



UNDERSTANDING CBJ'S PUBLIC DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

How decisions get made—and how to be heard

HOW DECISIONS ACTUALLY GET MADE

Most decisions don't start at meetings—they start with an idea.

Idea → Conversations → Sponsor → Legislation → Meetings → Vote → Implementation

Early conversations are where ideas get tested and refined. Because Assemblymembers can't meet as a group outside a noticed public meeting, this work happens one-on-one or in small groups. No decisions are made at this stage. All debate, testimony, and decisions must happen in public.

Once an idea has a sponsor, the sponsor will usually work with input from whoever brought forward the idea and the city's legal counsel to draft legislation (the formal tool for policy and funding decisions). A sponsor is an Assemblymember who brings the idea forward. Finding one usually involves outreach and refinement—and, as with any process, building support and timing can matter. A sponsored piece of legislation brought forward by an Assemblymember starts at the committee level which allows for fellow Assemblymembers to approve moving the legislation forward for introduction or to hold it in committee for more work.

The legislation is introduced at a Regular Assembly meeting, then usually reviewed in a work session or committee, and returns to a Regular Assembly meeting for a public hearing and final vote. **Most shaping happens between introduction and final vote. If you want to influence an issue, engage early—not just at the final meeting.**

MEETINGS & WHEN YOU CAN SPEAK

Not all meetings are the same, and not all include public testimony.

- **Regular & Special Assembly Meetings** → final decisions and votes; testimony is always taken
- **Committee of the Whole (COW)** → full Assembly work session; no final votes; testimony varies
- **Standing Committees** → Work sessions focused on specific policy areas. Finance and COW include the full Assembly (9 members); Human Resources, Lands Housing & Economic Development, and Public Works & Facilities each have four Assemblymembers. These committees make recommendations only. Public testimony is generally not taken; but may be allowed at the call of the Chair with sufficient notice to advertise to the public that public testimony will be taken on a specific topic.
- **Other Work Sessions** → staff presentations and discussion; no testimony unless specifically called for by the Chair (see *Standing Committees*)
- **Emailing the Borough Assembly** → boroughassembly@juneau.gov may be used anytime, on any topic. The Borough Assembly email distribution list includes the Assembly and Mayor, City Manager, Law, and City Clerk's Office.

Check the meeting agenda to see if public testimony is included. Look for: *Public Hearing* · *Public Testimony* · *Persons to be Heard*. You can attend in person and sign up at the meeting, or join by Zoom if you register by **4:00 PM** that day. Expect about **2–3 minutes** to speak.

If you want to be sure you'll have a chance to speak, attend a Regular or Special Assembly meeting, public testimony is always taken, including on non-agenda items.

For ordinances, the primary opportunity for public input is during the Public Hearing at a Regular Assembly meeting.

The tentative agenda for Regular Assembly meetings is published two Fridays in advance at <https://juneauak.portal.civicclerk.com/> giving the public time to review upcoming items.

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR ASSEMBLYMEMBERS

You can find contact information for all Assemblymembers on the City and Borough of Juneau website: <https://juneau.org/assembly/assembly-members>.

Residents are encouraged to reach out directly to share input and ask questions.

You may also email the full Assembly at boroughassembly@juneau.gov. This distribution list includes all Assemblymembers and the Mayor, as well as the City Manager, Law Department, and Clerk's Office.

HOW THE PROCESS IS RUN (AND WHAT TO EXPECT)

The Mayor sets the agenda and runs Regular and Special Assembly meetings. The Deputy Mayor chairs the Committee of the Whole (COW) and helps guide those agendas. Both roles influence how meetings are structured and how time is managed—but all decisions are made by a vote of the full Assembly.

Some parts of the process aren't obvious at first. Items on the **consent agenda** are approved without discussion unless pulled. Meetings typically end by **10:00 PM**, and time for testimony may be limited.

While a lot of conversation happens before meetings, all official action must happen in public.

FUNDING & FINAL TAKEAWAYS

Many decisions come down to funding. The budget and ordinances determine what moves forward - if something isn't funded, it doesn't happen. The process is public, but it's not linear. Ideas are shaped through conversations, and decisions are made in meetings.

The earlier you engage, the more impact you can have.

IMPORTANT LINKS

- [CBJ Assembly Calendar and Zoom Links / PDF Version for 2026 \(subject to change\)](#)
- [Meeting Agendas, Materials/Documents, Video Recordings & Minutes](#)
- [CBJ Code](#)