

Municipal Wastewater Permit Fees Advisory Committee

Ground Rules & Decision-Making

Proposed Team Ground Rules:

Preparation and Coordination

- Arrive to meetings on time and prepared.
- If you missed a meeting, take responsibility to find out what you missed.
- Let staff know if you are unable to attend a meeting.

How we treat each other and work together

- Support each other, inside meetings and with others outside.
- Be honest and respectful.
- Keep an open mind - listen to the opinions of others.
- Maintain objectivity at all times.
- Seek common ground and understanding (not problems and conflict).
- Strive to reach consensus - "I can live with it" and will support it outside the room. If consensus cannot be reached, the team may use majority vote. The majority and minority opinions will be recorded in the meeting minutes.

Communication

- Stay on topic and don't use this as a forum for side issues.
- Keep discussions brief and to the point.
- Do not interrupt others.
- Free yourself from distractions (e.g., phones, email).
- Avoid side conversations that distract others.
- Encourage "Yes - and" instead of "Yes - but" statements.
- Share all relevant information - no idea is a bad idea.
- Use specific examples and agree on what important words mean.
- Explain your reasoning and intent.
- Ask for clarity when needed.

Decision-Making Process

Our goal is thoughtful, informed decisions that have general consensus.

- Decision making will be preceded by thoughtful discussion and analysis, so everyone is informed to make a decision.
- Complex decisions will not be made on the same day the question is raised. The committee will follow a cadence of presenting information and compiling questions first, then clarifying and refining that information, and then providing time between meetings before a question is resolved with a decision. This will generally be a cycle of two or more meetings.

General Consensus

- The advisory committee will operate on a gradient of agreement. We'll seek consensus in the decision-making process, and discussions will be facilitated and managed to reach as much agreement as possible. Levels of agreement are:
 1. Enthusiastic Support – I really like it
 2. Lukewarm Support – I can live with it; it is an improvement
 3. Meager Support – I have concerns, but can go along with it
 4. Objection – I do not support the idea or proposal
- General consensus means general accord of collective opinion; it does not require a unanimous opinion. Ideally, most members have Enthusiastic or Lukewarm Support, and no members Object.
- In the event that full consensus cannot be achieved, the committee members shall attempt in good faith to resolve the matter. If a member has Meager Support for or Objects to a proposal, the group will strive to understand and if possible address the concerns and improve the proposal.
- Because this committee has a short timeframe and must produce recommendations, if concerns cannot be incorporated into a final proposal that obtains general consensus, the group will have agreement sufficient to proceed if 11 or more of our 14 members support a proposal to some degree. The majority and minority opinions will be documented in the meeting minutes.

Recommendations

- The group's recommendations shall include all decisions, concerns, and objections.
- Should decisions not culminate in a majority opinion (11 or more of our 14 members), the various proposals and levels of support shall be noted.
- The committee's recommendations will go into the larger and broader fee rule-making process. Should this group's recommendations change as a result of public comment, Ecology will inform the committee of the change and the rationale.