

Should I run?

INTRODUCTION

This memorandum provides general information about life as an elected official in the City of Centennial. It is based in part on legal requirements outlining the duties and responsibilities of the City's elected officials – but is more heavily based on the real-life experiences of elected officials that have lived the role. It provides food for thought as you decide whether to travel down the path toward election and is provided as part of the packet of additional materials which is made available in the City Clerk's Office. Those materials contain the hard facts about how to run, what your candidacy obligations are, and how the election will unfold. This document, on the other hand, addresses the initial questions you personally may have before deciding whether to take the next step.

COUNCIL GENERALLY

The Centennial City Council consists of nine elected officials including the Mayor. The Mayor is a member of the City Council. The Mayor has the same obligations as other members of the Council plus some additional duties as the ceremonial head of the City and required by Centennial's Home Rule Charter. The Mayor represents the citizens of the City at large. Two representatives from each of the City's four Council districts compose the remainder of the Council. These offices are all non-partisan. City elections are designed so that the terms of office of the Council members from the Districts are staggered. Therefore, in 2017, the Mayor and one representative from each Council District is open for election.

Council members receive monthly compensation of \$1,000.00. The Mayor Pro Tem, who is appointed by the City Council each March, receives an additional \$84.00 per month. The Mayor receives \$1,334.00 per month. These amounts are subject to tax deductions.

WHY SHOULD YOU DO IT?

People seek to serve their cities as elected officials for various reasons. Regardless of the motive, if you're contemplating serving your community as a member of City Council, you should be prepared for the demands, expectations and rewards that come with the role. Although the legal requirements for serving require only that you attend the scheduled meetings of the Council and participate as you desire in policy making, the City of Centennial has a proud tradition of active and involved elected officials who often exceed the minimum requirements.

As an elected official in Centennial, much more so than as a single voter, you will have a say in such important matters as how the City grows, what the street system will be like in the future, where and how development takes place, what the level of City provided services are and will be that benefit you and your neighbors, and how the City's annual budget will be allocated. It is a responsibility best met with energy, enthusiasm, and conscientiousness.

The Council sets public policy and sound policy decisions are the result of hard work. Thus, elected officials in the City are encouraged, albeit not legally required, to do outside-the-meeting work to review meeting materials, educate themselves about the public policy issues, interact with constituents and other elected officials, educate and inform constituents, attend meetings with other agencies and governments, serve on appointed committees, and act as liaisons with staff and other agencies.

YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND

Recalling the old adage that "no good deed goes unpunished," it can sometimes seem like all you ever hear from are aggrieved citizens. Happily (and hopefully just when you need it), you will see the benefits of a Council decision play out for the good of the community or you will occasionally get a much needed "thank-you." You will share the dais with others with a deep concern for the City and its citizens. Sometimes, and for periods even frequently, you won't agree with all of your fellow elected officials but you will be expected to disagree with professionalism and respect. Elected officials come from different backgrounds and have strengths different from yours but you will have a bond with them regardless because you have a common goal.



CENTENNIAL ELECTED OFFICIALS' TIME COMMITMENTS

Your experience as an elected official will be what you make of it. There are few legally required time commitments and those are marked with an asterisk below. The rest of the commitments set forth in this Section are obligations that Council members in the City have traditionally taken on -- and historically with zeal.

Council members and Mayor.

Regular meetings*

City Council meets on the first, second, and third Mondays of the month. On the first and third Monday, study sessions begin at 6 pm and the regular meeting begins at 7 p.m. On the second Mondays, study sessions begin at 6 p.m. and the regular meeting, which is abbreviated, begins at the conclusion of the study session. When a meeting falls on weeks containing a Monday holiday, the Council meeting is rescheduled to an alternate date acceptable to a majority of the Council.

On the same nights as Council meetings, Council also optionally meets at the Civic Center pre-meeting for dinner at 5 p.m., including one dinner/month with the City's Youth Commission.

Special meetings*

From time to time, and relatively infrequently, additional meetings are scheduled, known as "special meetings," when the press of business requires additional meeting time. The Council strives to schedule these meetings on the fourth Monday of a month.

Packet review

In advance of Council meetings, packets of meeting materials are delivered to the Council members on the preceding Thursday. Review of the packet can take 1-3+ hours and Council members are requested to send any questions raised by such materials to appropriate City staff by Monday morning to allow time for questions to be addressed before or at the Monday evening meeting.

Training

Newly elected officials are strongly encouraged to attend training sessions with City staff and the City Attorney's Office to become familiar with a variety of important subjects related to their service. These trainings can last 1-2 days. Traditionally, a Council Member Orientation session has occurred at the end of December following the election on two consecutive evenings.

Additionally, City staff and the City Attorney's Office offers "Friday Focus Meetings" starting in January following the election. These are education driven sessions to give newly elected officials and those already serving, a more in-depth training on issues specific to Municipal Government such as: the Budget Process, Municipal Court Operations, Economic Development Strategies, Capital Improvement Projects, or other such topics. "Friday Focus Meetings" are traditionally Friday morning breakfast sessions, held from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. and all Council Members are encouraged to participate.

Council workshops

Council holds occasional full day (Saturday) or two consecutive week-night workshops to address comprehensive subjects such as goal setting and budgets.

Council district meetings

Council members from each District hold evening meetings in a location within the District to address topics with constituents. The agendas of these meetings and the scheduling are handled by the District's Council members. Most Districts have a tradition of scheduling quarterly meetings.

Council liaison

The City has many internal advisory committees to research and provide guidance to Council on setting public policy. In addition, there are special districts and other governmental and quasi-governmental authorities that provide important public services to the City's citizens. Members of Council are assigned to these committees or organizations

to act as liaisons. Time constraints of working Council members are considered when assigning liaison duties; however, each Council member is asked to serve a liaison role. Time commitment will vary and meetings could be day or evenings.

Ad hoc committee or Council subcommittee participation

From time to time, the City convenes committees which include elected councilmembers to review proposals for services contracts, interview candidates for appointments to boards and commissions or consider special issues that come before the city. Each Council member is asked to volunteer some time to one or more of these committees. Time commitment will vary.

Individual constituent interaction

Constituents expect Council members to be available to communicate via electronic mail and phone calls about constituent concerns and to be diligent and consistent in following up and communicating such follow up back to the constituent.

Miscellaneous time commitments

Beyond the duties listed above, Council members are often asked to be present at ribbon cuttings, local ceremonies and community events, and important City traditions like the annual tree lighting.

Additional Mayoral time commitments.

The Mayor has all the responsibilities and duties of a Council member as set forth above and some additional time commitments.

Pre-meeting duties

On the evening of all Council meetings, the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem meet with executive staff members at 5:30 p.m. to go over meeting agenda items.

District meetings

The Mayor is not required to hold Council District meetings. The Mayor is, however, often invited to speak or present at District meetings.

Liaison/ committee membership responsibilities*

By ordinance, the Mayor is a member of the City's Budget Committee, Audit Committee and Investment Committee and is expected to attend these meetings. The Mayor may also be asked to take on additional liaison responsibilities or subcommittee roles as with any Council member. Time commitment will vary and meetings could be during the day or in the evening.

Other groups requiring Mayoral participation

1. The Mayor serves as the City's representative on the Board of the Denver South Economic Development Partnership and the Metro Mayor's Caucus meetings. Regular meetings of these groups are bi-monthly during the day. In addition, there is usually a full day workshop once per year.

2. The Mayor attends the county-wide Mayors, Commissioners, Managers meetings which occur four times per year during morning hours.

Staff intermediary

The Mayor may be asked by staff to participate in regular meetings with staff to address current City issues and projects. These meetings, if requested, are often scheduled early morning.

Individual constituent intermediary

In addition to handling individual constituent concerns brought to the direct attention of the Mayor, the Mayor is often called upon to act as an intermediary with constituent concerns of a broader nature or when a constituent is dissatisfied with the level of follow up or solution offered by another at the City.

Regular office hours

Traditionally, the Centennial Mayor holds open publicized office hours at the Civic Center to allow walk-in constituent concerns to be addressed in an informal one-on-one fashion. These office hours have typically been scheduled for weekday business hours.

Miscellaneous time commitments

In addition to attendance at ribbon cuttings, local ceremonies and community events as with other Council members, the Mayor is most often requested to appear and speak at events such as community events, business openings, city events, HOA meetings, and school group meetings.

CAN YOU MAKE IT WORK?

Knowing now what the legal and traditional time commitments are, prospective candidates should evaluate their professional and personal situation and ask:

- Will your job allow the flexibility to be at the City Civic Center by 6 p.m. most Monday evenings?
- Do you have time late week and over the weekend to review the packets?
- Will your professional and personal life allow for (and hopefully even support) you in attending occasional weekend or evening workshops?
- Will you be able to commit to the occasional working group or focus group meetings, which are sometimes held during afternoon or evening hours?
- Are you organized in a manner which will allow you to interact with your constituents while still allowing you uninterrupted personal and/or professional time? (These constituent interactions can include emails, phone calls, meeting residents for coffee, attending occasional HOA meetings or special meetings called by a couple of residents, and/or being asked to walk an area where there are concerns.)
- Are you willing and able to occasionally serve on City-formed ad hoc committees (for example, selection committees for appointing officials to Boards and Commissions)?

- Do you have an interest in attending various community events? (Ribbon-cutting ceremonies, Sherriff's Office Awards Ceremony, State of the City annual luncheon are examples.)

MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION

If, after evaluation, you decide to go for it, you will learn more about the City, its issues, your neighbors, effective political exchange of ideas, time management, and being a public figure than you can imagine. The City's elected officials feel it is a rewarding important role that they fulfill and, like most important and enriching roles that people take on, it has its hills and valleys. Make the decision to run with your eyes wide open but remember -- most of the City's elected officials choose to run for a second term and that fact alone sums it all up.