

## **ADVISORY COMMITTEES – November 1984 (Revised 2013)**

The Juneau League of Women Voters supports the use of advisory committees by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ). We believe that citizen committees can provide a valuable means of participation in government. In order for these committees to be effective, the resolution establishing the committee should clearly state the mission and scope of activities. These missions can be found on the CBJ website.

“Advisory committee” is defined as a committee, board, commission or task force of citizens to address specific community issues or needs.

Advisory committees should serve as channels for public opinion on specific, detailed issues related to the work of the Assembly. Therefore, each committee should be related to a specific subcommittee of the Assembly or the Assembly as a whole, and should report to the Assembly on a regular basis, but at least annually and in writing and the report(s) published on the committee’s webpage. Committees should be encouraged to schedule a presentation to the Assembly’s committee of the whole on issues felt to require special attention.

In addition to reporting to its guiding Assembly subcommittee, the activities of each committee should be reviewed annually by the entire Assembly. At that time, the committee should be given further guidance by the Assembly, or should be suspended, or dissolved, as the need warrants.

Committee membership should be balanced to represent the interests which will be served by its activities. In some cases, a balance between technical expertise and affected user groups should be emphasized. In other cases, a balance of age, sex, race or other factors would be more important.

When filling vacancies on a committee, the Assembly should publicly advertise the opening. A standardized application form should be used to determine the applicant’s reasons for wishing to serve on the board and qualifications that would contribute to the committee’s mission and balanced composition.

While appointing members with conflicts of interest arising from the work of the committee is not desirable, excluding individuals who have occasional conflicts may not be practical without limiting the technical expertise required by some committees. All members of advisory committees should receive an initial in person or web based orientation in addition to the CBJ’s on-line manual at [www.juneau.org/clerk/boards/documents/2011-05-25 Board info pamphlet-version 2011-02.PDF](http://www.juneau.org/clerk/boards/documents/2011-05-25%20Board%20info%20pamphlet-version%202011-02.PDF) (or its revised edition) that includes recognizing and handling conflicts of interest according to the Charter of the City and Borough.

In keeping with principles of citizen participation in government, all meetings of advisory committees should be open to the public. Meetings should be held on a regular, scheduled basis, with published agenda and adequate public notice of the time and place of meeting. Public testimony time should be available at each meeting of the committee. A written record of each meeting of the committee to summarize the meeting and any decisions made should be taken. This written record should be filed in the City Clerk’s office promptly

following each meeting and should be available to the public, and included on the CBJ website.

Support services should be provided to facilitate the work of the boards and to provide continuity in their activities. Each committee should be assigned a staff person to help coordinate its activities and to provide access to clerical support.

Standard by-laws should be provided to each committee at its inception. These by-laws could be modified and adopted by the committee to meet its own particular needs. The CBJ standard by-laws are available at [www.juneau.org/clerk/resolutions/res2246.pdf](http://www.juneau.org/clerk/resolutions/res2246.pdf).

A central file should be maintained in the office of the City Clerk containing individual files on each of the boards and committees including the following materials: the resolution or ordinance creating the committee, the by-laws adopted by the committee, the current and historic membership of the committee, and all agendas, minutes and reports filed by the committee. All these materials should be available to interested citizens on request and on the CBJ website.