



# CITY OF SANGER

## REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

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**To:** Sanger City Council  
**From:** Brian Haddix, City Manager  
**Subject:** Adoption of Resolution 4416 establishing a policy for Items Brought to Council and For Direction of Staff  
**Attachments:** Resolution No. 4416

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST:**

None Known

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Council adopt Resolution 4416 which establishes a policy that (1) the City Manager (and through him, all staff) take orders and instructions from the City Council only when it is sitting as a body in a lawfully held meeting, and that (2) any request by an individual Council Member, which is determined by the City Manager to take one hour or more of his or staff time to complete, may be included on the formal Council agenda for full Council discussion.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

As workload increases Sanger will be employing a method used by other cities for separating constituent needs brought by individual Council members and the community at large from needs of projects whose magnitude warrants direction from the Council as a whole. The key determinative factor involves an analysis of the amount of time required by staff to complete the project. If the project takes more than an hour of staff time, then it may be rising to the level of policy implementation that was not directed by Council. Thus, such projects would be brought to Council for its determination as to whether it fits the Council's policy direction.

Prepared by: Brian Haddix, City Manager

Approved by: Brian Haddix, City Manager

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REVIEW: City Manager: CBH Finance: \_\_\_\_\_ City Attorney: JV

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TYPE OF ITEM:	COUNCIL ACTION:	APPROVED	DENIED	NO ACTION
<input type="checkbox"/> Consent		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing
<input type="checkbox"/> Info Item		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Matter Initiated by a Council Member
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Item		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Department Report		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Continued to: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Redevelopment Agency				

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## **BACKGROUND:**

With the passage of the Fiscal Year 2013/2014 City Budget, a new round of work will be commenced by city staff. It is critical to keep in mind that the City of Sanger has limited staff. At the management level, each department currently has only one person overseeing all the duties associated with that department; that person is tasked with implementing policy, directing labor, running a department, and so on. It is not uncommon for staff to put in excessive hours when the need is great. As the manager for the City, it is the City Manager's job to implement the policy direction of the Council and the community of Sanger while avoiding "burning out" the City's employees in particular the department heads. Bare in mind, this problem is not unique to Sanger, most city managers struggle with this balance. The challenge for cities though has only gotten worse with the bad economy that has forced cities to layoff staff and cut back on workloads.

In an effort to find a solution to the challenge, I reached out to other cities regarding how they manage the workload assigned to staff and found that most cities have adopted policies and procedures addressing this matter. Generally, this methodology is incorporated in the City's Rules of Procedure. For example, the City of Menlo Park states that, "The Council recognizes the primary functions of staff as serving the community, executing Council policy and actions and in keeping the Council informed. Staff is obligated to take guidance and direction only from the Council as a whole or from the appropriate management supervisors." In this way, staff, through the City Manager, is assured that it is following the will and direction of the Council as a whole versus any one individual.

So how is this accomplished? First, Council motions should be specific in its direction. If Council is looking for certain kinds of activities to accompany a policy direction, then those activities should be incorporated in the motion; otherwise, staff will use its best judgment in implementing the policy direction.

For direction arising outside of regular Council meetings, cities have incorporated language in their Rules of Procedure designed to assist Council Members in avoiding situations that can result in City staff being directed, intentionally or unintentionally, by one or more members of the City Council. Referring again to the City of Menlo Park, its Rules state that, "City staff will make every effort to respond in a timely and professional matter to all requests made by individual Council Members for information or assistance; provided that, in the judgment of the City Manager, the request is not of a magnitude, either in terms of workload or policy, which would require that it would be appropriately assigned to staff through the direction of the full Council. If a request by an individual Council Member is determined by the City Manager to take one hour or more of staff time to complete, that request may be included on the formal Council agenda for full Council discussion." Note the role of the City Manager in the above sentence. This is because most cities clearly state that any direction or communication to staff goes through the City Manager. This is the policy in Sanger, based on Resolution #4179, passed on December 17, 2009.

This policy is followed by other cities as well. For example, in the recent employment contract with the Burbank City Manager, it states, "Neither the City Council, nor any of its members shall interfere with the execution of the powers and duties of the City Manager. The City Manager shall take orders and instructions from the City Council only when it is sitting as a body in a lawfully held meeting." Menlo Park has the same in its municipal code, spelling out that the City Council work through the City Manager in dealings with staff. It is a traditional "chain of command" organizational structure. In the end, staff operates with clear management direction as they address the constituent needs of Council while devoting more time to implementing Council policy.

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I look forward to using this model in Sanger as a method for sifting out constituent needs from those requests that should more appropriately be addressed by the Council as a whole.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

With limited staff numbers, management and time, this strategy will allow staff to devote more of its attention to those items directed by Council as whole.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

None.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

Choose not to adopt these recommendations.

**ACTIONS FOLLOWING APPROVAL:**

Staff will be working with the City Council in modifying the existing Rules of Procedure so that expectations and practices can be clearly articulated to guide Council members and staff in their actions.

**RESOLUTION NO. 4416**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANGER ESTABLISHING A POLICY FOR ITEMS BROUGHT TO COUNCIL FOR DIRECTION OF STAFF**

**WHEREAS**, the anticipated activities of City of Sanger Departments are expected to increase significantly in the new fiscal year; and

**WHEREAS**, the staffing levels of the City of Sanger have remained static or declined due to the fiscal impacts of a recessionary economy; and

**WHEREAS**, staff needs to find a balance between individual requests by Council members and those policy directives by the Council as a whole.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that (1) the City Manager (and through him, staff) take orders and instructions from the City Council only when it is sitting as a body in a lawfully held meeting, and that (2) any request by an individual Council Member, which is determined by the City Manager to take one hour or more of staff time to complete, may be included on the formal Council agenda for full Council discussion.

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of a Resolution duly and regularly adopted and passed by the City Council for the City of Sanger, California, at a special meeting held on the 3rd day of July 2013, by the following vote:

AYES:           COUNCILMEMBERS:  
NOES:           COUNCILMEMBERS:  
ABSTAIN:       COUNCILMEMBERS:  
ABSENT:        COUNCILMEMBERS:

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Rebeca Hernandez, City Clerk