

2016-2017 PL/PW Council Decision-Making Process & Operating Guidelines

Council Operating Guidelines and Ground Rules: Developed under a framework of questions that asked “*How will this PL/PW Council operate?*” and “*What roles, expectations, and behaviors do you have for your relationships with (1) each other; (2) the public; and 3) FWP/Governor/Legislature?*” Council members previously developed the following guidelines and ground rules for future Council work:

Decision-Making Process

The PL/PW Council will work by consensus to reach decisions. A way to test whether or not the group is achieving consensus is to ask the participants how they feel about a particular proposal or option according to the following statements:

1. I can say that I **wholeheartedly agree** to the decision.
2. I find the decision **perfectly acceptable**. It is the best option available to us.
3. I can **support** the decision, although I’m not especially enthusiastic about it.
4. I do not fully agree with the decision and need to register my view about it. However, I do not choose to block the decision. **I am willing to support the decision** because I trust the wisdom of the group.
5. I do not agree with the decision and feel the need to **block** the decision from being accepted as consensus.
6. I feel we have no clear sense of unity in the group. We need to **do more work before consensus can be achieved**.

Consensus is achieved if all participants indicate that they are at levels 1-4. When someone falls at 5 or 6, that person must assume the burden of clearly articulating his or her concern to the larger group, which must then assume responsibility for seeking to accommodate those concerns. The group may continue with the procedure until consensus is achieved or the group decides to disagree, or not move forward with a particular decision or recommendation.

Lack of Consensus: If the Council cannot achieve consensus, the Council may move forward on issues where consensus was not reached if a supermajority of members (80%) vote in favor of the issue or recommendation. The majority and minority voting memberships of the Council shall report to FWP on the issue or recommendation dividing the group, along with a voting record.

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Operating Guidelines

PL/PW Council members will:

- Represent all the citizens of Montana, and not just specific groups or interests.
- Create idea components rather than person components.
- Demonstrate respect for each other by:
 - Listening actively
 - Listening honorably, and respecting each other
 - Giving the other person permission to openly speak his or her mind
 - Avoiding attacking remarks, “name calling,” hitting,” etc.
 - Not interrupting
 - Not conducting side conversations
- Participate in Council deliberations
- Leave personal agendas off the table or outside the meeting room.
- Take or call for a “time-out” when or if one is needed.
- Attend meetings unless unavoidable; communicate ideas to other members if necessary.
- Take personal responsibility for “catching up” on any meeting that may be missed.
- Make efforts to contact absent members to get their input if decisions need to be made.
- Establish “triplines” to gather and share information with area “constituents.”
- Welcome FWP participation in Council activities to provide necessary information and guidance while also allowing for Council independence.
- Utilize a facilitator to assist with meetings on an as-needed basis.
- Media requests will be handled by Hank Worsech, who will coordinate with Ron Aasheim, Communication & Education Administrator for FWP, as necessary.