

# Report on Standing Committees and Meeting Durations

December 18, 2020 • Compiled by R. Boustani

In early 2020, the Bloomington Common Council adopted [Resolution 20-01](#). That resolution created eight new standing committees of the Council, restated and expanded the scope of an existing Land Use Committee (created in early 2018 by [Resolution 18-02](#)), and abolished (effective Sept 2020) three Interview Committees. Prior to 2018, the Council's legislative cycle for ordinances typically (with some exceptions) spanned three consecutive Wednesdays. The first Wednesday involved a first reading of the legislation at a Regular Session, the second Wednesday involved discussing the legislation at a Committee of the Whole, and the third Wednesday involved a second reading and a vote on the legislation at a Regular Session. Resolutions have typically not received a first reading. Prior to 2018, resolutions were usually considered either at a Committee of the Whole before being considered at the following Regular Session, or were considered at a Regular Session without receiving any committee discussion (again, with some exceptions).

The Council also regularly utilizes two additional standing committees and participates on another that specifically focus on certain funding sources – the Jack Hopkins Social Services Funding Committee, the Council Sidewalk Committee, and the Public Safety Local Income Tax Committee of the Monroe County Local Income Tax Council.

This report examines the duration of Council meetings over the last 6 years in an effort to determine the impact that the newly-formed standing committees have had on the legislative process. The report attempts to include data from all Council meetings with the exception of Council Work Sessions, Interview Committee meetings, and standing committee meetings held to consider board/commission appointments. Methods of data collection and any irregularities are discussed at the end of the report.

## Section 1. Number and Duration of Meetings by Type

In 2020, councilmembers met for Regular and Special Sessions, Committees of the Whole, and in twelve standing committees for a total of 93 meetings with a total meeting length of 178.45 hours. (10,707 minutes). The Council considered 57 items of legislation in 2020. Legislation was not considered at all meetings. Tables A-C include all meetings of the Council or its committees (whether or not legislation was considered), with the exception of Council Work Sessions, Interview Committee meetings, and standing committee meetings held to consider board/commission appointments.

**Table A - Number of Meetings**

<b>Meeting Type</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
Regular Session	20	20	21	21	20	19
Special Session (including organizational meeting)	14	22	6	19	8	8
Committee of the Whole	13	18	19	21	21	22
All Other Council Committees	46	25	24	10	11	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>55</b>

**Table B - Total Meeting Duration in minutes**

<b>Meetings</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
Regular Session	3,526	3,138	3,303	3,303	3,259	2,623
Special Session (including organizational meeting)	1,541	3,131	629	2,110	429	657
Committee of the Whole	2,133	2,132	2,329	3,226	3,095	2,801
All Other Council Committees	3,507	2,114	2,021	1,152	945	478
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,707</b>	<b>10,515</b>	<b>8,282</b>	<b>9,791</b>	<b>7,728</b>	<b>6,559</b>

**Table C - Average Duration of Meetings in minutes**

<b>Meetings</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
Regular Session	176.3	156.9	84.2	157.3	163.0	138.1
Special Session (including organizational meeting)	110.1	142.9	104.8	111.1	53.6	82.1
Committee of the Whole	164.1	118.4	122.6	153.6	147.4	127.3
All Other Council Committees	76.2	84.6	84.2	115.2	85.9	79.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>115.1</b>	<b>123.7</b>	<b>118.3</b>	<b>137.9</b>	<b>128.8</b>	<b>119.3</b>

## Section 2. Council Member Minutes (CMM)

Common Council Regular Sessions, Special Sessions, and Committees of the Whole are typically attended by all nine councilmembers, while standing committee meetings held in 2020 include four councilmembers. Of the 93 meetings in 2020, 46 were standing committee meetings (with a total meeting duration of 3,507 min).

In an attempt to reflect the time any given councilmember spent in meetings, the metric Council Member Minutes (CMM) was calculated. This was done by multiplying the meeting duration of standing committee meetings by 4 (the number of councilmembers that should be in attendance) and the meeting duration of Regular Sessions, Special Sessions, and Committees of the Whole meetings by 9 (again, the number of councilmembers that should be in attendance). The result is the CMM, which can then be divided by nine councilmembers to arrive at the average minutes any given councilmember participated in meetings.

### Example:

Regular Session – 60 minutes

Standing Committee meeting – 100 minutes

Total meeting duration – 160 minutes

Councilmember Minutes (CMM)  $\rightarrow 60 \cdot 9 + 100 \cdot 4 = 940$  CMM

Average CMM per councilmember  $\rightarrow 940/9 = 104.4$  min

While the total meeting duration for these two meetings totaled 160 minutes, 104.4 minutes would represent the average amount of time any given councilmember spent in these two meetings.

The average time any given councilmember participated in meetings in 2020 is 94.2 minutes as opposed to the average meeting duration (shown in Table C) of 115.1 minutes.

Table D - 2020 Total and Average Councilmember Minutes (CMM)					
# of Council Members	# Meetings	Total Meeting Duration	Total CMM	Average CMM	Average CMM/Meeting
9	47	7,200	64,800	7,200.0	153.2
4	46	3,507	14,028	1,558.7	33.9
Totals	93	10,707	78,828	8,758.7	94.2

## Section 3. Duration of Legislation in Legislative Cycle

### Full Legislative Cycle

The Legislative Cycle for ordinances typically consists of First Reading at a Regular Session (sometimes Special Session), referral to one or two committee meetings, and Second Reading at a Regular Session (sometimes Special Session). Resolutions can be referred to a committee without a First Reading, and can be considered at a Regular or Special Session without committee consideration. Given that Regular and Special Sessions often involve business beyond just legislation, the table below reflects the time the Council actually spent on legislation (i.e., time spent on any non-legislative agenda items was excluded). Again, data for Work Sessions was not included.

**NOTE: In previous years, a handful of legislative items took significantly longer than the average piece of legislation to make their way through the legislative cycle, impacting the averages. In an effort to account for these outliers, an *adjusted average*, which excludes items that took over 500 minutes, was added to Tables E-F below. As a reference, in 2020, the item that took the longest amount of time was Ordinance 20-04, at 401 minutes. The excluded items were:**

- Ord 19-24 – UDO (1,965 min)
- Ord 19-09 – Scooters (697 min)
- Res 19-01 – Transportation Plan (769 min)
- Res 18-24 – Parking Garage (501 min)
- Res 17-28 – Comprehensive Plan (1,347 min)
- Ord 16-04 – Partial Demolition (517 min)

**Table E - Duration of Council Consideration of Legislative Items Across All Meetings**

Year	# of Legislation Considered	Total Minutes	Average min/legislation	Adjusted Average (excludes outliers)
2020	57	5802	101.8	101.8
2019	56	7,017	125.3	70.1
2018	57	4,780	83.9	72.9
2017	88	6,468	73.5	65.5
2016	71	5,031	70.9	67.2

### Regular/Special Sessions

For this section of the report, the time the Council spent considering legislation in Regular or Special Sessions was totaled (excluding the time spent on first readings, which is typically negligible). Note that some legislative items were not considered by a committee and some items that had been introduced for first reading were withdrawn before second reading, which is reflected in Table F.

- 2020 – Ord 20-33 was introduced for first reading but not returned by the committee for second reading.
- 2019 – Ord 19-08 and Ord 19-26 were introduced for First Reading only.
- 2017 – 9 Ordinances (related to annexation) were introduced for First Reading only.

Table F - Minutes Per Legislative Item in Regular/Special Session				
Year	# of Legislation Considered in RS/SS	Total Minutes	Average min/legislation	Adjusted Average
2020	56	3,160	56.4	56.4
2019	54	5,189	96.1	38.9
2018	57	2,906	51.9	40.2
2017	79	4,300	55.0	37.5
2016	71	2,926	41.2	38.3

## Standing Committees

Before 2018, committee-bound legislation was almost always referred to a Committee of the Whole. In 2018, a standing Land Use Committee was formed. It met seven times in 2018 to consider four ordinances, with an average meeting duration of 88.5 minutes. In 2019, the Land Use Committee held three meetings to consider two ordinances with an average meeting duration of 92 minutes.

2020 saw an increase in the average amount of time an item of legislation spent in committee. When looking at Council Member Minutes (the average time any given councilmember participated in such meetings) per item of legislation – the number is similar to past years. See Section 2 for more information on Council Member Minutes.

Table G - Minutes Per Legislative Item in Committee Meetings*							
Year	# of Legislation Considered in Committee	Total Minutes	Average min/item	Total Minutes (Standing Committees)	Total Minutes (COW)	Avg. Council Member minutes	Avg. Council Member Minutes/Item
2020	38	2,472	65.1	1567	905	1,601.4	42.1
2019	32	1,656	51.8	276	1,292	1,414.7	45.6
2018	40	1,741	43.5	536	1,164	1,402.2	36.0
2017	49	1,975	40.3	0	1,975	1,975	40.3
2016	51	1,911	37.5	0	1,911	1,911	37.5

\* Includes Standing Committees and Committee of the Whole

## Section 4. Standing Committees

In 2020, the new standing committees (plus the existing Land Use Committee) met 32 times for 2,342 minutes (excludes Jack Hopkins, PS-LIT, and Sidewalk Committees). These committees met 22 times to consider legislation and 10 times for discussion and to receive public input about a variety of topics, including climate action and public safety. Five items of legislation items were heard over the course of two committee meetings. In 2019, the Land Use Committee met three times to consider two pieces of legislation. In 2018, the Land Use Committee met seven times, including five meetings to consider four pieces of legislation.

Committee	All Meetings			...Where Legislation Was Considered			...Where Legislation Was Not Considered		
	Mtgs	Min	Avg	Mtgs	Min	Avg	Mtgs	Min	Avg
Administration	7	243	34.7	4	82	20.5	3	161	53.7
Climate Action & Resilience	2	190	95.0	--	--	--	2	190	95.0
Community Affairs	1	37	37.0	1	37	37.0	--	--	--
Housing	0	0	0.0	--	--	--	--	--	--
Land Use	7	560	80.0	7	560	80.0	--	--	--
Public Safety	5	518	103.6	3	280	93.3	2	238	119.0
Sustainable Development	4	254	63.5	1	68	68.0	3	186	62.0
Transportation	5	490	98.0	5	490	98.0	--	--	--
Utilities & Sanitation	1	50	50.0	1	50	50.0	--	--	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>2342</b>	<b>73.2</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1567</b>	<b>71.2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>77.5</b>

### 2018-2019 Land Use Committee

Land Use 2019	3	276	92.0	3	276	92.0	--	--	--
Land Use 2018	7	619	88.5	5	536	107.2	2	82	41

<b>Table I - Duration Per Legislative Item in Standing Committees in 2020</b>			
<b>Committee</b>	<b>Items Considered</b>	<b>Minutes</b>	<b>Average min/legislative item</b>
Administration	5	82	16.4
Climate Action Resilience	0	0	0
Community Affairs	1	37	37.0
Housing	0	0	0
Land Use	5	560	112.0
Public Safety	3	280	93.3
Sustainable Development	1	68	68.0
Transportation	6	490	81.7
Utilities	2	50	25.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1,567</b>	<b>68.1</b>

**2018-2019**

Land Use Committee 2019	2	276	138
Land Use Committee 2018	4	536	134

## Section 5. Methodology

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Data was taken from meeting minutes prepared by the Clerk's Office and from archived meeting recordings on the Community Access Television Service (CATS) website. Data for the total meeting time (Tables A-D) was calculated from the time that a meeting was called to order through adjournment. Legislative Cycle data for years 2016-2020 is calculated from the time legislation was introduced for discussion through the last legislative motion. In 2015, the start and stop times of legislative deliberation were not recorded in the meeting minutes, so the year is not included in the Legislative Cycle tables.

### About the Data:

- The impact of meeting via Zoom for much of 2020 and associated effects (any increased public participation) were not examined.
- Legislation-specific public comment time is not filtered out of the Legislative Cycle data
- Downtime between meetings held on the same night was not recorded.
- Council Work Sessions, Interview Committees, and standing committee meetings held to consider board/commission appointments are not included in this report.
- In 2019, a Council Rules Committee held four meetings and the Council also participated in three joint work sessions with county officials. These meetings were included in Tables A-C.
- If there was ambiguity regarding when consideration of a piece of legislation began or ended in the meeting minutes, CATS-archived recordings of Council meetings were consulted.
- Data on the meeting duration of two meetings was unavailable, and those two meetings were not included in this report.