



To: MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL

Agenda Item #: VIII. A. I.

From: Council Member Joni Bennett

Action

Discussion

Date: July 15th, 2014

Information

Subject: Student Board and Commission Attendance Recommendations

Action Requested:

Adopt recommended record-keeping, reporting and application of attendance requirements.

Information / Background:

Edina advisory boards and commissions have two types of members, regular and student (City Code Section 2-80). The only differences in code between the two types of members are age, length of term, and voting status. Regular members must be adult residents of the city and are appointed for three year terms. Student members must be residents of the city and enrolled full-time in a secondary school. They are appointed for terms "not to exceed one year per term" (Sec. 2-81(b)) and are nonvoting members (Sec. 2-80(b)).

Code changes doubling student membership on each board and commission from one to two and making students nonvoting members were adopted in 2010. Edina High School Principal Bruce Locklear requested the changes, stating in an email "I do believe the experience, in this case, is far greater than the vote." (City Council Regular Meeting Agenda Item No. IV. F., April 20, 2010).

In practice, the Council interviews and appoints applicants for regular membership in the early months of each year. It interviews and appoints applicants for student membership in the summer, with student membership terms beginning in September of each year. Since 2010, the Council has interviewed every applicant for regular and student membership before appointing new members to boards and commissions.

Attendance at board and commission meetings has been required by ordinance for decades. The current ordinance is City Code Section 2-86. The purpose of the requirement is "to assist boards and commissions in fulfilling their purposes and duties and to ensure that they are not prevented from doing so by the repeated absence of their members." (Sec. 2-86(a)). The requirement applies to "[a]ny member serving on a board or commission." (Sec. 2-86(b)). It prescribes the removal of any board or commission member who fails to attend at least 75% of scheduled meetings in a calendar year or who misses three consecutive meetings. (Sec. 2-86(b)).

During interviews, Council members always ask applicants about their availability and advise them of the attendance requirements. Updated attendance records are included in the minutes of some boards and commissions, making it very easy for members of those boards and commissions to track their own attendance. After the end of each calendar year, an annual report comes to the City Council for its review per Section 2-86(d).

Ideally, attendance reporting allows regular members to self-assess the fit between their time, interests and the work of their board or commission. When annual reporting shows that a regular member has not been able or willing to make board and commission service fit into his/her schedule, the vacancy created by the attendance ordinance allows the Council to appoint an applicant whose time and interests are a better fit.

Attendance reporting could be as useful for student members, if a few changes were made to the timing and content of attendance reports.

First, the minutes of all board and commission meetings should include updated attendance records.

Second, annual reports should include all members who served at any time in the calendar year. Most boards and commissions report annual attendance only for those members still serving at the end of the calendar year. This means that each year, annual reports show attendance for student members at fall meetings but not winter, spring and summer meetings.

Third, attendance reports should come to the Council before it begins interviews for the next round of appointments. Calendar year reports should come to the Council in early January and an annual report of student attendance should come to the Council in early June. This new report could be drawn from the previous year's annual report (fall attendance) and the current year's minutes (winter and spring attendance). The information would help in evaluating the success of past year appointments and student applications for reappointment.

Fourth and last, students who fail to meet attendance requirements in the first part of their terms should be replaced with students who are better able or willing to make board and commission service fit into their schedules. Most student board and commission members have excellent attendance, but a few don't show up regularly even in the first months of their terms.

In fall 2010, of 16 student members, eight attended 100% of scheduled meetings and five attended at least 75%. One attended just one of three scheduled meetings.

In fall 2011, of 18 student members, ten attended 100% of scheduled meetings and five attended at least 75%. One attended just one of four scheduled meetings.

In fall 2012, of 16 student members, six attended 100% of scheduled meetings and four others attended at least 75%. One attended 67% and five attended just 50%. (One commission did not report student attendance.) Every student who applied this year was appointed; seven had served the previous year and three of them failed attendance.

In fall 2013, of 16 student members, six attended 100% of scheduled meetings and seven students attended at least 75%. One student attended just 50%. (One commission reported no fall meetings.) Six students were appointed who had served the previous year; one failed attendance.