scheduled meeting of the St. Joseph City Commission at which the City Commission may consider all business that comes before it. A Regular Meeting is typically held at a time and place established at the beginning of each calendar year. However, it is possible to reschedule a Regular Meeting to a different time or place.

"Special Meeting" shall mean a meeting other than a Regular Meeting. A Special Meeting may be held as a work session or study session to have an in-depth discussion of one or more topics; to consider and conduct urgent business that should not be delayed to the next Regular Meeting; or for other particular purposes such as conducting personnel interviews or to hold a Public Hearing.

III. **AGENDA:**

a. **REGULAR MEETING:**

- i. Each Regular Meeting agenda will provide a time for Public Comment near the beginning of the agenda. At that time, any person may address the City Commission for up to three (3) minutes on any City-related topic except for a topic listed as an Action Item on the approved agenda. Comments regarding Action Items should be made as described in section ii, below.

ii. The Mayor will provide an opportunity for public comment while considering each Action Item. This opportunity will generally occur after a motion is made and seconded. Any person may address the City Commission on the current Action Item for up to three (3) minutes.

b. **SPECIAL MEETING:** Each Special Meeting agenda will provide a time for Public Comment near the end of the meeting. At that time, any person may address the City Commission for up to three (3) minutes on any City-related topic. If there are one or more Action Items on the agenda, the Mayor will provide an opportunity for public comment during consideration of each Action Item as provided in Section III.a.ii, above.

c. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:** Public hearings shall provide an opportunity for public comment as provided in Section III.a.ii, above. In addition, if applicable laws or regulations impose special requirements on a public hearing, those laws or regulations shall be followed and supersede any conflicting portion of this policy.

IV. PROCEDURE:

a. Persons wishing to comment shall wait to be recognized by the Mayor before speaking.

b. Once recognized, the speaker should speak from the podium and use the microphone so their comments can be heard by the City Commission and the audience, and should identify themselves by name and address before commenting.

c. Citizen groups may appoint a spokesperson to speak on behalf of the group. The spokesperson should identify the group they represent and may speak for up to three (3) minutes.

V. ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES:

a. Public comments are a means of communication from the public to the City and shall be respectfully directed to the Commission.

b. Public comments should be succinct; if a previous speaker has expressed a person's thoughts well, it is efficient to indicate agreement with that speaker.

c. The Mayor may grant a person additional time for public comment if the Mayor believes it is beneficial.

d. No person addressing the Commission shall be allowed to comment more than once during a public comment period unless authorized by the Mayor.

e. Commissioners will not typically respond to public comment but may exercise discretion to succinctly respond (directly or by staff) if it is beneficial to correct a factual or procedural error, direct the speaker to staff or another entity for follow-up, or address a routine administrative matter.

f. Public comments also may be provided in writing in advance of a meeting, including by emailing city.commission@sicity.com which will be delivered to each of the City Commissioners.