

WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY BOARD BYLAWS

June 18, 2024

Responsibilities

“The board shall advise the city council, mayor, public works director, and other city departments on the formulation and implementation of plans, programs and projects concerning the city’s municipal water, sanitary sewer, wastewater treatment and disposal, and surface and stormwater utilities, including the protection and preservation of Lake Whatcom through, in part, the watershed acquisition program, as the city’s primary source of drinking water. Such plans include but are not limited to the water system plan, surface and stormwater comprehensive plan, comprehensive sewer plan, and the Lake Whatcom five-year work plan.” (See BMC 2.91.020)

Membership

Overview

“The board shall consist of up to nine members. Members shall be appointed and removed by the mayor and confirmed by city council. Members shall serve without compensation. No member of the board shall be employed by the City. (See BMC 2.91.030A)

Members shall be residents of the City of Bellingham. To the extent possible, members shall be selected so that the board collectively possesses knowledge and/or experience on the following municipal matters:

1. Drinking water source preservation and protection;
2. Drinking water utility systems;
3. Sanitary sewer utility systems, including wastewater treatment and disposal;
4. Surface and stormwater utility systems; and
5. Utility finances and rates.”

(See BMC 2.91.030C)

Terms of Appointment

“Members shall serve three-year terms. At the outset, appointments may be for shorter terms to allow for staggered terms of service.” (See BMC 2.91.030B)

Re-appointment

“Members may be reappointed without limitation.” (See BMC 2.91.030B)

Vacancies

“Any vacancy in the membership of the board shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment, with the replacement serving the remainder of the unexpired term.”
(See BMC 2.91.030B)

Meeting attendance

Members are expected to attend all regular meetings. Regular meeting attendance is important to the conduct of meetings, participation in board decisions, and provision of timely input to the City. Absences will be excused by notifying the board secretary before the scheduled meeting.

Unexcused absences

Members who miss three or more meetings in a calendar year without notifying the board secretary prior to the meeting may have their appointments terminated by the Mayor.

Member removal

A board member may be removed from the board only by the Mayor. The Board may recommend to the Mayor that a member be removed for failure to participate in Board activities or for behavior that negatively impacts the board’s purpose. The member being considered for removal may not vote on the recommendation of their removal.

Resignations

A board member may resign from board membership by giving written notice to the Mayor. The notice shall specify an effective date of resignation and should be submitted at least thirty days before the effective date whenever possible.

Organization

Chair and Vice Chair

“Upon the initial appointment of the board, the board shall elect a chairperson and vice chairperson from among its members to preside at its meetings, and thereafter such officers shall be elected at the first meeting in January of each year.” (See BMC 2.91.040A)

The Chairperson shall preside over all meetings of the board. The chairperson shall draft the agendas for future meetings with input from board members and staff.

The vice chairperson shall assume the duties of the chairperson when the chairperson is absent. In addition, the vice chairperson shall assist the Chairperson in fulfilling their duties.

Secretary

The secretary will keep accurate account of all board records and minutes of all meetings. To be consistent with City practices, City staff will perform the role of Secretary. The public works department shall support the board in the fulfillment of its responsibilities. (See BMC 2.91.040F)

Expectations of all board members

See City document: *Expectations of Advisory Group Members*

Quorum and Voting

“A majority of the members of the board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and a majority of board members present shall be required to approve any action.” (See BMC 2.91.040C)

Absent a quorum of active board members, only three motions can be considered:

- To recess,
- To fix the time to which to adjourn, and
- To adjourn.

Meetings

Regular board meeting frequency

“Regular meetings of the board shall be held at least six times per year.” (See BMC 2.91.040D)

Additional meetings

“Additional special meetings may be held as the board deems necessary.” (See BMC 2.91.040D)

Open Public Meetings Act (from BMC 2.91 and Expectations of Advisory Group Members)

“All meetings of the board shall be open to the public and in accordance with the Washington Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 42.30 RCW.” (See BMC 2.91.040D)

“All records of the board shall be public records, maintained in accordance with the Washington Public Records Act, Chapter 42.56 RCW.” (See BMC 2.91.040B)

A quorum of members may not discuss board work and related issues via email, telephone, text, or in unnoticed meetings, as these actions may be in violation of open meeting laws.

Notice of meetings

All meetings of the board will be announced to the public through normal City meeting notification processes. Agendas and associated materials will be distributed by the Secretary to the board one week before each meeting and published along with the City’s meeting notification.

Public Comment

General public comment will be accepted, not to exceed 15 minutes with individual speakers limited to two minutes each. Written public comment is also accepted.

Meeting follow-up

- The secretary sends the current draft minutes to the board within 1 week of any meeting.
- The board approves minutes at the following meeting.
- The secretary posts minutes on the board's website cob.org as soon as possible following approval. Supporting material and resolutions should be attached. Include persons responsible (according to agenda) when necessary.

Decisions

A majority of members must be present for the board to make any decisions or recommendations.

The current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall provide the basis for meeting structure and official decisions shall be made by motion and vote.

Conflict of Interest

During the board's meetings, the Chair shall ask members if they have any conflicts of interest. Such conflicts must be publicly disclosed and the member who has an interest in any matter before the board that could influence their actions shall refrain from voting on the matter.

Adoption and Amendment of Bylaws

"The board is authorized to make bylaws for the conduct of its business, consistent with this chapter." (See BMC 2.91.040E)

"The adoption or amendment of board bylaws shall require approval by a majority vote of the entire board (not just a majority of those present at the meeting where the vote occurs)." (See BMC 2.91.040C)