



Wyoming  
Association of  
Municipalities  
Building Strong Communities

# Municipal Operations, Roles & Responsibilities

2025 WAM WINTER CONFERENCE

NEWLY ELECTED BOOT CAMP



Learn roles and responsibilities of  
municipal elected leaders & key staff



Understand how to manage your  
community and your governing body

# Course Objectives

# What is public governance?

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Public service providers should be directed, controlled and held to account by citizens

Rule of law is followed (not arbitrary)

Key values include transparency, accessibility, accountability, security, stewardship, efficiency and effectiveness

Municipalities and their leaders *serve public interest*, not self interest

Public participation is critical (and not just voting)

Decisions should be based on consensus, and responsive to public's needs (not self interests)





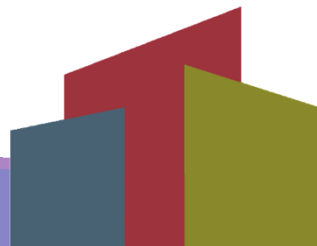
## Public Governance in practice

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**Rule of Law** is honored by complying with all applicable state and federal laws (some of which also mandate adherence to industry standards, like accounting)

**Best practices** are not legally required, but are proven methods that help to achieve good outcomes for public services

**Values** are also not legally required, but whatever values you hold will be reflected in your operations



# Applicable Laws and Legal Framework

## Wyoming Constitution

- Article 13, Section 1 – Home Rule

## Wyoming Statutes

- Title 15 – Cities and Towns
- Title 16 – City County State & Local Powers
  - Chapter 4 – Municipal Fiscal Procedures Act and Wyoming Open Meetings Law

## Municipal Documents

- Your Municipal Charter
- Your Municipal Code

The Wyoming Legislature's website provides the most current versions of all state laws, Constitution, and state agency rules/regulations. Some are annotated. But while reading these laws is easily accomplished, municipal leaders should still seek legal counsel to understand precisely how they apply. That's why you have a Town or City Attorney. There are many good ways to manage your legal costs, so communicate with your attorney to work out what's best in your situation.



# Home Rule Authority

Home Rule is the basis for your municipality's claim to **10<sup>th</sup> Amendment** powers:

- **Structural** – power to choose the *form of government*, adopt a charter and enact charter revisions
- **Functional** – powers of local *self government* (this is broad authority, but can be limited by relevant state laws that apply to all municipalities)
- **Fiscal** – authority to determine *revenue* sources, set tax rates, borrow funds, *spend* public funds, etc
- **Personnel** – authority to set *employment* rules and conditions, ranging from salary to collective bargaining

*“The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.”*

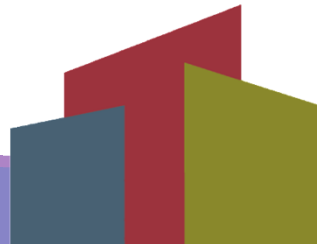


# Home Rule in Practice

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- Can use municipal manager/administrator
- Can create wards or at-large divisions
- Choose number of Council members
- Determine extent of land use planning (zoning)
- Hire (and fire) employees
- Create a municipal court (generates revenue)
- Enforce nuisance abatement (force clean up)

***Think of Home Rule as broad authority to govern locally, limited by state laws that apply to all***





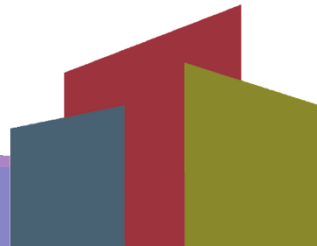
## Types of WY Municipalities

- ✓ Incorporated Town (under 4,000)
- ✓ First Class City (pop. over 4,000)
- ✓ Form of government can be changed:
  - ✓ Most are *strong* Mayor-Council
  - ✓ City Manager (Laramie, Rawlins & Casper)
  - ✓ City or Town Administrator (Afton, Cody, Douglas, Gillette, Green River, Jackson & Powell)
  - ✓ Commission (none currently)

# The Mayor's Roles and Responsibilities

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- ✓ Presiding Officer (run meetings, present information, make recommendations, etc.)
- ✓ Executive (supervise top management, sign checks and contracts)
- ✓ Legislative (Mayors should vote on each motion, not just when breaking ties)
- ✓ Veto power (*not* in City Manager municipalities, where Mayor powers are mostly administrative and limited)



# Core Responsibilities of Council

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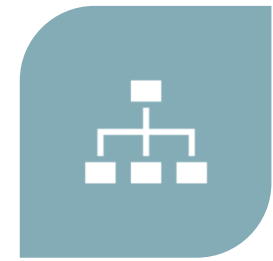
**STRATEGIC  
MANAGEMENT**  
(NOT DAY-TO-DAY  
MANAGEMENT)



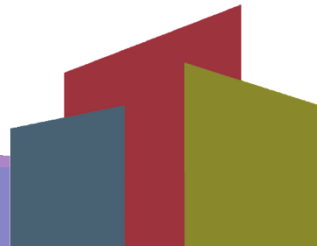
**PERSONNEL  
MANAGEMENT**  
(SYSTEMS, NOT  
INDIVIDUALS)



**FINANCIAL  
MANAGEMENT**  
(OVERALL BUDGET &  
INTERNAL CONTROLS)



**ORGANIZATIONAL  
MANAGEMENT**  
(SYSTEMS, NOT  
INDIVIDUALS)



# Strategic Management

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- ✓ Define organization's mission
- ✓ Plan overall goals and objectives
- ✓ What resources do you need?
- ✓ How will you manage those resources?
- ✓ How will you manage the services being provided?



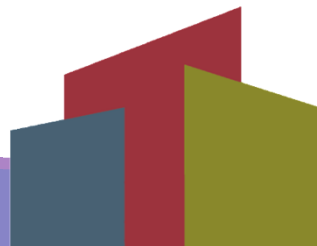
**Strategic Planning for Municipalities**  
2025 WAM WINTER CONFERENCE  
NEWLY ELECTED BOOTCAMP

# Strategic Planning means setting goals

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- ✓ Gets everyone pulling together
- ✓ Helps you spend your time more effectively
- ✓ Sets clear guidelines for staff
- ✓ Gives you useful budget guidelines
- ✓ Helps you communicate with constituents and build support for programs and policies
- ✓ Gives you an evaluation tool (accountability)





# Personnel Management

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- ✓ Wyoming law addresses appointment & removal of municipal officers
- ✓ Mayor hires, fires, and manages day-to-day
  - City Manager and Administrator authority originates from Mayor's authority
- ✓ Council adopts employment policies, establishes wage system/budget, approves job descriptions, and hears discipline appeals
  - *Typically, City Manager/Administrator sets salaries with consent of Council, generally within established salary structure and budget*

# Set appropriate goals and allocate adequate resources to provide core public services within your power (Title 15)

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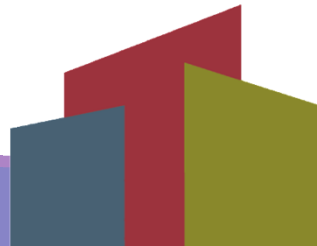
Streets and sidewalks, parks,  
public space, cemeteries,  
libraries, recreation, museums

Police and fire protection

Health, safety, welfare of  
community

Sewer, water

Airports, public transportation,  
utility services



# Financial Management

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- ✓ Create fiscal budget
- ✓ Establish policy with internal controls
- ✓ Monitor key staff and financial condition
- ✓ Ensure audit process
- ✓ This is another core WAM topic

**Community Builders, Inc.**  
Community and Economic Development Consulting  
*"Building Communities - One Relationship at a Time"*  
**GBI**

**wam**  
Wyoming  
Association of  
Municipalities  
Building Strong Communities

Municipal Expenditures, Revenues & Controls

2023 LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP

CORE COURSE

# What are the statutory financial requirements?



State Auditor resources are online: <https://audit.wyo.gov/public-funds/resources>

# Organizational Management

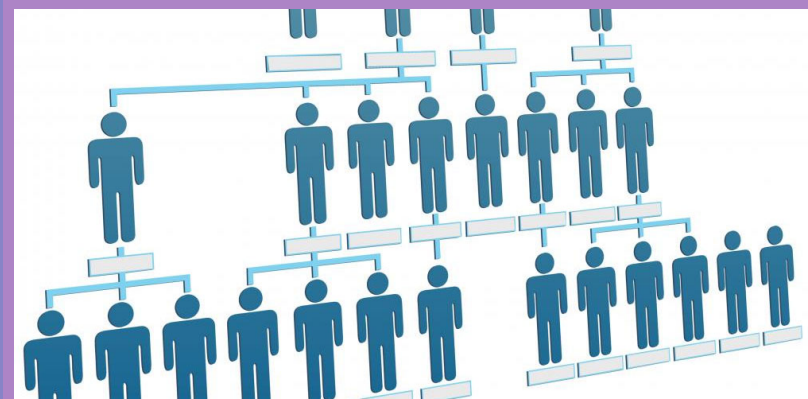
This is the domain of Council

Council manages and controls the affairs of the organization

*It is critical that you prepare for AND attend Council meetings*

Be an advocate for your community

Council members are individual community leaders, working together as one body





## Council is Governing Body in Control

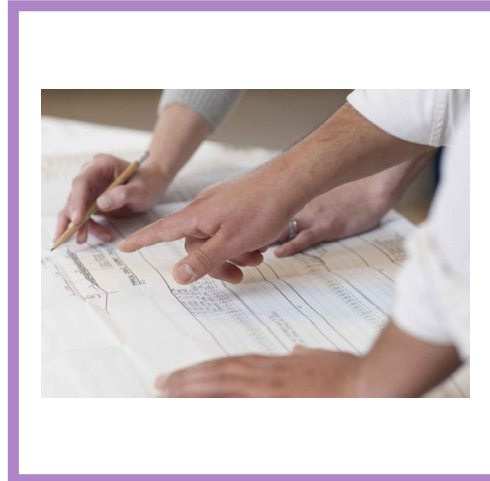
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Set broad parameters for operation of municipality

Develop a long-range work plan

Develop job descriptions for appointed employees

Monitor and evaluate (trust and verify)



To manage appropriately you must get informed and monitor progress

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Review reports about finance, results of programs, successes and failures

Request information to fulfill oversight responsibilities

Monthly financial statements are windows to monitor organization finances

Regular review of progress of goal achievement

*Your Conduct should reflect the importance of the responsibility that has been granted by the community, who expects results*

Council is a team

Equal voice and vote

Treat each other with mutual respect

Be prepared for meetings

Use common courtesy & MUTUAL RESPECT

Refrain from rude, personal, or derogatory remarks

Work toward consensus

Stay positive and grow through the challenges



# Wyoming Open Meetings Law

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Wyoming Statutes  
16-4-401 and  
following

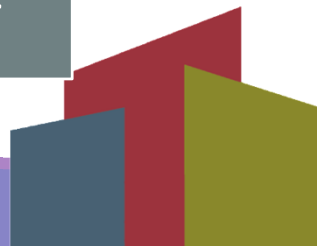
Official business  
can only be  
conducted at  
public meetings

Requires proper  
notice, minutes of  
proceedings

Law dictates  
process for public  
participation and  
quorums

Executive sessions  
have limited  
purposes

Consequences and  
penalties for  
noncompliance



# Wyoming Public Records Act

- Wyoming Statutes 16-4-201 and following sections
- Defines “public records” to include any information in a physical form created, accepted, or obtained by a governmental entity in furtherance of its official function and transaction of public business which is not privileged or confidential by law
- Also includes electronic files, digital data, email, websites, etc.
- Two classifications: Official public records; and Office files & memoranda





## Official Custodian

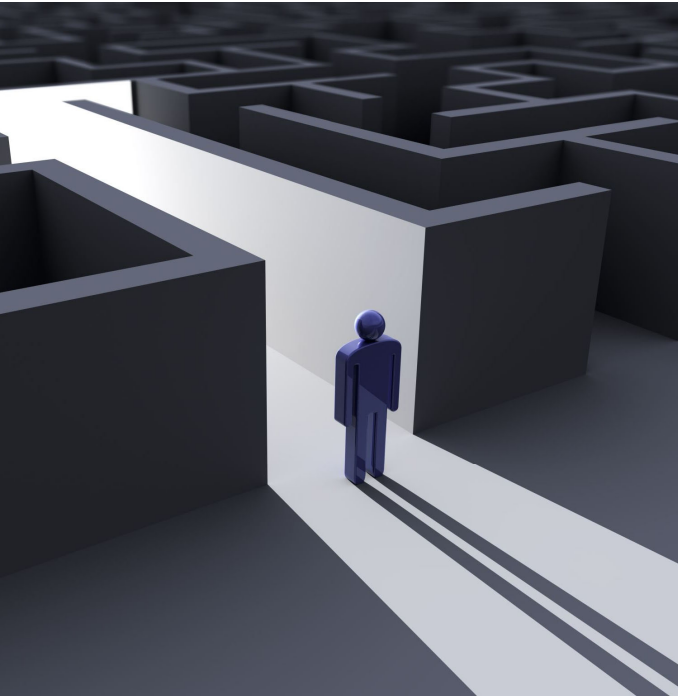
- Official custodian may make rules and regulations with reference to the inspection of records, including establishment of fees for copies
- Official custodian is anyone responsible for maintenance, care and keeping of public records, regardless of whether the records are in his/her actual personal custody and control
- Official custodian is typically the Municipal Clerk





## Public Records – Retention Schedules

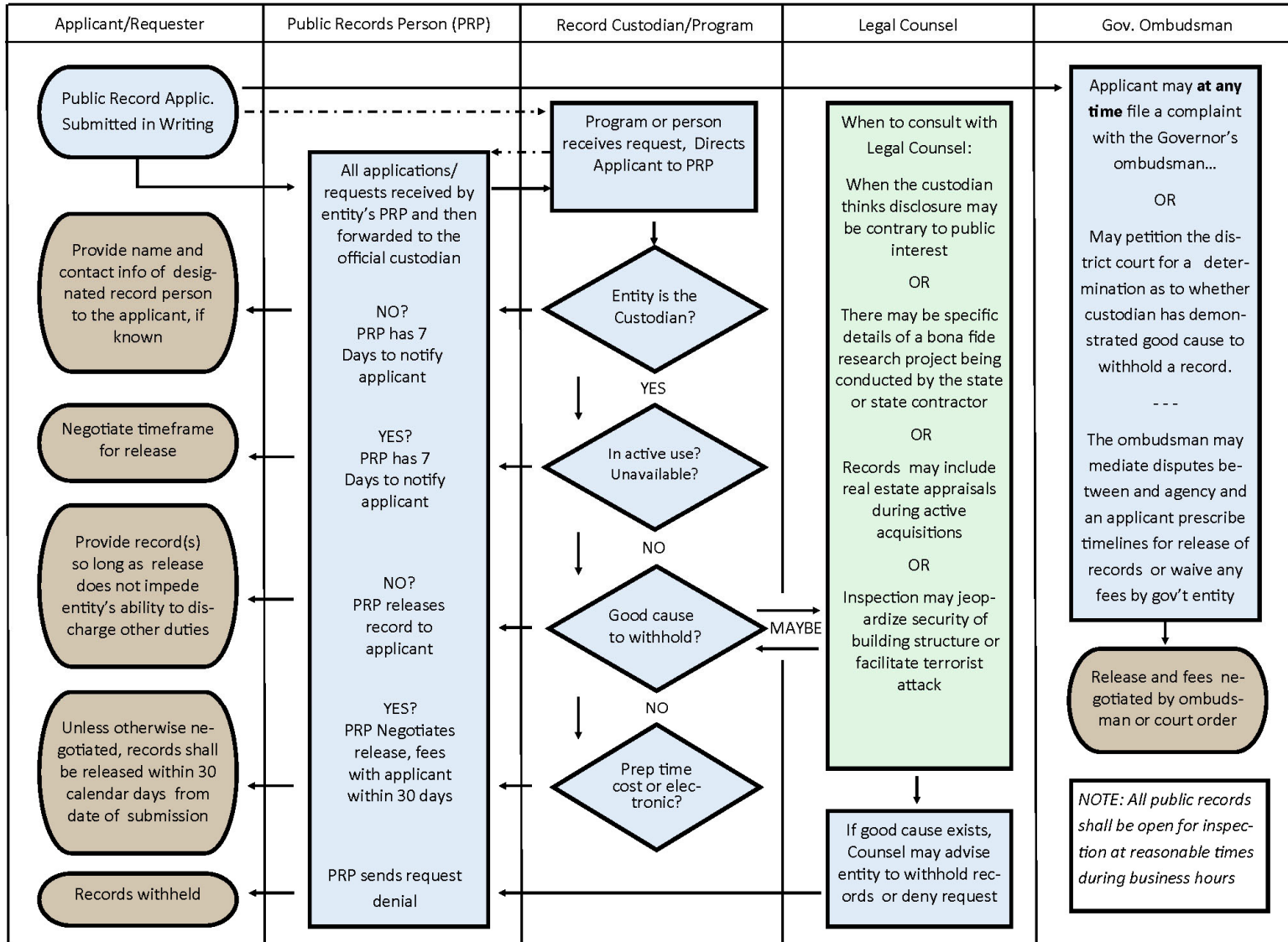
- Wyoming State Archives has produced a cross-walk of how long such records should be kept, depending on the type of record and completion of relevant events
- <https://wyoarchives.wyo.gov/index.php/record-retention-schedules>
- Records need to be kept at least one year, some for several years, and some permanently depending on the function of the record
- Detailed retention schedules and assistance are available from Wyoming State Archives on their website



## Public has Right of Inspection

- All public records shall be open for inspection by any person at reasonable times, during business hours of the governmental entity
- Written or verbal request
- Timing of release of records is dictated by law
- If public record is readily available, it shall be released immediately as long as release does not impair or impede city's ability to discharge its other duties

**SAMPLE PROCESS FOR PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS \***





# Can you deny access to any public records?

- General Rule: ***Must provide*** public records within 30 days unless there is a specific and legal justification to not do so
- If disclosure would do substantial injury to public interest, custodian may apply to district court for order permitting restriction
- Municipalities can make rules and regulations with reference to the inspection of the records as is reasonably necessary for the protection of the records and the prevention of unnecessary interference with the regular discharge of the public duties



# Fees

- Must be reasonable
- Costs of producing copy; including time to supervise copying, printing or photographing
- Right to make own copies
- Must set fees for record production by rule, resolution, ordinance



# Staff Roles

Implement Council decisions

Provide advice to Council

Align work priorities with governing body goals

Staff is supervised, but NOT by individual council members (Council must act as a unit)

Key staff include Clerk/Treasurer and City Administrator/Manager





## Council can expect Staff to:

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- Manage area of responsibility
- Provide professional advice
- Make recommendations
- Implement policy
- Communicate as needed
- Develop budget
- Recruit personnel
- Supervise employees
- Uphold public image

## Staff can expect Council to:

Counsel and advise

Consult

Delegate

Clarify responsibilities

Communicate

Support

Hold themselves and others accountable

Evaluate





# Council/Staff Relationship

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Nothing gets anything done without staff

Council is in charge – HOWEVER, no individual Council member has authority over staff

Council's job:

- Define the target

- Enable sufficient resources/time

- Say what you will and won't support, and...

- Let Staff get the job done - celebrate every success!



## Strive to maintain professional respectful environment

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Mutual respect and cooperation

Treat as professionals

Direct questions to appropriate supervisor rather than directly to staff member

Never publicly criticize an individual employee



## Council Conduct with Boards & Commissions

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Be mindful of the effect your presence may have on others when attending board or commission meetings

Limit contact w/board members to questions of clarification – no lobbying

Board members serve the community, not individual council members



WYOMING  
— PRESS  
ASSOCIATION



# Council Conduct with Media

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- ✓ Build relationships with media
- ✓ Public information venue
- ✓ Be available and return reporters' calls
- ✓ Never go "off the record"
- ✓ Who is the official spokesman?
- ✓ Choose words carefully

**It is important to remember that the press/media is the eyes and ears of the people**

# Council Conduct with Public

Be welcoming, treat everyone with care

Active listening

Ask for clarification, but avoid debate – don't argue

No one but presiding officer should interrupt a speaker

No personal attacks of any kind

Watch body language

Make no promises on behalf of Council

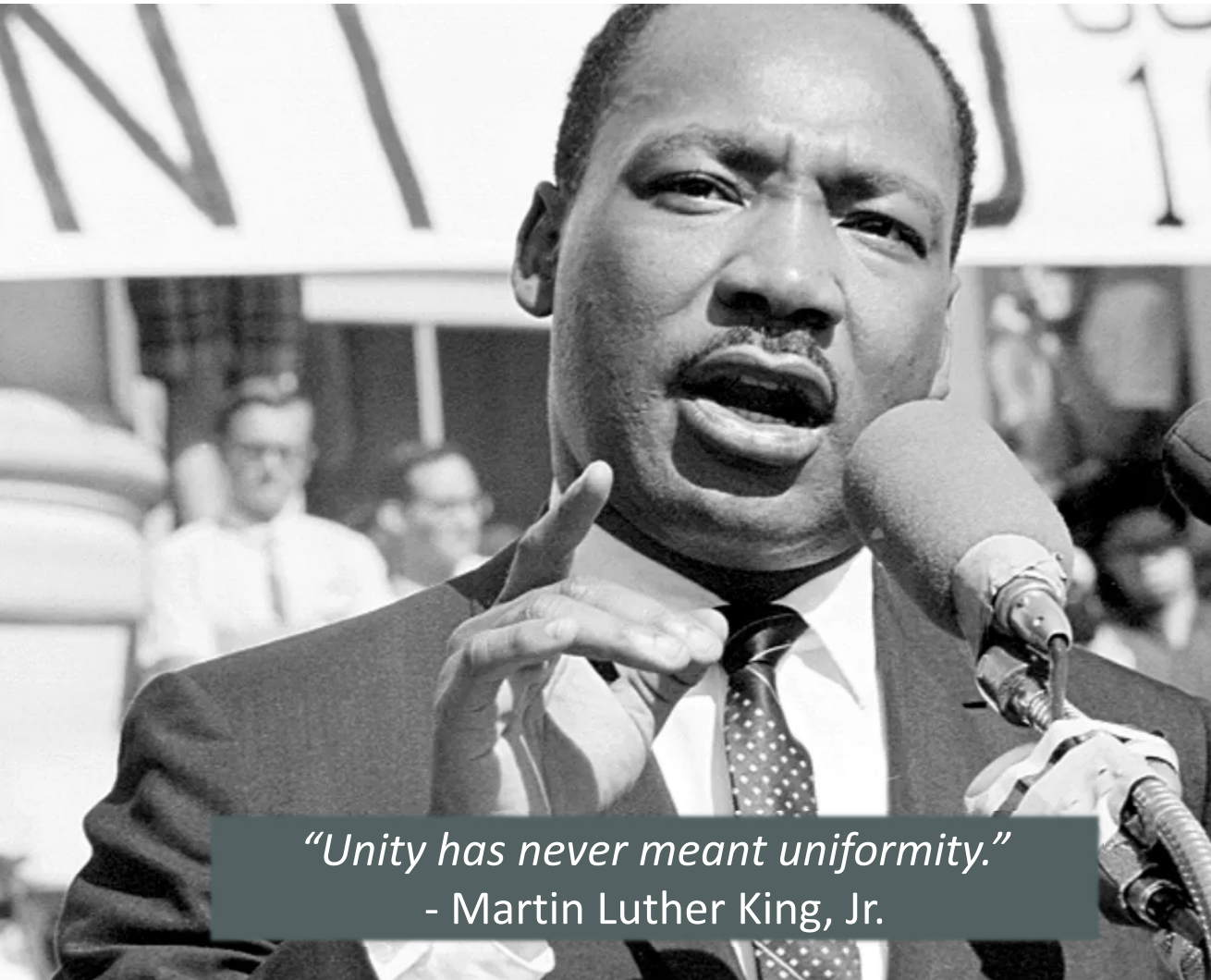




# Importance of Presiding Official

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- ✓ Mayor presides over meetings
- ✓ Set the tone by emphasizing culture of civility
- ✓ Follow the agenda
- ✓ Tell audience how to act – self-discipline, respect
- ✓ Remind audience not to applaud, boo or otherwise make remarks when others are speaking
- ✓ Cannot make motions, but can call for them (and then should always vote on them)



*"Unity has never meant uniformity."*

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Council Member Meeting Roles

All members have right to full participation

Each member can make motions, speak on motions, vote on all questions

Mutual respect and courtesy

Preparation for meetings

Listen Listen Listen

Work towards consensus

**When you reach a decision, act as a single voice**

# Council Meeting Protocol

Choose a meeting protocol – **Robert's Rules of Order** is commonly used, but others can work

Be professional and always address the Presiding Officer – they run the meeting

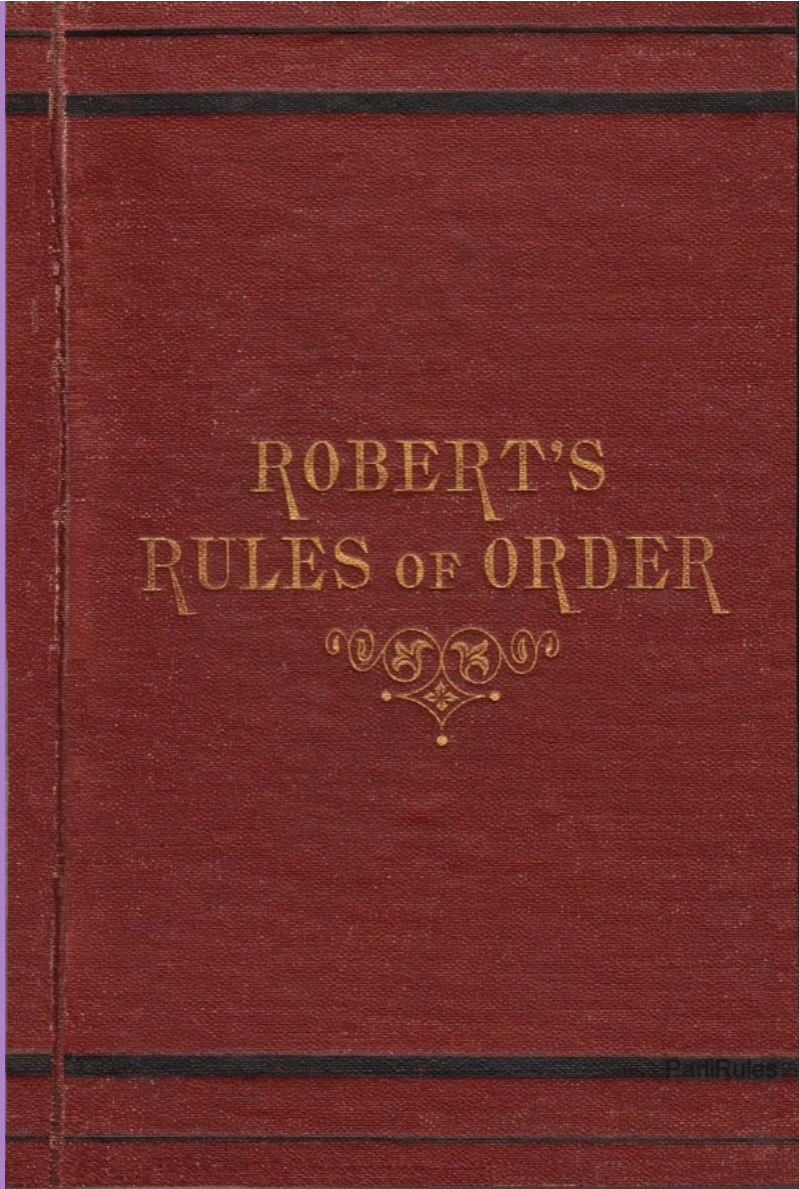
Use formal titles, not first names or nicknames

Stick to the Agenda – roadmap for meeting

Decide how to address non-agenda items

Public Hearings

Executive Sessions

The image shows the front cover of a book titled "ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER". The cover is a deep red or maroon color with a textured, possibly leather or cloth, finish. The title is embossed in a gold or brass color. "ROBERT'S" is on the top line in a large, serif font. "RULES OF ORDER" is on the second line, also in a large, serif font. Below the title is a decorative, ornate flourish or scrollwork design. The book is bound with visible spine lines on the left side. In the bottom right corner, there is a small, faint logo that says "ParlRules".

ROBERT'S  
RULES OF ORDER

# Sample Agenda *(create a template)*

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Call to order

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Opening Ceremony, Presentations, Proclamations

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Roll call

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Agenda review/changes

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Presentation and approval of minutes

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Public comments

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Public hearings

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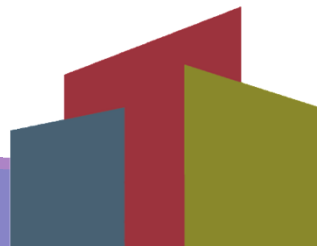
Action items – ordinances, resolutions, contracts, etc.

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Reports from staff, boards, committees

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Adjournment





# Consent Agenda

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Allows council to approve many items of routine business with just one vote

*Routine items are those that are not controversial and do not require further discussion*

Examples: approving minutes, receiving reports, receiving communications, approving licenses and permits, approving contract execution, reading of resolutions and second reading of ordinances, approving finance warrants, etc.

Any Council member can remove any item from Consent Agenda (Ex: matter needs further discussion, or if they will be abstaining from voting on any particular item)



## Making a motion

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Typically, after the Mayor invites action on a matter, any council member can start by saying: *“I move that we approve the .....”*

Motions must be seconded. *“I second that motion.”*

Mayor repeats motion and second, and calls for any Council discussion

Amendments, if any – *“I move to amend the motion to.....”* (amendments also require a second)

Mayor can call for vote (“ayes” & “nays”) or ask Clerk for roll call vote; Mayor should vote just like rest of Council!

Mayor announces results of vote

# A municipal law is called an ordinance

Enactment – requires three readings (council votes each time)

Must be signed, attested and recorded

Must designate an effective date (must be after publishing or posting 10 days)

## 6 parts of a municipal ordinance:

1. **Title** [general statement of contents] *“An ordinance of the Town of \_\_\_\_\_, establishing that ..., and repealing Ordinance No. 456.”*
2. **Be it ordained** by the governing body of the town of \_\_\_\_\_, that:
3. Section 1 – **Body** – detailed provisions
4. Section 2 – All ordinances in conflict are herewith **repealed**.
5. Section 3 – This ordinance shall **take effect on** \_\_\_\_\_
6. **Penalty** clause – if applicable



# Emergency Ordinance

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Council can suspend requirement that ordinances must be read 3 times

Super majority vote (3/4) required

Emergency must be specified in preamble

Effective upon proclamation of Mayor followed by “as soon thereafter as is practicable” by publication or posting

Signed, attested and recorded

# Charter Ordinance

Same form as other ordinances

Must be approved by 2/3 majority of all elected members

Effective after publishing for two weeks and at least 60 days after final publication before enactment

10% of qualified electors can call for referendum and file with Clerk

Recorded and file certified copy with Sec. of State

May amend only by another charter ordinance





# Resolutions

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Resolutions are merely to express a Council *opinion*

A municipal ordinance, in contrast, is a law intended to permanently direct and control

Resolutions are temporary

Examples: Support for a community effort; adoption of policy; or stipulating a position on a matter of public concern

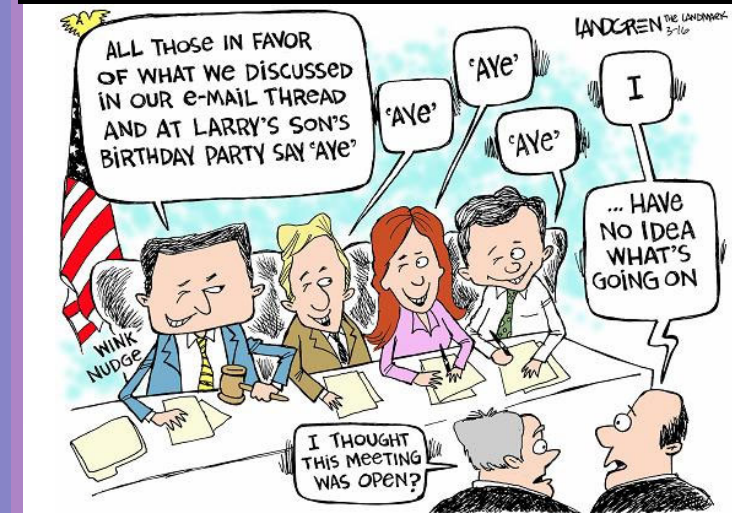
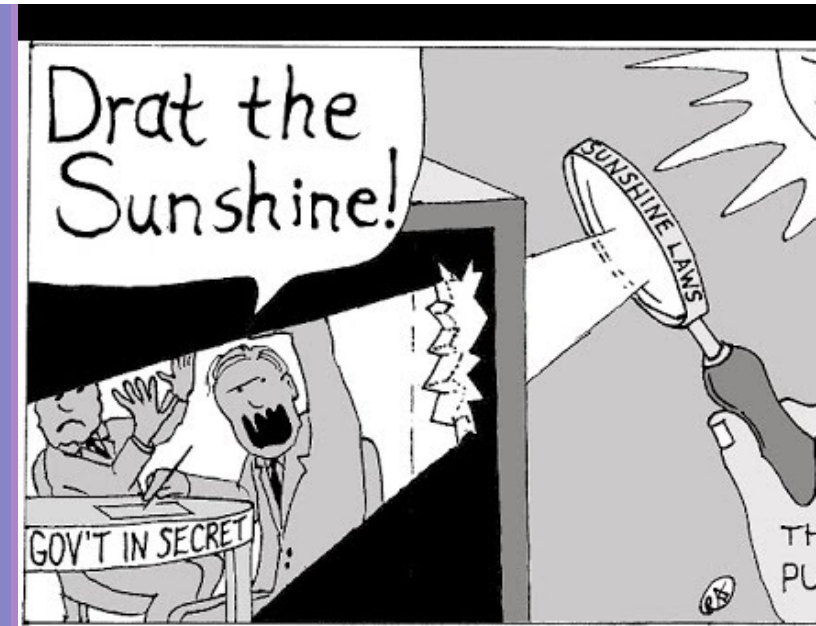
# Public Meetings

## Wyoming Open Meetings Law

### 16-4-101

- ✓ “Quorum of governing body called by proper authority for the purpose of discussion, deliberation, presentation of information or taking action regarding public business”
- ✓ All meetings open to public – except executive sessions
- ✓ No action can be taken except during a public meeting following notice of meeting

Best practice: **Conduct the maximum amount of the public's business in public**





# Statutes dictate Public Notice requirements

Date, time and place of regularly scheduled meetings adopted by ordinance, resolution, by-laws or rules

Any meeting that is not a regularly scheduled meeting is a special meeting (should give 24-hour prior notice)

## Jackson Hole News & Guide Public NOTICES

### TOWN OF JACKSON NOTICES

#### • LIQUOR LICENSES •

PUBLIC NOTICE: Notice of Application for a Restaurant Liquor License  
Notice is hereby given that the applicant whose name is set forth below filed application for a Restaurant Liquor License in the Office of the Town Clerk of the Town of Jackson, Teton County, Wyoming. The date of filing, name of the said applicant, and description of the place or premises which the applicant desires to use are as follows:  
Date Filed: December 8, 2022 Applicant: Abuelito Group LLC d/b/a El Abuelito Mexican Restaurant  
Location: 385 W. Broadway, Jackson, WY 83001  
Protest, if any there be, against the transfer of the above license will be heard at the hour of 6:00 pm or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, on the 17th day of January 2023 before the Town Council of the Town of Jackson, Teton County, Wyoming, in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall at 150 East Pearl.  
Dated this December 9, 2022. L.Lenamond, Sr. Deputy Town Clerk  
**Publish: 01/04, 01/11/23**



## Legal actions can only be taken at properly called Public Meetings

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No action of a governing body shall be taken except during a public meeting following notice of the meeting

Action taken at a meeting not in conformity with WOML is **null and void** and not merely voidable – *it will be as though the contract never existed, so any actions/payments that were made must now be undone*



## Public Attendance at Meetings

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- ✓ Member of public are not required to register name or any other information in order *to attend* meeting
- ✓ Those who wish to speak may be required to give their name and affiliation



# Citizen Participation

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- ✓ Decide how and when citizens may participate in meetings, subject to open meeting law
- ✓ Presiding officer may recognize attendees at any time, and can limit comments to agenda/time
- ✓ Consider tabling (not ignoring) off-topic comments and schedule topic for next meeting or a public hearing to listen more

# Public Hearings

- ✓ Close regular meeting
- ✓ Open public hearing
- ✓ Council members should NOT express opinions during public hearing portion (but may ask clarifying questions)
- ✓ “I think” and “I feel” are NOT appropriate council comments until after close of public hearing
- ✓ Time limits are permissible/needed
- ✓ Consider having “for” speak and then those who are “against”



# Minutes of Meeting

Required to be recorded  
(but not published if no  
Council action taken)

Not required to be recorded  
or published for *day-to-day*  
activity

Minutes must reflect all  
official actions/votes, but  
it's up to Council how much  
more detail to included

Public record

City of Sundance, Wyoming

January 4, 2022

The Town Council met this day in regular session at 7:00 p.m. with Mayor Paul Brooks presiding.

Roll call was taken by Mayor Brooks with Council Members Joe Wilson, Callie Hilty, Brad Marchant present. Randy Stevenson, present by phone.

Mayor Brooks presented the council members with the recommended 2022 appointments: Brad Marchant-Acting Mayor in the absence of Mayor Brooks, Sundance Times-Official Newspaper, Kathy Lenz-City Clerk Treasurer/Emergency Management Coordinator, Mac Erickson-Public Works Director/Zoning Code Official, Mark Hughes Law Office-City Attorney, Gari Gill-Fire Chief. City Engineer-Trihydro-Karla Greaser. Committee Members: Housing Authority Members-Kristy Ulmer-Manager, Marie Reed, Cassie Stark, Cindy Waller, Arna Montgomery, Wendy Kipp, Sue Fuhrman and Evergreen Management Services, Spearfish-SD. Land Use Planning Commission Members-Amanda Miller-Chairman, Lonnie Galloway, Trevor Keyworth and Mark E Hughes. Recreation Board Members-Andrea Humphrey, Shelby Gill, Jill Mackey, Rowdy Dowdy, Heidi Mills and Reggie Gaylord. Clarenbach Park Committee-Cheryl Wales, Sally Rogers and Debbie Davis. Crook County Promotion Board-Steve Lenz. Community Development Loan Board-Charlie Jones and Cindy Lambert. Economic Development Board-Andy Miller, Brent Fowler, Curt Williamson, Dan Fairbanks, Roger Connett, Stephanie Pribilske and Trey Hendrickson.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILSON MOVED, COUNCIL MEMBER MARCHANT SECONDED a motion to approve the appointments as read. All ayes, MOTION CARRIED.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARCHANT MOVED, COUNCIL MEMBER WILSON SECONDED a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. All ayes, MOTION CARRIED.



If there is a quorum present then Yes, these are meetings!

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Informal conversation to discuss public business, whether decision is made or not

Council work sessions, retreats, presentations

Council telephone conferences, on-line discussions

To be legal, such meetings must be preceded by public notice and open to the public

On the other hand...

If Mayor requests quorum of council members to ride together *to discuss city business*, this is a meeting under the law!

Meetings in areas that cannot or do not accommodate members of the public should not occur





## No, these are NOT meetings

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- ✓ Wedding or similar event
- ✓ Restaurant or party
- ✓ Riding in same vehicle to convention
- ✓ WHY NOT?
  - ✓ Not *called by proper authority* for purpose of conducting public business

## Executive Sessions for Limited Purposes Only (16-4-405)

To consider appointment, employment, etc.

Litigation to which governing body is a party or proposed litigation to which may be party

National security

Selection of sites for real estate purchases

Salary negotiations

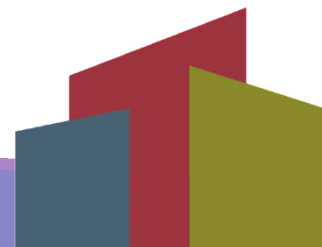
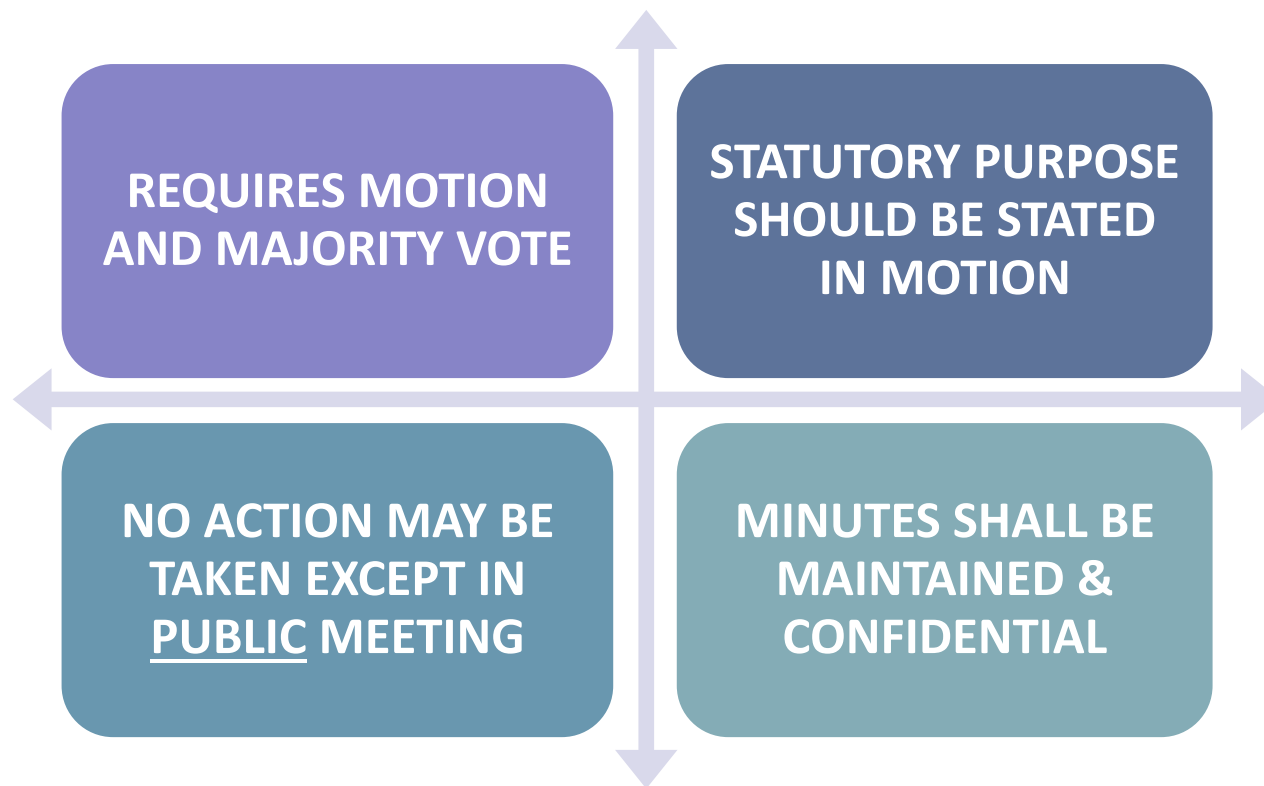
Collective bargaining negotiations – NO!



**CONFIDENTIAL**

# More on Executive Sessions

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# WOML and other violations

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All actions taken during a meeting in violation of WOML are **null** and **void**, not merely voidable



Public officers found in violation of the act are guilty of a misdemeanor and can be assessed fines of up to \$750



Remember: Disclosure of any information acquired in Executive Session also violates the Ethics and Disclosure Act



Questions about Government  
Operations, Roles &  
Responsibilities?

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*Thank You!*

*This presentation was prepared by Community Builders, Inc., a Wyoming-based consulting firm specializing in community and economic development, under contract and in cooperation with the Wyoming Association of Municipalities*

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Wyoming  
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