

Speaking at the City Council Meeting

Before speaking at the city council meeting, consider:

1. Visiting the city website, www.gatesvilletx.com under government, city council, agenda, and minutes. The agenda packet contains all the supporting documents for the agenda.
2. Contacting City Hall, located at 803 Main Street, Gatesville, TX, 76528 (254) 865-8951
3. Speak with a council member for guidance and assistance. The current process to contact a council member is to go through City Hall.
4. If you are looking to report a problem on the city website (e.g., "How do I?"), go to the "Report a Problem" section. You can report a code violation, manhole overflow, pothole, sewer issue, water leak. To report a water or sewer issue after 5 PM Monday- Friday and on weekends or holidays, call the Police Department at (254)865-2226.

Speaking before the city council on an agenda item allows you to be involved in the discussion before the city council. The citizen's forum allows you to speak on any topic for 3 minutes; the council may not enter into discussion and is limited to a response to a statement of specific factual information given in response to the inquiry or a recitation of existing policy in response to the inquiry. Any deliberation or decision about the subject of the inquiry shall be limited to a proposal to place the subject on the agenda for a subsequent meeting by a Council Member.

The governmental body may not unfairly discriminate among speakers for or against a particular point of view. A governmental body may not prohibit public criticism of the governmental body, including criticism of any act, omission, policy, procedure, program, or service, except criticism otherwise prohibited by law. You can record all or any part of an open meeting of a governmental body using an audio recorder, video camera, or other means of aural or visual reproduction.

How is an item on the agenda placed?

1. Requests to have an item placed on the agenda must be submitted to the city secretary at least seven (7) days before the Council read ahead books are prepared. These books are prepared on the Friday before the scheduled meeting date. The Mayor or City Manager may place an item on the agenda for consideration within such seven-day period if it is an unexpected matter requiring the immediate attention of the Council, otherwise items submitted less than seven days before the read ahead books are prepared may be postponed to a later meeting.
2. The Mayor, City Manager, City Attorney, City Secretary, or any two (2) Councilmembers may request an item to be included on the agenda. The person or persons requesting an item be placed on the agenda will consult with the City Manager to ensure sufficient information pertaining to the issue is coordinated with The entire Council and to determine the appropriate timing for consideration of such items.
3. The City Manager /City Attorney Mayor will decide whether a request is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the city council. Items not within the subject matter jurisdiction of the council may not be placed on the agenda.
4. The City Manager/City Attorney or City Secretary shall decide whether an agenda item is appropriate for discussion in open or closed session, and whether the item should be an action item, informational item, or consent item. An item not appearing on the agenda shall not be taken up for discussion as a matter of council business during any council meeting.

Additionally, the Texas Office of the Attorney General (OAG) produces the Open Meetings Handbook, an in-depth publication about the Act and its interpretation in attorney general opinions and court cases. That publication is available in a downloadable PDF format on the Attorney General's website at <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open-government/open-meetings-act-training>. Finally, the OAG sponsors

an Open Government Hotline where public officials and concerned citizens can get answers to basic questions about the Act. The Open Government Hotline number is (512) 478-6736 or (877) 673-6839 (OPEN-TEX).

Prepared by Leo Corona. Resources used: Open Meetings ACT Handbook 2024 and Council Meeting Procedure Policy for the City of Gatesville, Texas, dated January 10, 2023