

## Public Meetings

City Council, School Committee and City of Worcester Boards and Commission meetings are generally all open to the public and interested individuals are encouraged to attend.

**Public meetings are subject to the Massachusetts Attorney General's Open Meeting Laws.**

All public meeting notices and agendas are published on the City website at least 48 hours prior to each meeting. The agendas outline the topics each board will be discussing. The minutes are also posted for all the previous meetings to inform the public concerning attendance, topics discussed and votes taken.

In order to ensure orderly meetings, boards adhere to **parliamentary procedures** which refer to rules, ethics and customs governing meetings and other operations of these boards. These rules outline procedures to ensure that all board members follow the same rules of deliberation, debate and voting.

It is essential that all members are involved and have the chance to contribute to the democratic process of the meetings. These rules are in place to encourage, not limit, the participation of all members and the public.

### Resources

<http://www.mass.gov/ago/openmeeting>

<http://www.robertsrules.org>

## City Council

**Meets Tuesdays at 6:30PM \***

**Council Chamber, third floor of City Hall**

Worcester is governed by a Council-manager form of government with a popularly elected mayor. A city council acts as the legislative body, and the council-appointed manager handles the traditional day-to-day chief executive functions.

\*July & August meetings start at 6:00PM.

<http://www.worcesterma.gov/city-council>

## School Committee

**Meets first & third Thursdays at 7:00PM**

**Council Chamber, third floor of City Hall**

The Worcester School Committee is the legislative and policy-making body that deals with supervision of the Worcester Public School System. The School Committee selects and terminates the superintendent, approves public education budgets in the district and sets educational policies and goals for each school in the district consistent with the laws, goals and standards set by the MA Board of Education.

<http://www.worcesterma.gov/city-clerk/public-meetings/agendas-minutes>

## City of Worcester

### Boards and Commissions

Worcester residents serve as volunteers on thirty municipal boards, commissions, and advisory committees. Meeting locations, days and times vary; check the online city calendar or

<http://www.worcesterma.gov/boards-commissions>

Interested in serving on a board? Contact:  
[michelsonj@worcesterma.gov](mailto:michelsonj@worcesterma.gov)

For more information and to learn how to become a Board or Committee Member, contact: Jeannie Michelson by phone (508) 799-1175 or email: [michelsonj@worcesterma.gov](mailto:michelsonj@worcesterma.gov)



OPEN MEETING \* PUBLIC WELCOME

# Guide to Participation in Public Meetings



The City of Worcester is committed to principles of equal opportunity and affirmative action.

*Published by the City of Worcester  
Office of Human Rights & Disabilities  
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# The City of Worcester Welcomes Your Participation



## ***What is a public meeting?***

A meeting of any multi-member board, committee or council, known as a public body, that has been established to serve a public purpose constitutes a public meeting.

## ***Who can attend?***

Public meetings are free and open to the general public. Adults and children are welcome. You are free to come and go as you please.

## ***Why attend?***

By attending public meetings, you can become informed about different issues in the City as well as comment on problems or solutions.

## ***How will I know what is going on?***

The laws governing public meetings mandate that an agenda must be publicly posted 48 hours ahead of time that outlines what will be discussed. Printed copies of the agenda are also available to the public during meetings.

## ***Can I ask a question or comment?***

A public comment period is generally provided during each meeting. The public are encouraged to sign in with the staff. Once called upon to speak by the Chairperson the member of the public should begin by announcing their name and city/town of residence and reference which agenda item they wish to address.

## ***What if I need a reasonable accommodation?***

The City of Worcester does not discriminate on the basis of disability. All City sponsored public meetings and hearings must be held in locations that are accessible to people with disabilities, including people who use wheelchairs.

Auxiliary aids and services, written materials in alternative formats, and reasonable modifications in policies and procedures are available upon advance request to persons with disabilities. Please contact the board staff or liaison.

## ***Are interpretation services available to help me or others participate in meetings?***

Yes. Contact the board staff or liaison no less than 48 hours before the meeting to make a request.

## ***Are meetings televised?***

City Council and School Committee meetings are aired live and other boards and commission meetings are generally videotaped for streaming afterwards online and aired on the government access channel.

## ***Am I permitted to audio or video record the public meeting?***

Yes. Notify the board staff or liaison that you are making an audio or video recording and find out where is the best location to set up your equipment so that it does not disrupt the meeting or block others' view.

## ***Did you know that the level of government that most affects you daily is local government?***

Local government is responsible for parks, libraries, public schools, public streets and sidewalks, voter registration and polling locations, business licenses, commercial and residential zoning and permitting for construction, ensuring there are adequate numbers of police and firefighters on duty to respond when you need them and much more.

## ***The importance of a participatory process in a democracy***

Participating in public meetings are ways to make your voice heard. Do you know who are your local representatives charged with making these recommendations and decisions? Do they know what you want and need from your City?

## ***Suggestions for advocating your case***

Attending public meetings helps keep you informed of issues and is a forum to express your comments and suggestions. Be sure to review the board description and meeting minutes from past meetings so you are informed about the issue as well as the jurisdiction and/or authority of each board for the decision you seek.

Helpful pointers:

- Do your research- Collect information that strengthens your position
- Assess if there is community support or opposition
- Write out your position and support it with references
- Speak loud, clear and respectful to all.