

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE: Staff Support for City Councilmembers—"8-Hour Rule"
DEPARTMENT: City Manager's Office
PRESENTED BY: Steven C. Burkett, City Manager

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT:

Recently Councilmember Robert Ransom requested that City Manager Steve Burkett bring before the City Council the issue of staff support for individual councilmembers. Councilmember Ransom recalls that the Council established during the City's initial formation an "8-Hour Rule," which provides the Council with staff support to work on an issue of legislative consideration for up to eight (8) hours per month.

BACKGROUND:

To confirm this rule, City Clerk Sharon Mattioli provided the following notes from the Council's September 1995 Retreat, which was facilitated by Phil Kushlan.

"8-Hour Rule" provides the council with up to eight (8) hours of staff support to work on any issue, if it is a legitimate city issue, for the Council's legislative consideration. Staff would sit with the councilmember and help put together a presentation to Council. The Council makes the decision if more time or energy is to be spent on this. This provides a process for reaching a yes or no decision point on issues and helps limit the sense of powerlessness. The primary contact is the City Clerk's Office and the city manager makes the staff assignment. This would be tracked to ensure staff is not wasting its time.

The City Clerk recalls that the "8-Hour Rule" was intended to apply on a per month basis. Additionally, councilmembers were already working very closely with staff on numerous issues at this time in the City's early history. Likewise, the City Clerk recalls that it was never used and hours were not tracked.

City staff makes every effort to respond to council requests for information; however, if a specific request requires substantial staff time, the current process for handling this is by making the assignment through the direction of the full city council. When a request of this nature occurs, the city manager prepares a "one-page memorandum" to the city council informing them of the request. Following the memorandum, it would be the individual councilmember's prerogative to discuss the request at an upcoming council meeting and to seek approval by the "full" council (by majority). This ensures that all councilmembers are aware of requests being made to the city manager, thereby

ensuring that staff resources are allocated in accordance with overall council goals, priorities, and direction.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

If all seven (7) councilmembers requested staff support of eight (8) hours per person per month—approximately 56 staff hours—it would require an estimated .30 FTE. Currently, there is no dedicated staff person to manage this unanticipated workload. To manage this workload, either current assignments would need to be reprioritized or Council would need to consider hiring an additional FTE.

IMPLEMENTATION:

If the “8-Hour Rule” is adopted then it should be implemented and tracked through the City Manager’s Office.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff does not recommend any changes to the current “one-page memorandum” process.

Approved By: City Manager  City Attorney ____