Topics to be Covered

- Open Meeting Law
- Data Practices
- Gift Law
- Conflicts of Interest
- Parliamentary Procedure Basics
- Social Media
- City Code Requirements
- Tips for Effective Participation
- Q & A
Introduction

- Role of Commissions in City Government
  - Appointed by Council
  - Advise/recommend direction to City Council
  - Give guidance to staff and other commissions and taskforces
  - Assist in setting City policy
  - Serve as ambassadors
Open Meeting Law

- Applies to City Council and Commissions
- What is a meeting?
  - Quorum or more of members, at which members receive or discuss information on matter that is or will come before the body
  - Not necessary that action be taken for it to be a meeting
  - Not chance or social gatherings
  - Usually not seminars/conferences
- Be careful to avoid discussions with other Commissioners
Open Meeting Law

- Meeting must be open to public
- Generally must be in city limits; accessible room
- Public must have access to agenda materials, unless protected
Open Meeting Law

- Open Meeting Law sometimes ALLOWS closed meetings and sometimes REQUIRES closed meetings.

- Advisory bodies unlikely to conduct closed meetings; topics are generally not within their authority.
Open Meeting Law: Email and Social Media Concerns

- Basic Assumptions
  - Email and social media communications can violate OML where a quorum is involved and topic is city business
  - Okay to use social media for exchanges with all members of the public
  - Consider whether purpose of communication is to evade public discussion on the issue
  - **General rule:** Avoid discussions with each other outside of a public meeting
  - Ask staff liaison or attorney if you have questions
Data Practices

- Data Practices statute applies to all data (written or electronic information) maintained by City, including data in possession of Commissions.

- General Classifications:
  - Public
  - Private/Non-public (personnel)
  - Confidential/protected non-public

- Government Data on Personal Devices
  - Subject to data request
  - Where data is stored does not matter
Data Practices

- Public Data on appointed officials:
  - Name and address
  - Education, training and employment history
  - Volunteer work, awards and honors, prior government service, veteran status
  - Telephone or email, first and last dates of service
- Inform staff liaison of any data requests
- City doesn’t necessarily collect all of the above information
- Commissioner contact information on website
Gift Law

- Statute/City Charter (Chapter 12 of Ethics Code)
- Applies to both elected and appointed officials
- Prohibits local officials from accepting gifts from “interested persons” (persons having a financial interest in a decision)
- May accept donations, which are approved by City Council
Gift Law

Exceptions
- Services of insignificant monetary value
- Plaques or memento recognizing work
- Trinket or memento costing $5.00 or less
- Informational material of unexceptional value
Conflicts of Interest

- State statute/city charter (Chapter 12-Code of Ethics)
- Rules apply to council and commission members
- General rule
  - Do not participate in matters in which you have a personal financial interest
  - Notify staff liaison of possible conflict
Meeting Procedures

- Sturgis’ Code of Parliamentary Procedure
  - Will apply if disputes arise

- Typical Process:
  - Attendance
  - Review and approve agenda
  - Approve minutes
  - Regular business – Old/New
  - Public Hearings
  - Future Agenda Items/Upcoming meetings
  - Other business/Announcements
  - Adjournment
Parliamentary Procedure: Meeting Procedures

- **Role of Chair**
  - Announces items
  - Staff presents report
  - Calls for discussion or a motion
  - Calls for a vote and announces results
  - May request disruptive persons to leave
  - Seek assistance from law enforcement if necessary
Use of Social Media

- City presence on Social Media
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - You Tube

- Purpose
  - Connecting with residents and sharing information

- City website
  - Commissions may post/update content through staff liaisons
Use of Social Media

- Issues for City
  - Compliance with laws (OML; data practices)
  - Content oversight
  - On-line etiquette

- City Policy
  - Websites monitored and controlled by staff
  - Subject to review and deletion
  - Contact staff liaison for posting information

- Use of Personal Sites/Expressing Personal Opinions
  - You represent the City
  - Avoid perception of favoritism and conflicts
  - “Letters to the editor”
City Code Requirements

- City Code contains requirements for Commissions:
  - Residency (for most Commissions)
  - Terms (3-year terms; no more than 3 consecutive terms on the same Commission)
  - Attendance
  - Removal (appointed & removed by Council)
- Attendance required; may be removed for excessive absences
- Notify staff liaison of anticipated absences
- Bylaws may be amended by a 2/3 vote
Tips for Effective Participation

- Come to the meeting with a positive attitude
- Be on time
- Read your packet in advance
- Think about what is best for the entire city
- Visit agenda locations in advance
- Allow group participation
- Be a good listener
- Contact your staff liaison if you have questions or concerns before the meeting
- Contact your staff liaison if you cannot attend
QUESTIONS?

- May contact staff liaison or city attorney any time!
Your Contribution is Important!

- THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE TO THE CITY OF RICHFIELD!