

Legislative Process Myth vs. Fact

MYTH: Secondary Referrals can report to Council without ever reporting to the Lead Referral.

FACT: Secondary Referrals must report back to the Lead Referral (LR) before LR can report to Council, unless otherwise noted.

MYTH: There is no financial impact to my legislative file, so I don't need fiscal note approval.

FACT: All resolutions, ordinances and charter ordinances require fiscal note approval. (APM 1-3: www.cityofmadison.com/mayor/apm/1-3.pdf)

MYTH: If you create a Legislative File, it cannot be searched via the web for external users until you publish it to your agenda.

FACT: If the legislative file is a Resolution or Ordinance, do not change the status. The "draft" status will change automatically according to the history lines.

MYTH: I should always generate my agenda prior to the Council meeting.

FACT: To make sure that you get all referrals that were issued to your committee/commission/board, you should generate your meeting agenda the Thursday after a Council meeting. Typically, by Thursday the City Clerk's Office staff will have entered in the entire proceedings from the Common Council meeting on Tuesday.

MYTH: All I need to do to cancel a meeting is not show up at the meeting location.

FACT: The following steps to cancel your meeting properly: In Legistar:

1. Change the status of your agenda from Final to Cancelled
 2. Publish to Calendar, and get URL for Clerk's Office
 3. Email CL meetings (Clerk's Office) with the following:
Meeting cancelled, date and time and URL of Cancelled agenda
 4. If possible, post note on door of meeting location, to let citizens know of cancelled meeting.
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MYTH: My committee is very different and does not need to follow the legislative process

FACT: There is only one legislative process, and all committees must follow the process. (APM 1-3: www.cityofmadison.com/mayor/apm/1-3.pdf)

MYTH: I only need to make sure that supporting materials are handed out at my meeting.

FACT: All materials that are provided at a meeting must be part of your Legistar agenda packet. If you make a hard copy of the committee packet for your committee members, those materials must be attached to the corresponding legislative file in Legistar as a PDF file.

MYTH: I do not need to worry about any legislative files under “Unfinished Business” on my agenda, and it is OK to delete the line when the agenda is generated.

FACT: You must take an action, other than deleting the line. If you do not take an action on a legislative file, it will appear on the next agenda you generate and will continue to appear until an action is recorded. Pursuant to APM 3-1, unless otherwise noted, referral agencies have 45 days to act on an item referred to them by the Common Council.

MYTH: My committee/board/commission uses different wording to indicate how to request accessible materials for my meeting.

FACT: The “languages” information that appears at the top of all agendas has been created and approved by the City Attorney’s Office and must be used by all committees/commissions/boards. All you need to do is add contact information. Any other information may contain contrary information.

MYTH: When I create a new agenda, I always have to add lines and insert the referrals from Council.

FACT: You need to make sure to “generate” the agenda. This action will populate your agenda with any referrals from Council or any other body.

MYTH: I always have to add my members when I take Attendance (roll call).

FACT: When you take attendance, the current members should appear. If this does not happen, contact the Mayor’s Office, 266-4611.

MYTH: My committee doesn’t have to take actions to approve minutes or adjourn.

FACT: At the very least, every committee needs to take the following actions: 1) Attendance, 2) Approve minutes from the previous meeting, and 3) Adjourn.

MYTH: I wait to take attendance until after everyone shows up.

FACT: Attendance must be taken when the meeting is called to order. A new roll call should be done every time a member enters or exits the meeting.