



## MEMO FROM COUNCIL OFFICE:

**To:** Members of the Common Council

**From:** Stephen Lucas, Council Administrator/Attorney

**Date:** June 7, 2024

**Re:** Ordinance 2024-16 - To Amend Title 2 of the Bloomington Municipal Code Entitled "Administration and Personnel" Re: Amending BMC 2.04.120 (Limits on debate)

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### Synopsis

This ordinance is sponsored by Councilmember Piedmont-Smith and would set limits on the number and length of speeches during debate of legislation in order to make Council regular session meetings more efficient. It would limit each councilmember's comment in the first round to three (3) minutes and allow councilmembers a second round of comments limited to one (1) minute each.

### Relevant Materials

- Ordinance 2024-16
- Memo from Sponsor Cm. Piedmont-Smith

### Summary

Ordinance 2024-16 proposes to amend Bloomington Municipal Code [Section 2.04.120](#) (Limits on debate), which is part of the Council's meeting rules and procedures. This section currently reads:

No member shall speak more than once upon a question until every other member has had the opportunity to speak. The council may, before debate begins, decide by a two-thirds vote of all members to set time limits on debate upon a particular pending question, but time spent in answering questions shall not be counted against the speaker.

The revised section would read:

No member shall speak more than twice upon a question without leave of the council, and no more than once until every other member has had the opportunity to speak. No member shall speak longer than three (3) minutes for the first speech on a question and no more than one (1) minute for a second speech on the same question, unless further time is granted by the council. The council may, before debate begins, decide by a two-thirds vote of all members to set time limits on debate upon a particular pending question, but time spent in answering questions shall not be counted against the speaker.

The effect of this change would be to limit the number and length of speeches from members (in practice often referred to as "council comments") when the Council is debating a motion. Members would be allowed to speak for up to three (3) minutes for a first comment and for up to one (1) minute for a second comment, with the Council able to



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authorize additional time or opportunities for members to speak. Members asking questions and providing or receiving answers would not be counted as speaking in debate. A member's unused time would not be transferable to another member, nor could it be reserved for use at a later time.

There is minimal to no direct fiscal impact associated with this ordinance.

**Contact**

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