Proposed City Council Agenda with Recommendations and Considerations

1. **Call to order and roll call**
2. **Approval of minutes**
3. **Announce committee meetings, committee membership appointments, and changes to committee agendas.**
   - *Recommendation: Do not read committee schedule and agenda topics; focus on changes to posted schedule if there are any.*
4. **Special presentations and proclamations**
   - *Consideration: Could include announcements and be used to set tone for meetings. The City of Billings includes something called "courtesies" where council members can announce events, etc. Would need to reconcile with communications from the mayor and city council members, below.*
5. **Public Hearings**
   - *Consideration: Moving up public hearings in the agenda focuses the effort on the main business of City Council. Provides time savings for the public, staff, and consultants.*
6. **New business (1/30/24 update)**
   - *Consideration: Moving up new business in the agenda focuses the effort on the main business of City Council. Provides time savings for the public, staff, and consultants.*
7. **Public Comments for Items on the Agenda**
   - *A place for public comments for any item on the agenda, so that people do not have to wait through every item and hearing to make public comment on noticed items.*

8. ~~**Final Consideration**~~
   - *Recommendation: Eliminate Final Consideration. This was a COVID-era protocol established when access to local government was limited. Final consideration now just adds delay and cost. If an item needs more work, it should be sent back to committee.*
9. **Consent agenda**
   - *Consideration: Do we need to read everything on the consent agenda. Is it sufficient to refer to the consent agenda in council member packets?*
   - *Recommendation: Be clearer about what it means to put something on the consent agenda. While separating votes may be fine, if someone desires to speak to the item, it should probably go to committee reports. The purpose of the consent agenda is to simplify and expedite the approval of routine business items.*
10. ~~**Council business**~~ **Regular Business (1/30/24)**
    - *Neighborhood Council updates*
    - *If committee reports follow consent agenda, it is easier to move items from the consent agenda to committee reports when necessary.*
    - *Maybe this could be "Standing Reports" or "informational reports" and include the administratively approved report? And any other reports that aren't acted on, like the legislative update during legislative season?*
11. **Public Comments on items not on the agenda**

- *Consideration: Places public comments for items not on the agenda after noticed committee business to be respectful of the time of those commenting and appearing for noticed and required items;*
- *Consideration: Places public comments for items not on the agenda closer to mayoral/council communications & general comments to allow for clarification or information sharing*

12. ~~Comments from city staff, city agencies, community forum, neighborhood councils, boards, commissions, or authorities~~
- *Recommendation: Eliminate this agenda subject. Comments and reports and informational items are generally presented at committee meetings. In the last few years, we have not had any of these agenda items.*

13. **Communications from the Mayor**
- *May not be needed if covered in courtesies or opening announcements.*

14. **General comments from City Council members**
- *Can councilors notify the mayor by raising a hand of their interest in making comments? Going around the table to ask each member can create the appearance that a councilor should speak when they don't necessarily desire to do so.*

15. ~~Miscellaneous communications reports, and announcements~~
- *Recommendation: Eliminate this agenda subject.*
- *Recommendation: Find an alternative way to share the administratively approved agreements list with council members. Inclusion on the agenda is confusing since it does not get discussed. We can share the information more effectively.*

16. **Adjournment**

Further Explanation

Under this order, grouping:

- first four items are <u>administrative</u> business and setting the state for the meeting,
- 5 through 10 represent the <u>core Council business</u> and public comment on core business items
- last 3 items (other than adjournment) are <u>informational</u>.

This format can help serve a couple purposes:

- Gives priority to items that have been scheduled for consideration, allows better time management for staff and stakeholders who are addressing individual items.
- Puts the core business in the middle.
- Concludes with informational items and things that cannot be acted on in this meeting due to notice (public comments for non-agenda items).
- Central Services is investigating timing equipment to help the presiding officer and the public manage the time spent on individual public comment

Other Recommended Changes for Consideration

1. Move away from verbatim minutes for City Council

     a. Use basic minutes in compliance with state law

     b. Recordings provide full context

     c. Saves money on transcription and staff productivity

2. Proposed to end minutes for non-required meetings (boards / commissions / etc.)

     a. For boards and commissions where there are not state law requirements to maintain minutes, transition away from minutes in favor of recordings.

3. Committee reforms

     a. Having all members of Council on every committee is a somewhat new cultural shift and somewhat defeats the purpose of having committees. Council should consider whether all members should be on every committee.

4. Roll call vs voice votes – we've created a culture of having a roll call vote on almost every matter, including procedural items like setting a public hearing. Should more voice votes be considered?

5. Register for public comment – public comment at the Montana Legislature requires registration. Recommend getting organization represented (if applicable) in addition to name and ward.

6. Public Comment – for recurring items like the consent agenda and committee business, some cities have a specified agenda item for "public comment on remaining agenda items"