



Town Council Work Session
April 21, 2026 | 3:30 PM
Apex Town Hall | 73 Hunter Street, Apex, NC
3rd Floor Training Rooms A and B

AGENDA

1. Call to Order | Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor, Jacques K. Gilbert

2. Town Council Procedures and Policies Update

Allen Coleman, Town Clerk

- a) Council Policies Discussion
 - Financial
 - Press Releases / Socials
 - Community Town Halls / Special Events by Elected Members
 - Public Forum / Public Hearing Standards
- b) Town Council Committees Research
- c) Resident Advisory Board Research and Processes
- d) Naming Practices Requested by Elected Officials

3. Adjournment

English	Spanish	Chinese (Simplified)
<p>ANNOUNCEMENTS Members of the public can access and view the meeting on the Town’s YouTube Channel https://www.youtube.com/c/TownofApexGov or attend in-person. The meeting date, start time, and location details are included at the top of this agenda document.</p>	<p>ANUNCIOS Las personas interesadas pueden acceder y ver la reunión a través del canal de YouTube de la Ciudad en https://www.youtube.com/c/TownofApexGov o asistir en persona. En la parte superior de este documento de agenda se indican la fecha, la hora de inicio y la ubicación de la reunión.</p>	<p>公告 公众可通过镇政府的YouTube频道 https://www.youtube.com/c/TownofApexGov 在线旁听会议，或选择现场参与。会议日期、开始时间及地点详情见本议程文件顶部。</p>
<p>Accommodation Statement: Anyone needing special accommodations to attend this meeting and/or if this information is needed in an alternative format, please contact the Town Clerk’s Office. The Town Clerk is located at 73 Hunter Street in Apex Town Hall on the 2nd Floor, (email) allen.coleman@apexnc.org or (phone) 919-249-1260.</p>	<p>Aviso sobre adaptaciones: Si necesita adaptaciones especiales para asistir a esta reunión o requiere esta información en un formato alternativo, comuníquese con la Oficina del Secretario Municipal, ubicada en el segundo piso del Ayuntamiento de Apex, en 73 Hunter Street, por correo electrónico a través de allen.coleman@apexnc.org o llamando al 919-249-1260.</p>	<p>便利服务声明: 如需特殊便利服务以参加本次会议，或需要将本信息提供为其他格式，请联系镇书记官办公室。 办公地址：Apex镇政务厅二楼（Hunter街73号） 邮箱：allen.coleman@apexnc.org 电话：919-249-1260</p>



April 21, 2026

Town Council Policies and Procedures

April 2026 Work Session

Allen Coleman, Town Clerk



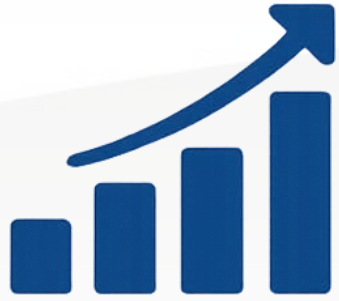
APEX
NORTH CAROLINA

AGENDA

- Purpose
- Research
- Flow of Work Session
- Council Committees
- Resident Advisory Boards
- Policies and Best Practices
 - Financial
 - Social Media and Press
 - Town Halls / Elected
 - Official Events
 - Public Forum
- Naming Practices



Purpose



Policies and procedures evolve with Apex's growth



Data-driven look at other municipalities



Identify areas for Council direction

Framework for Discussion

- Community Focused
- Respectful and Collaborative
- Policy Oriented
- Clear and Concise
- Thoughtful and Sensitive



Flow of Work Session



How the Research Was Conducted



Comparison of
21 municipalities
across North
Carolina



Range of
communities
and governance
styies

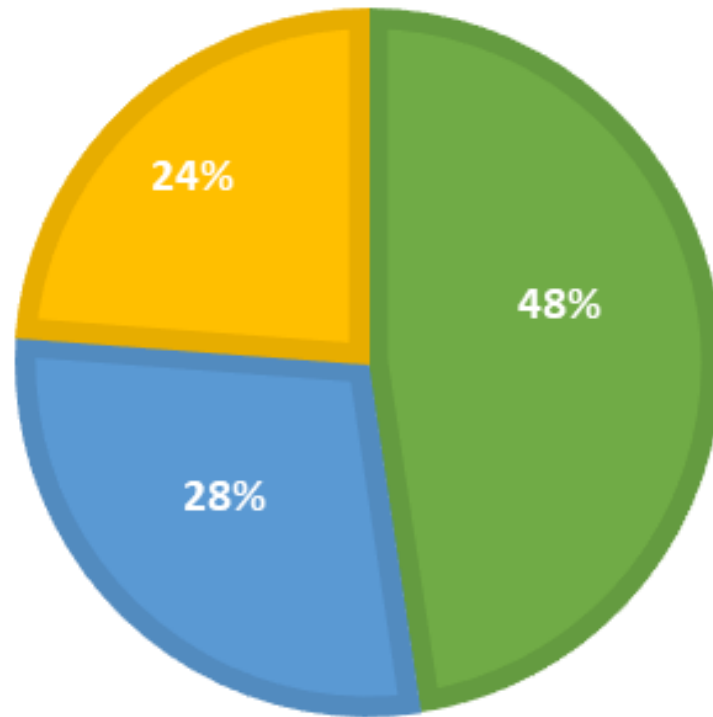


Committees,
advisory boards,
financial policies,
public engagement

Visual Overview – Understanding the Data Set

MAYOR'S LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

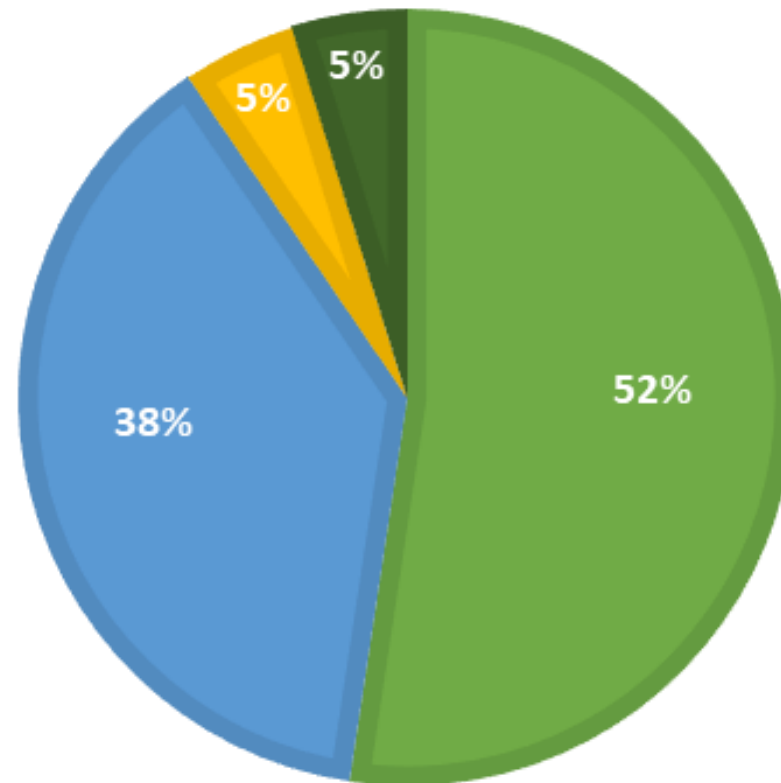
■ All Matters ■ Tie Only ■ Tie + Personnel



Visual Overview – Understanding the Data Set

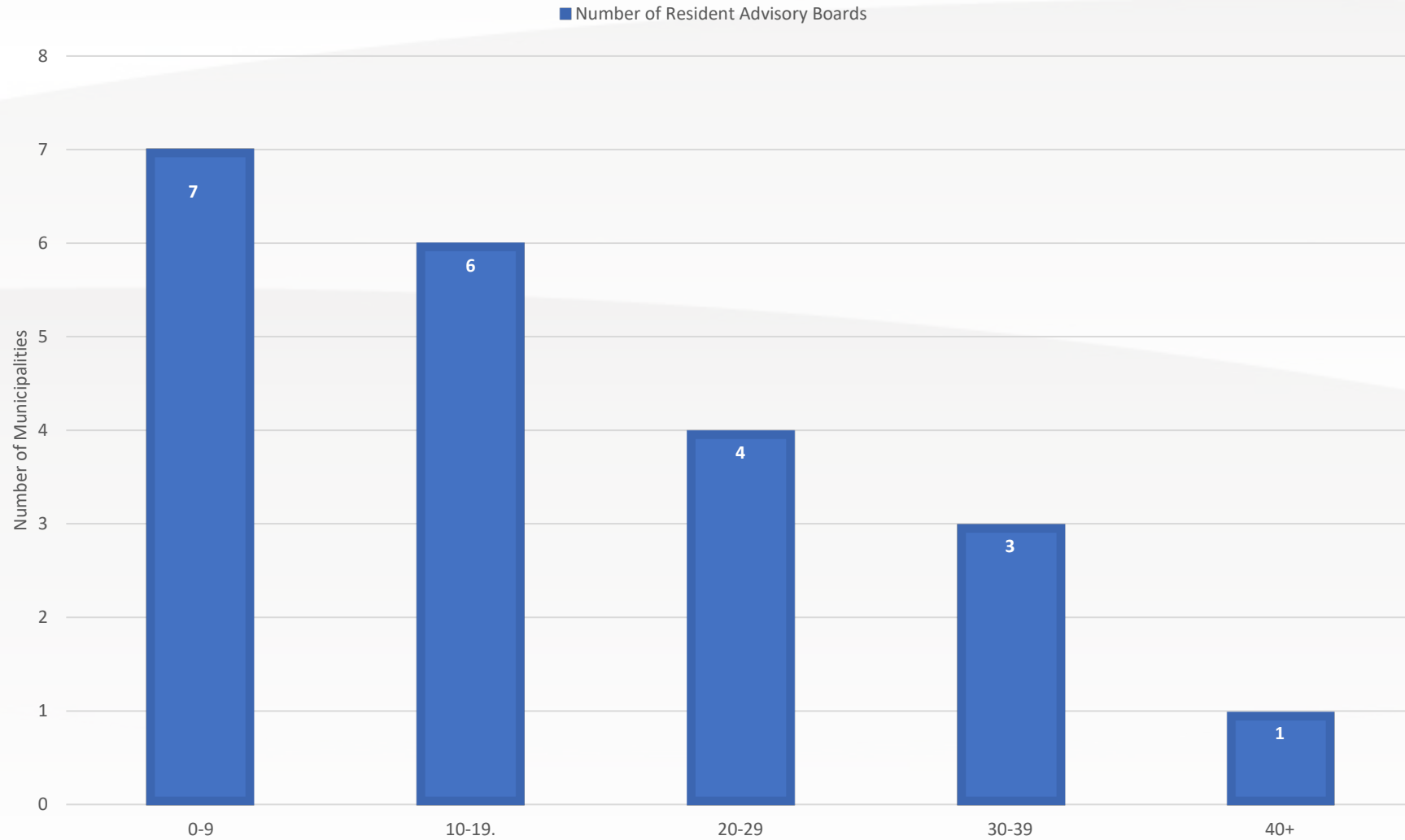
COUNCIL COMMITTEES

■ Yes ■ No ■ Ad Hoc Only ■ Entire Body

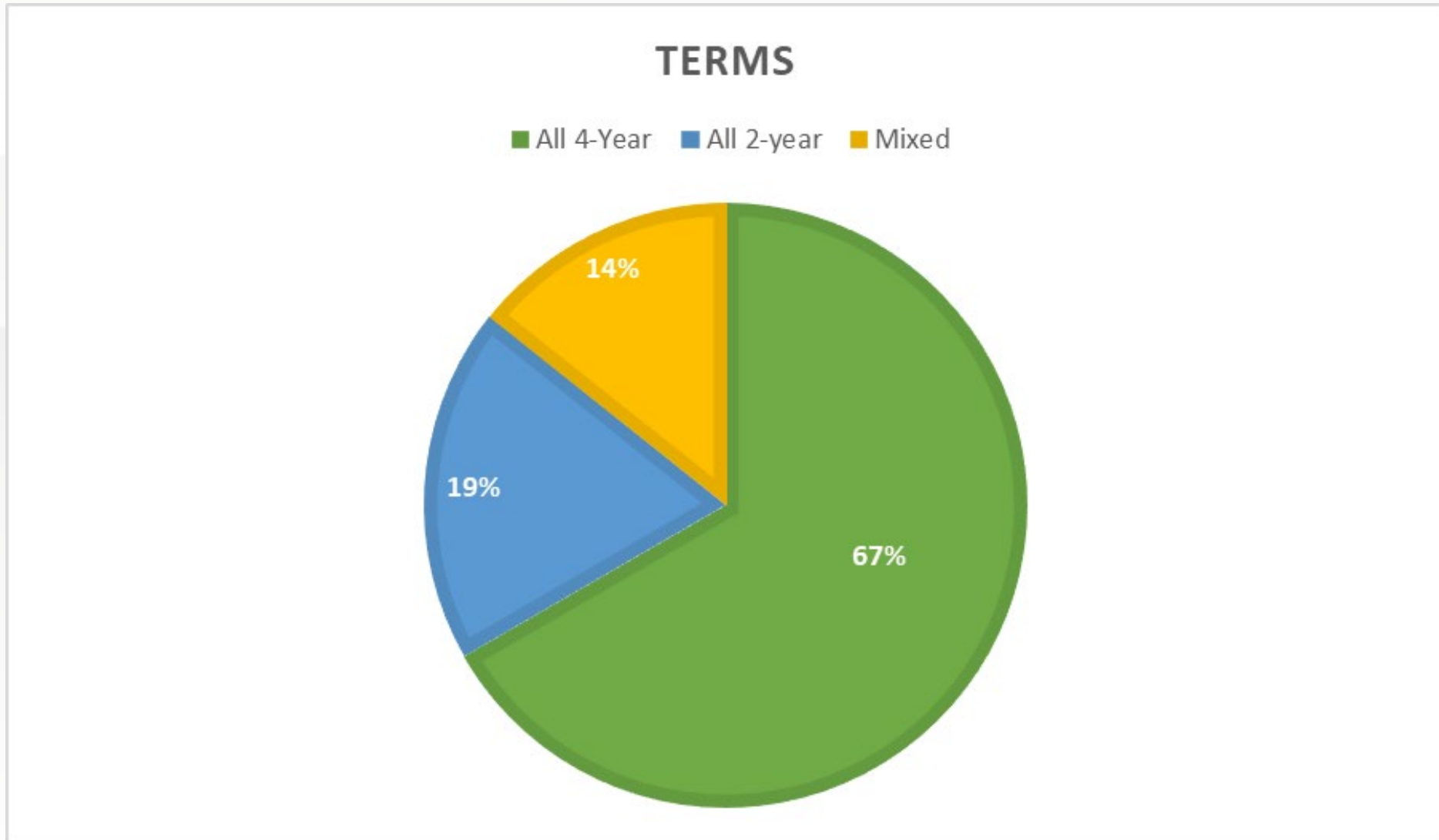


Visual Overview – Understanding the Data Set

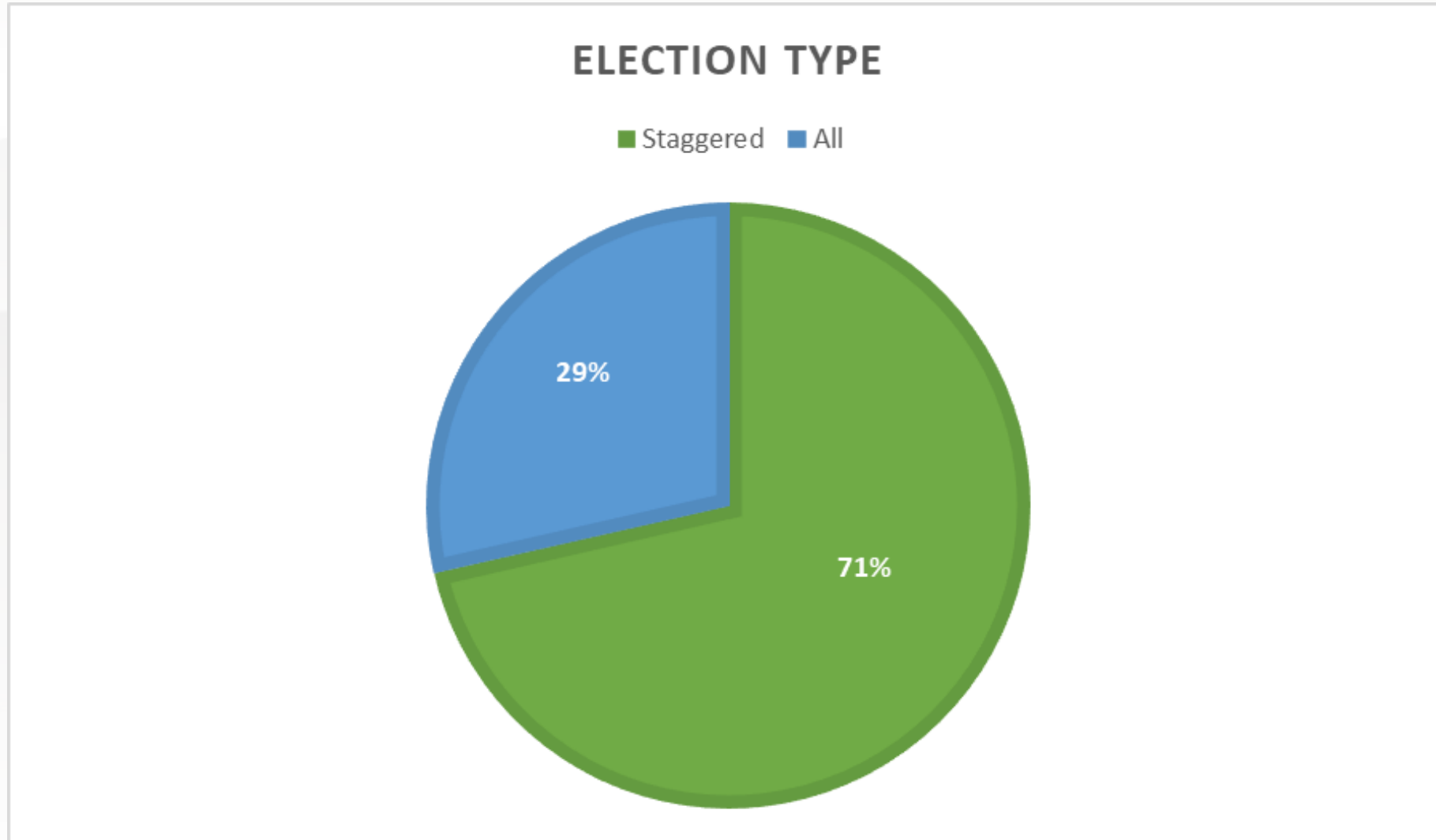
NUMBER OF RESIDENT ADVISORY BOARDS



Visual Overview – Understanding the Data Set



Visual Overview – Understanding the Data Set





Council Committees

Council Committee – Purpose

- Enhance Policy Review
- Support Informed Decision Making
- Facilitate Collaboration
- Strengthen Governance Structure



Council Committee – Use Statewide

- **Large cities** use formal committees (12)
- **Hybrid approaches** exists (e.g. Committees of the Whole or Ad-Hoc as Needed)
- A few Cities **Do Not**
 - Greensboro
 - Durham



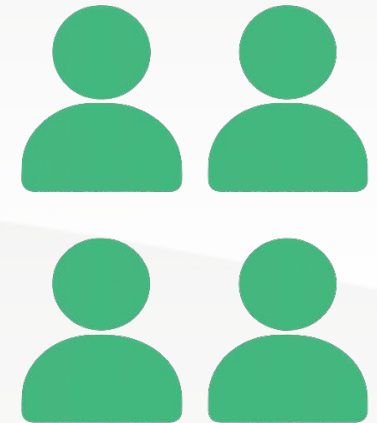
Council Committee – Membership Appointment Authority

Mayor (common model)

- Charlotte
- Raleigh
- Winston
- Fayetteville
- High Point
- Gastonia

Full Council (less common)

- Asheville
- Greenville



Council Committee – Mayoral Participation and Size



- Varies Across Municipalities
 - Active (e.g. Raleigh, Fayetteville)
 - Inactive (e.g. Charlotte, Asheville, Winston Salem)
- No standard model
- Typically small and focused
 - Most represent 3-4 members

Council Committee – Transparency



**Livestream
Only**



**Livestream
and Record**



**No Streaming
or Recording**

Council Committee – Meeting Preference



Monthly



Bimonthly



Unspecified



Council Committee – Town of Apex

- **Current Committees**

- Environmental Leadership
- Governance, Fiscal Stewardship, and Internal Support
- Public Safety
- Responsible Development
- Vibrant Community and Economic Vitality

- **Current Structure**

- 2 members
- Not Recorded or Livestreamed
- Mayor Appointment
- Quarterly meetings

Council Committee – Decisions

- Continue with Standing Council Committees?
- If yes,
 - Who makes appointments?
 - Membership size?
 - Mayor participation?
 - Livestreamed/Recorded?
 - Meeting Cadence






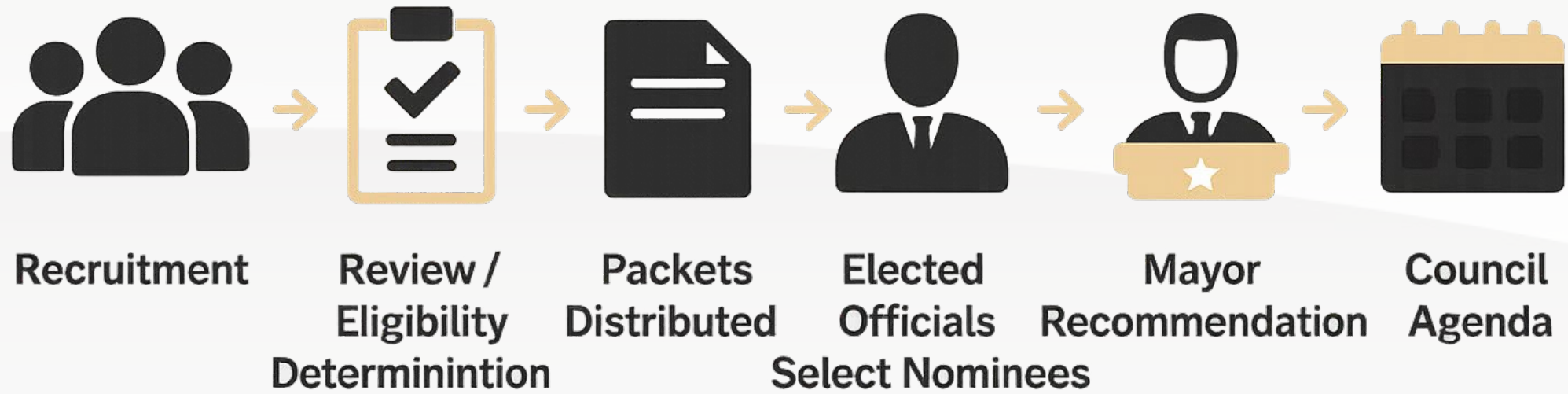
Resident Advisory Boards



Resident Advisory Boards – Purpose

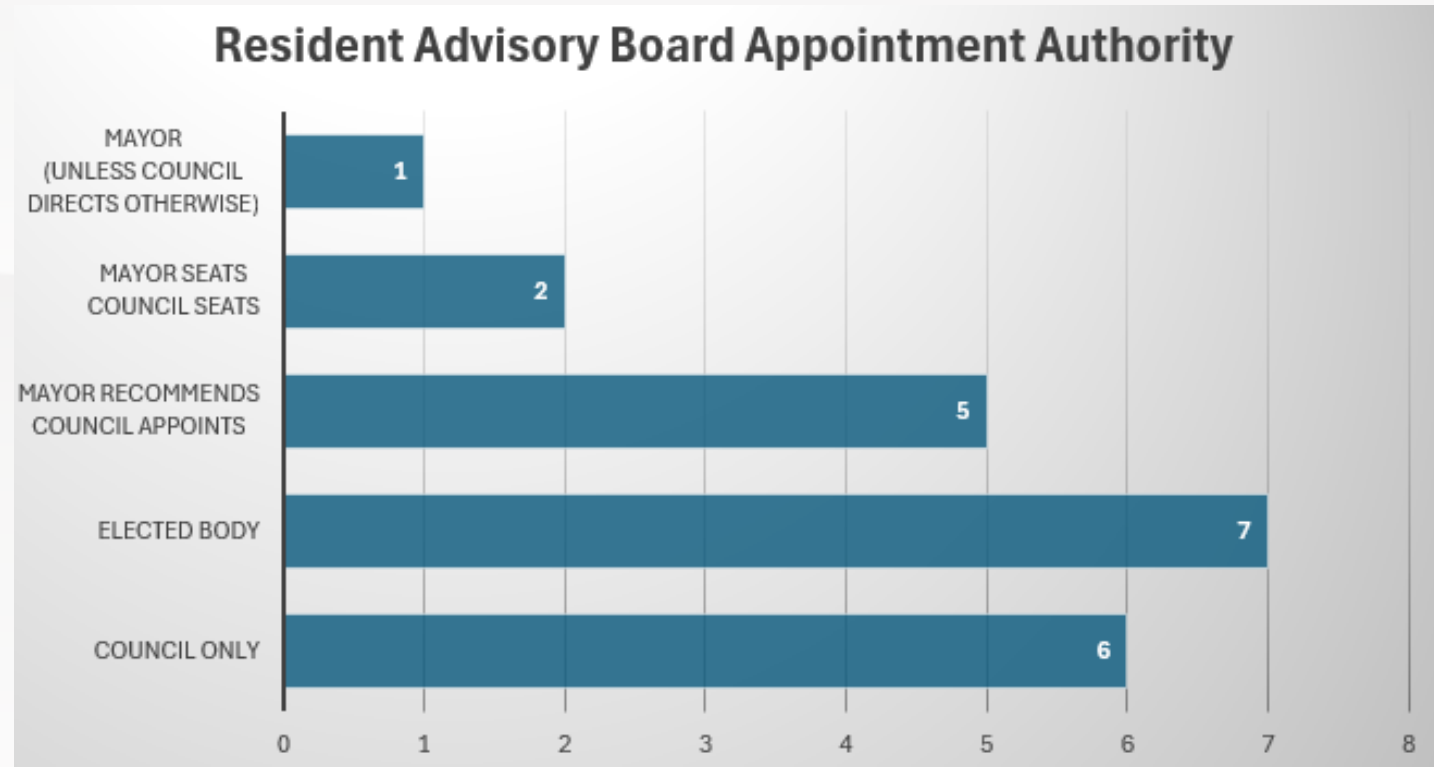
- Provide community input on local policies and decisions
 - Represent diverse resident perspectives to elected officials
 - Offer recommendations on specific issues (e.g., planning, parks)
 - Help identify community needs and priorities
 - Support data gathering through public feedback and outreach
 - Serve as a communication bridge between residents and city staff
 - Encourage civic engagement and participation
 - Review proposals, plans, or projects before final decisions
 - Assist with long-term planning and visioning
- 

Resident Advisory Board – Appointment Process (Current)



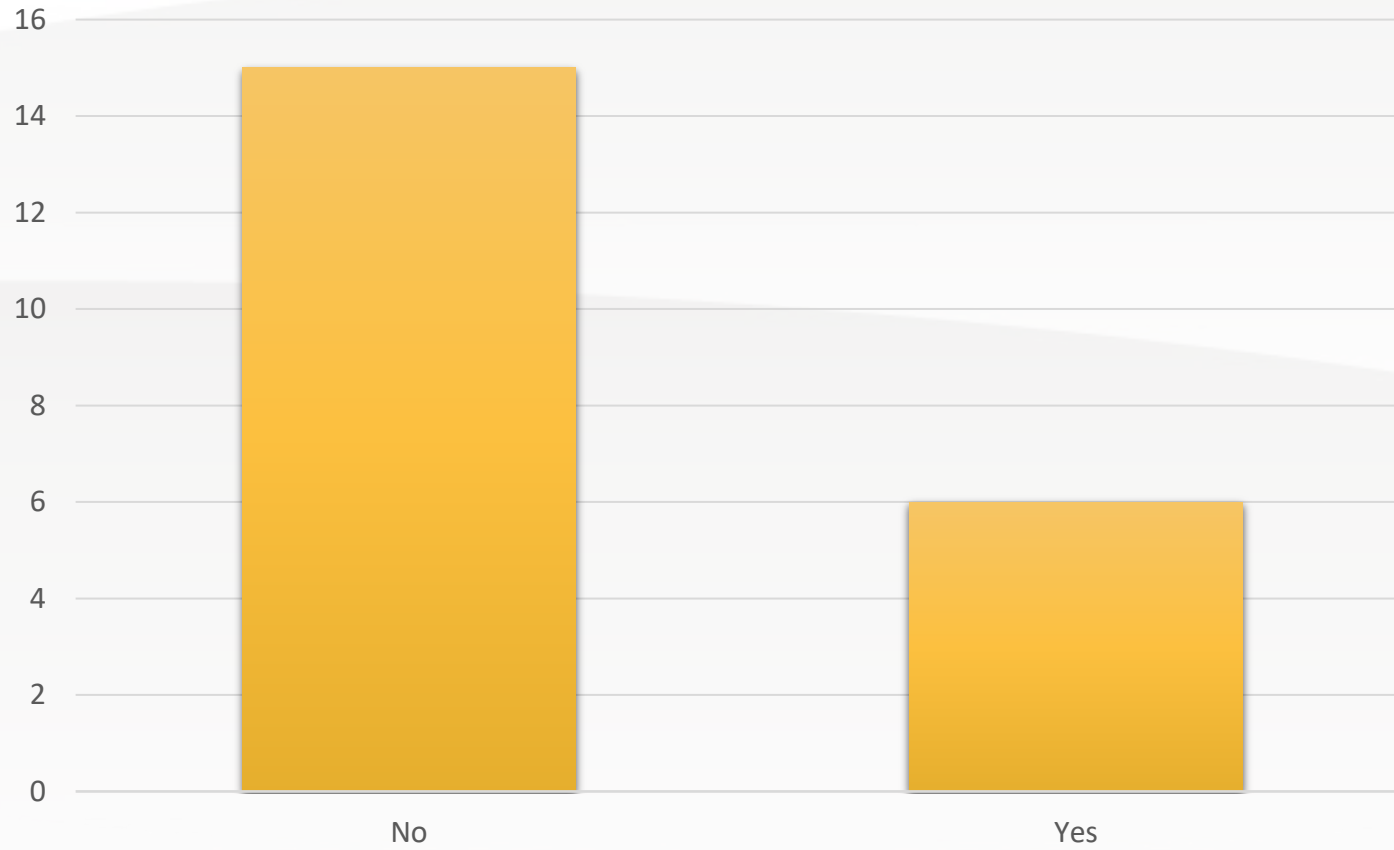
Resident Advisory Board – Research

- Significant Variation in Appointment Structure
- Four Primary Models
 - Elected Body (Full Council) Appointment
 - More often seen in Mayor's who vote
 - Council Only
 - Mayor-Led or Mayor Appointment
 - Hybrid Model
 - Mayor Recommends / Council Appoints
 - Designated Seats (Mayor and Council)



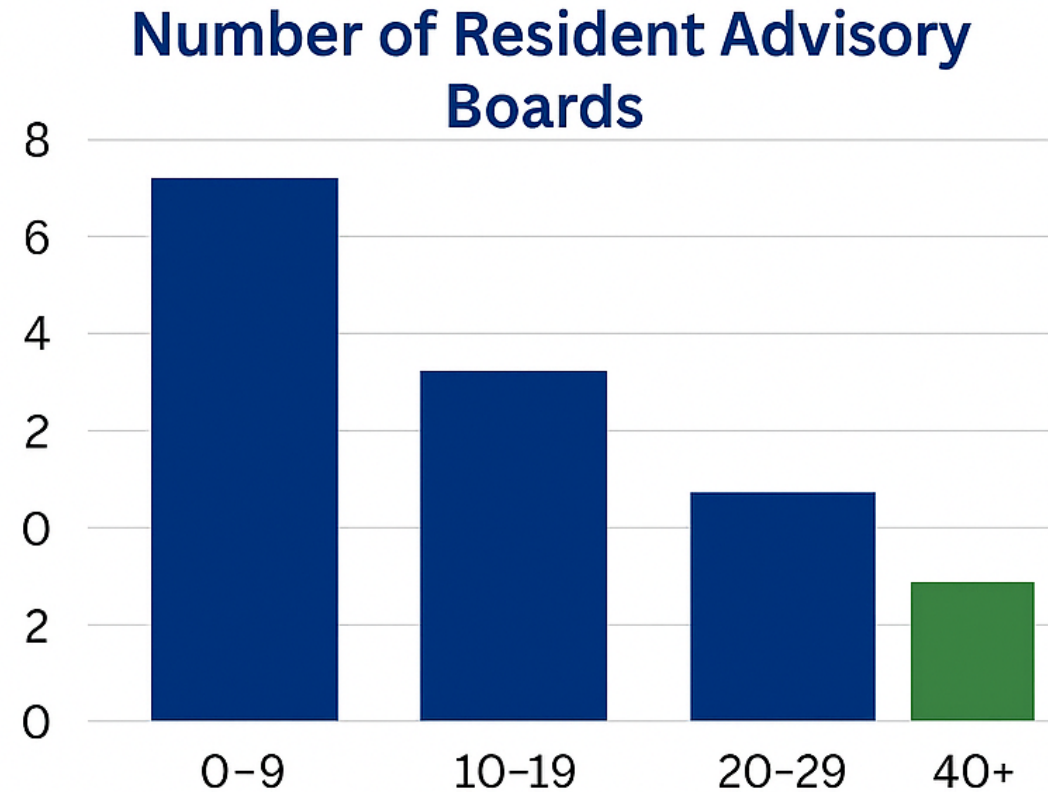
Resident Advisory Board – Research

Conduct Interviews



Resident Advisory Board – Research

- Number of boards ranges from 4 to over 40
- Most municipalities have fewer than 20 boards
- Larger cities tend to have more advisory boards



Resident Advisory Board – Decisions

- **Process for Appointing Advisory Board Members?**

- Elected Body Appointment
- Council-Only Appointment
- Mayor-Led unless Council directs otherwise
- Hybrid – Designated seats

- **Formal Interviews?**

- Statutory Boards only
- Tie in nominations only

- **Number of Advisory Boards**

- Continued Evaluation?





Elected Official Financial Policy

Financial Policy for Elected Officials- Purpose

- Clear and Consistent Framework
- Commitment to Transparency, Fiscal Responsibility, and Accountability






Best Practices – UNC School of Government, Peer Municipalities, and other Financial control standards across N.C.

- **P-Cards**

- Elected Officials do not receive personal p-cards (few exceptions)
- A departmental p-card may be checked out for a specific travel/event purpose only through the Town Clerk's Office.
- Receipts must be provided to the Town Clerk within five (5) business days
- Monthly limit per official - \$250 – any amount above shall receive full Council approval

- **Mileage**

- Boundary area or determined mileage for determining what is covered under an existing stipend.
 - Mileage reimbursed at the **IRS Rate only** when outside of the stated area.
 - Town vehicles are available for use by the elected member
- 



Best Practices – UNC School of Government, Peer Municipalities, and other Financial control standards across N.C.

• **Meals**

- Must be in the transaction of public business and defined as an official function
- Inside four (4) county boundary the stipend shall cover meals except those identified as an official function
- A meeting recap noting those in attendance and the purpose of the meeting shall be provided to the Town Clerk for distribution to the full elected body within five (5) days of the meeting.
- Advanced per diem rates

• **Lodging**

- No Wake County lodging except for:
 - Disability-related accommodation
 - Weather emergencies
- Purchase of in-room entertainment prohibited
- Room service prohibited unless medically necessary



Best Practices – UNC School of Government, Peer Municipalities, and other Financial control standards across N.C.

• **Training**

- Annual Per-Member Budget Amount
- Out of State Travel Requires Council approval (consent agenda, etc.)

• **Stipends**

- Mayor and Town Council receive monthly stipends
- Tiered Food/Event Limits:
 - Light Refreshments: up to \$75
 - Working Lunch/Dinner: \$150
 - Community Event/Meeting: \$400
- Reasonable expenses defined as:
 - Directly tied to Town business
 - Cost does not exceed standard business-meal norms
 - Comparable to local government benchmarks



Best Practices – UNC School of Government, Peer Municipalities, and other Financial control standards across N.C.

- **Town Halls / Office Hours / Community Meetings**

- Covered expenses include food, water, printed materials, etc.
- Per Town Hall/Community Meeting Limit: \$400
- Annual Limit Per Member: \$1,500

- **Documentation and Receipts**

- Receipt submission to Town Clerk within five (5) business days
 - Attendee names and general purpose required for official functions
 - Missing receipt require an affidavit
- 

Financial Policy – Decisions

Elected Official Financial Policy
Considerations





Elected Official Press Release / Social Media Preferred Practices



Press Release / Social Media Preferred Practices - Purpose

- The purpose of this Social Media Policy is to provide guidance to elected officials regarding the appropriate and responsible use of social media in their official capacities as well as establish a procedure for requesting an official press release from the elected body.
- Components to consider:
 - Social media use
 - Official vs. personal capacity vs. election/campaign
 - Misuse of letterhead or official insignia
 - Public perception of “official” communication
 - First Amendment protections
- **DISCLAIMER:** This policy is not intended to restrict or infringe upon the First Amendment rights of elected officials in their personal capacities. Rather, it establishes clear distinctions between official and personal use of social media and provides standards for conduct when social media platforms are used as tools of governance, public communication, or official engagement

Press Release / Social Media Preferred Practices - Research

- Social Media Policy – Town Staff
 - Very Common
- Social Media Policy – Elected
 - Inconsistent
- Social Media Archiving – Elected
 - Common
- Press Release Standards – Elected
 - Inconsistent
- Branding – Elected
 - Inconsistent




Press Release / Social Media Preferred Practices




Dos

 Communicate factual information

 Engage with the community


 Maintain separate official accounts vs. personal accounts


 Include disclaimer language


 Set appropriate comment settings





Don'ts

 Discuss ongoing legal matters

 Share confidential information

 Post personal opinions

 Forget public records obligations

 Use town branding or logo on personal accounts

Press Release / Social Media Preferred Practices



Apex Elected Officials Social Media
and Press Release Policy Decisions





Elected Official Events, Office Hours, Community Meetings

Events, Office Hours, and Community Meetings for/with Elected Officials - Purpose

- To establish policies and procedures for the Town Clerk's Office and Town Staff in scheduling, coordinating, and providing governing body member support for community meetings and/or office hours, that are organized or initiated by a member of the elected body with the Town of Apex.



**Staff
support**



**Town
facilities**



**Branding
and
messaging**



**Frequency
limitations**



**Docu-
mentation**

Distinguish between town-and council-led events

Elected Official Events, Office Hours, Community Meetings - Research

- Four (4) Policies (Similar) Exist
- General Policy Preferred – 90%
- Define Level of Support
- Town Resources
 - Branding
 - Messaging
 - Facilities
- Roles of Elected Official in Official capacity vs. Personal Project



Elected Official Events, Office Hours, and Community Meetings - Decisions



Elected Official Events, Office
Hours, and Community Meetings





Elected Official Public Forum / Public Hearing Revisions



Public Forum / Public Hearing Guidelines

- North Carolina General Statutes (NCGS) § 160A-81.1, requires that municipal governing boards provide for public comment **only once** a month, however, the Apex Town Council has chosen to provide this opportunity at **each** regular business meeting. In addition, this statute allows the Apex Town Council to adopt reasonable rules which govern the conduct of the public comment period, including rules to maintain order and decorum. This is not intended to limit the content of the speaker's message but are instead to ensure that this part of the Meeting Agenda is conducted in a civil, orderly, and efficient manner.

Public Forum / Public Hearing Guidelines



**Applies to the Town Council,
advisory boards, and committees**

Public Forum and Participation - Decisions

Public Forum and Participation





Next Steps



Timeline for Consideration

- **Monday, June 1, 2026**

- Draft Policies Distributed to Elected Body

- **Tuesday, June 23, 2026 – Regular Town Council Meeting**

- Policy Adoption



Questions?

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 20, 2026
To: Mayor and Town Council
From: Allen Coleman, Town Clerk
RE: Town Council Policies and Procedures Update



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report has been prepared for the Mayor and Town Council to support the April 21, 2026 Work Session focused on policies and procedures governing the Apex Town Council. Its purpose is to provide a clear, research-based foundation to inform policy discussions and guide potential updates to the Town’s governing framework. Drawing on a comparative analysis of twenty-one (21) North Carolina municipalities—representing a broad spectrum of population sizes and governmental structures—the report highlights current practices and emerging trends relevant to Apex.

The analysis addresses several key policy areas identified for Council review, including financial policies and oversight, communication protocols such as press releases and social media use, and expectations related to community town halls and special events hosted by elected officials. The report also evaluates standards and procedures for public forums and public hearings, emphasizing transparency, consistency, and opportunities for meaningful public engagement.

In addition, the report includes detailed research on Town Council committee structures across North Carolina’s largest municipalities. This section examines committee purpose, scope of work, standing versus ad hoc designations, appointment authority (whether exercised by the Mayor, Council, or both), Mayoral involvement, and typical meeting cadence. An in-depth review of Resident Advisory Boards, including governance models, appointment processes, the use of interviews, and the number and focus areas of active boards in comparable communities is also included.

As the Town continues to grow and its organizational needs evolve, it is appropriate to revisit and assess the effectiveness of existing rules, procedures, and policies. This report is intended to support that work by offering a thoughtful, comprehensive resource that advances the Town’s commitment to clear, accountable, and forward-looking governance—ensuring that practices remain aligned with the community’s needs and with the highest standards of municipal service.

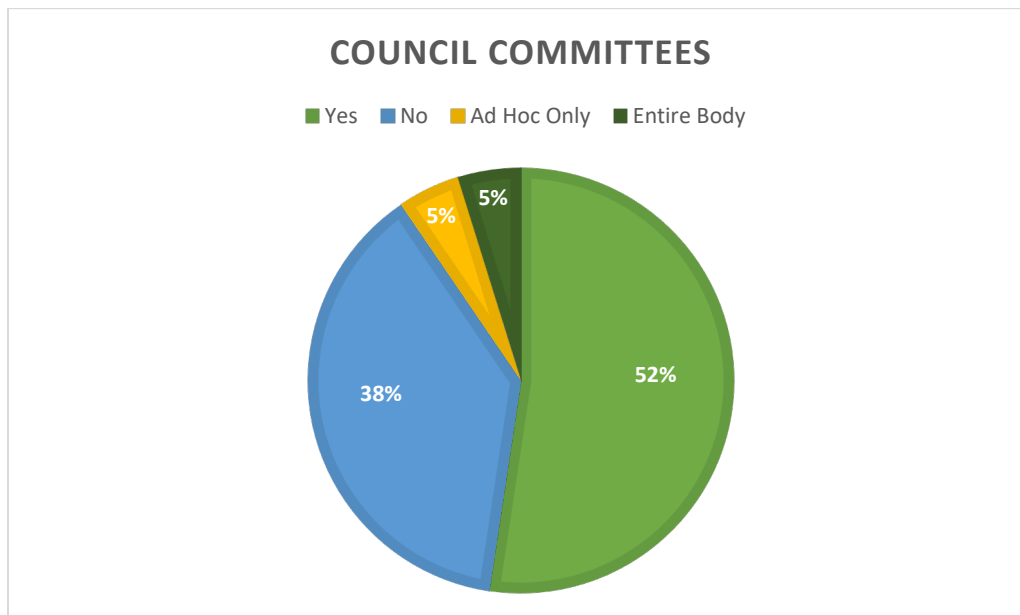
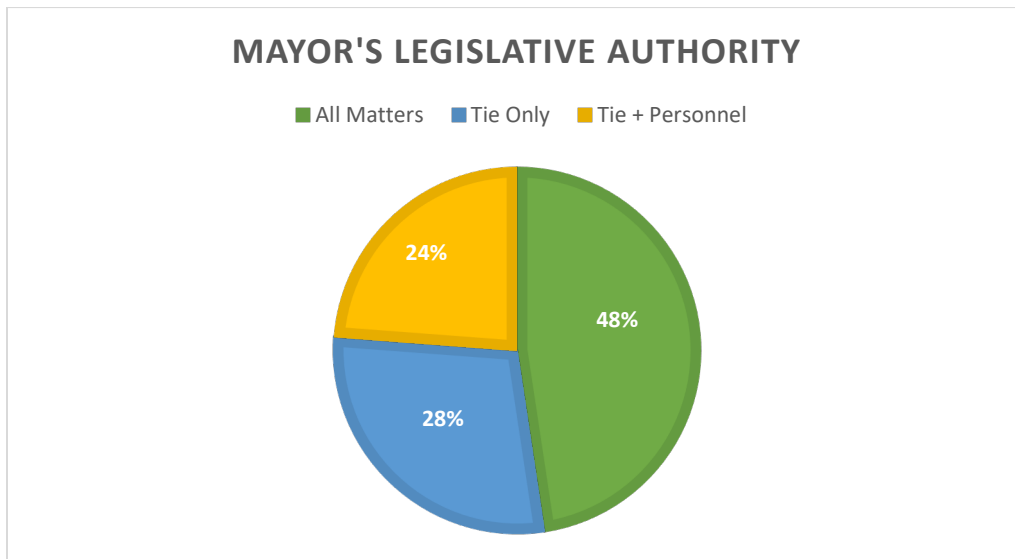
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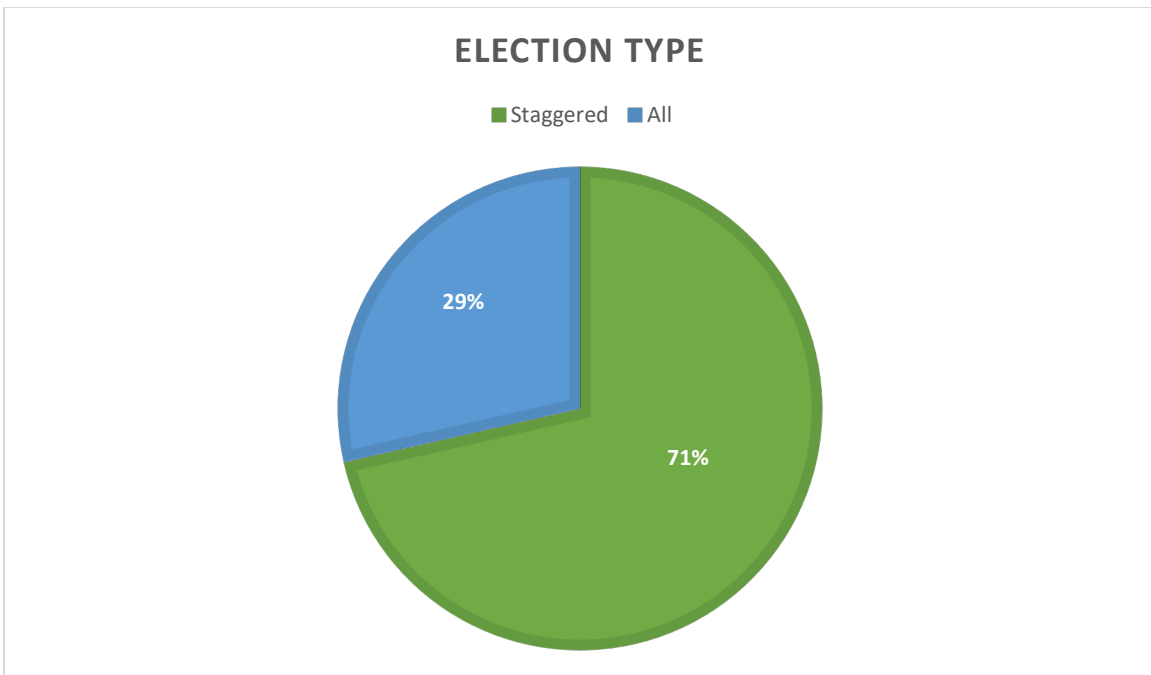
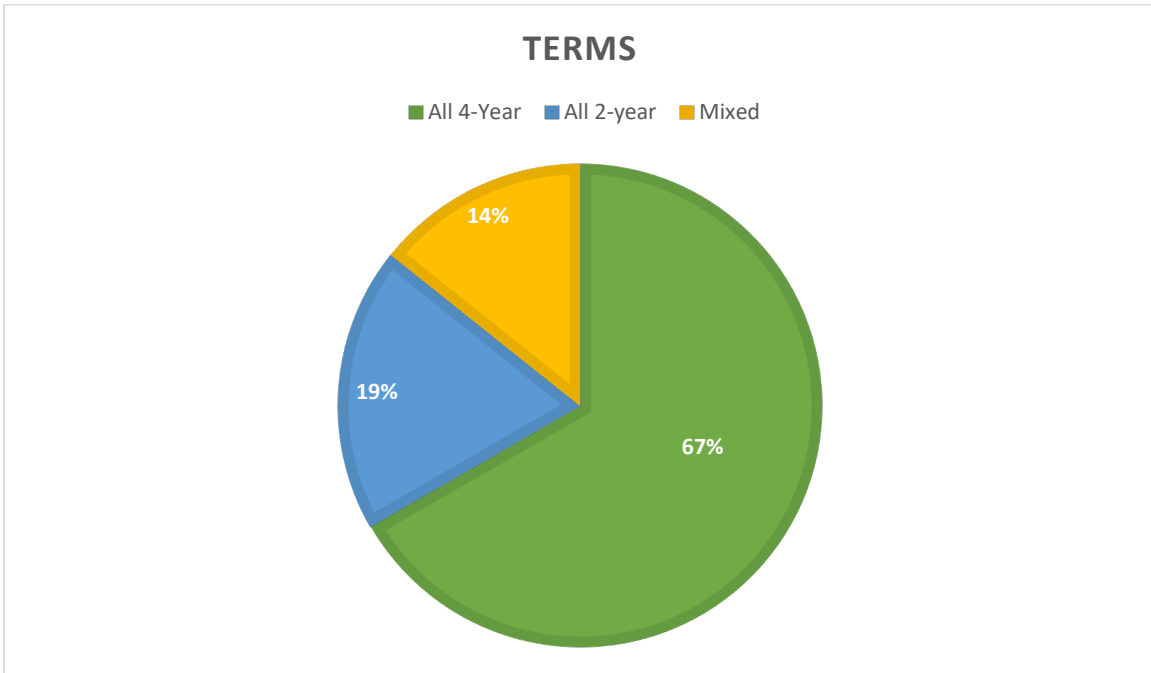
VISUAL OVERVIEW

Below are visual illustrations of the data set that was analyzed. As a reminder, this included twenty-one (21) of North Carolina's largest municipalities. Apex currently is the thirteenth (13) largest municipality in North Carolina and was included in the research.



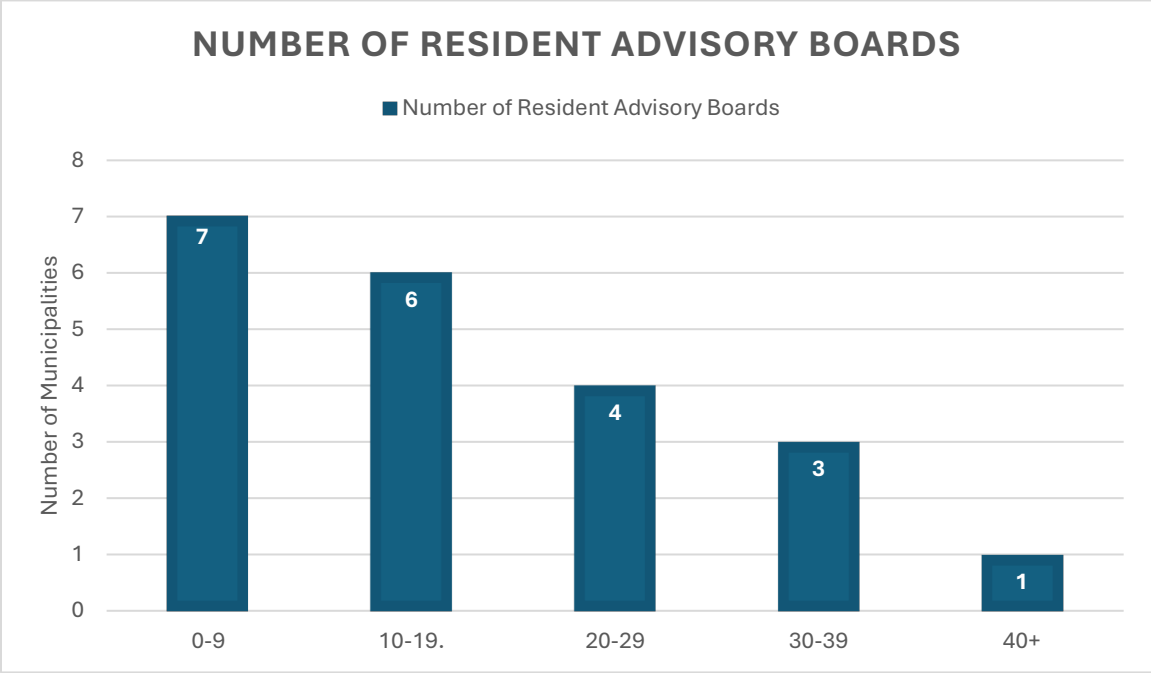
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COUNCIL COMMITTEES

This dataset provides a comparative snapshot of governance practices across 21 North Carolina municipalities, with a particular focus on mayoral authority, council committee structures, and transparency practices. Several clear patterns and distinctions emerged.

Overall Structure and Use of Committees

Larger municipalities are significantly more likely to utilize formal council committee structures. Cities such as Charlotte, Raleigh, Winston-Salem, Fayetteville, and High Point maintain multiple **standing committees** aligned with major policy areas (e.g., finance, housing, public safety, economic development). These committees typically meet monthly and serve as key venues for policy development and detailed review.

In contrast, many mid-sized and smaller municipalities—including Greensboro, Durham, Concord, Huntersville, Chapel Hill, Burlington, Kannapolis, and Wake Forest—report **no formal council committee structure**. This suggests a preference for handling business at

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the full council level, often through regular meetings or work sessions, rather than delegating to smaller subgroups.

A hybrid approach is also evident. For example, Cary and Wilmington maintain a limited number of targeted committees, while Rocky Mount uses a “**Committee of the Whole**” model, where all councilmembers participate rather than serving on smaller committees.

Mayor’s Legislative Authority

There is inconsistency statewide in the legislative role of the Mayor:

- Most municipalities follow one of two models:
 - “**All matters**” voting authority (no veto) – common in council-manager forms (e.g., Raleigh, Durham, Greensboro).
 - **Tie-breaking vote only** – also very common, particularly in larger or more traditional structures (e.g., Charlotte, Winston-Salem, Asheville).
- **Veto authority is rare**, appearing only in Charlotte among this sample.

Additionally, several municipalities allow the mayor to vote on **personnel matters** (e.g., City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk), even when otherwise restricted.

Committee Appointment Authority

Appointment authority is most often vested in the **Mayor**, either solely or with council override provisions. This is the dominant model in cities with established committee systems (Charlotte, Raleigh, Winston-Salem, Fayetteville, High Point, Gastonia, Jacksonville).

A smaller number of municipalities place appointment authority with the **full elected body** (e.g., Asheville, Greenville), indicating a more collaborative or distributed governance approach.

Mayor Participation on Committees

Practices vary considerably:

- In many municipalities, the **Mayor does serve on committees** (e.g., Raleigh, Fayetteville, High Point, Apex, Jacksonville).

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- In others, the Mayor **does not participate** (e.g., Charlotte, Winston-Salem, Asheville, Gastonia), reinforcing a more neutral or presiding role.

There is no single dominant model, suggesting this is often shaped by local governance philosophy rather than size alone.

Committee Size and Focus

Committee membership is generally small, most often **3–4 members**, with some variation:

- High Point uses larger committees (6 members) defaulting to the Mayor and Mayor Pro-Tempore to serve on ALL committees.
- Apex uses very small committees (2 members) and was the smallest in the research data set.
- Rocky Mount includes the full council.

Committee focus areas are highly consistent across municipalities and tend to cluster around core functions:

- **Finance/Budget/Governance**
- **Housing and Community Development**
- **Public Safety**
- **Economic Development**
- **Transportation/Infrastructure**

Some cities (e.g., Gastonia) maintain a broader and more specialized committee structure, while others concentrate on fewer, more comprehensive committees.

Transparency Practices

Transparency varies widely:

- Larger municipalities with formal committees are more likely to **livestream meetings**, though many only livestream without recording archives (e.g., Charlotte, Raleigh, Winston-Salem).

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- A smaller number (notably High Point and Rocky Mount) both **livestream and record** meetings, representing a higher standard of accessibility.
- Many mid-sized and smaller municipalities report **no formal livestreaming or recording**, particularly where committees do not exist.

Meeting Cadence

Where committees exist, **monthly meetings** are the norm. Fayetteville is an outlier with a **bimonthly schedule**, and several municipalities do not specify cadence, often correlating with less formal or more limited committee use.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE CONCLUSION

For a growing municipality, this dataset suggests that introducing or refining a **structured committee system** can improve efficiency and policy focus, particularly as service demands increase. At the same time, decisions around **appointment authority, Mayoral participation, and transparency practices** should be made deliberately, as they directly shape governance dynamics, public trust, and operational effectiveness.

Ultimately, there is no single model to replicate; however, the data highlights a spectrum of approaches that can be adapted to align with the Town’s preferred structure.

RESIDENT ADVISORY BOARDS

This dataset provides a comparative view of how 21 North Carolina municipalities structure and manage Resident Advisory Boards, with particular focus on appointment authority, use of interviews, and overall board volume. Several clear patterns emerge regarding governance approach, scale, and public engagement practices.

Overall Structure and Scale of Advisory Boards

There is significant variation in the **number of advisory boards**, ranging from as few as **4 boards (Kannapolis)** to as many as **40 boards (Winston-Salem)**. Larger municipalities generally maintain a higher number of boards:

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- Cities like Charlotte (35), Asheville (36), Wilmington (31), Durham (28), and Raleigh (27) maintain extensive advisory structures.
 - Mid-sized and smaller municipalities tend to have fewer boards, often **under 15**, suggesting a more consolidated or streamlined approach.

However, population alone does not fully explain board volume. For example, Winston-Salem (40 boards) exceeds even the largest city (Charlotte), indicating that **local governance philosophy and service delivery model** play a significant role.

Appointment Authority Models

Four (4) primary models for appointing advisory board members emerge:

1. Elected Body (Full Council) Appointment

- Used by municipalities such as Raleigh, Greensboro, Cary, High Point, Jacksonville, Burlington, and Kannapolis.
- Reflects a **collective governance approach**, where appointments are made collaboratively.
- Common in both large and mid-sized municipalities.

2. Council-Only Appointment

- Seen in Winston-Salem, Wilmington, Concord, Asheville, Greenville, and Wake Forest.
- Centralizes authority within the Council, often minimizing direct Mayoral influence.

3. Mayor-Led or Mayor-Directed Appointment

- Includes Fayetteville (Mayor unless Council directs otherwise).
- Less common as a sole model, but still present.

4. Hybrid Models (Shared or Sequential Authority)

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- **Mayor Recommends / Council Appoints** (Apex, Gastonia, Huntersville, Chapel Hill, Rocky Mount):
A balanced approach where the Mayor plays a leading role in nominations, but council retains final authority.
 - **Designated Mayor and Council Seats** (Charlotte, Durham):
A more structured hybrid model where appointment authority is explicitly divided, with certain seats reserved for Mayoral appointment and others for Council. This approach encourages **collective responsibility** and **balanced** representation in board composition.

Overall, **hybrid models are common**, reflecting an effort to balance executive leadership with legislative oversight.

Use of Interviews

The use of **formal interviews** in the appointment process is inconsistent:

- Municipalities conducting interviews include Charlotte, Durham, Cary, Wilmington, Asheville, and Jacksonville.
- Most others **do not conduct interviews**, relying instead on application review or informal vetting.

There is a noticeable tendency for **larger or more complex municipalities** to incorporate interviews, suggesting a focus on:

- Candidate qualification
- Transparency
- Intentional board composition

However, this is not universal, as several large cities (e.g., Raleigh, Greensboro) do not use interviews.

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Mayor’s Legislative Authority Context

Consistent with the previous dataset, the Mayor’s legislative authority remains **inconsistent**. Notably, there is **no clear correlation** between Mayoral legislative power and advisory board appointment authority. Even in municipalities where the Mayor has limited legislative authority, they may still play a significant role in appointments (e.g., hybrid or designated seat models).

RESIDENT ADVISORY BOARD CONCLUSION

In sum, the research demonstrates that while Resident Advisory Boards are a widely utilized tool for community engagement, there is no single prevailing model for how they are structured, appointed, or managed. Municipalities tailor their approach based on governance preferences, organizational complexity, and desired levels of public involvement. The prevalence of hybrid appointment models and the variation in board size and processes underscore the importance of intentional design. As the Town evaluates its own advisory board framework, this analysis provides a range of practical models and considerations to help ensure that its approach is balanced, transparent, and well-aligned with both operational needs and community expectations.

FINANCIAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

This policy is intended to establish a clear and consistent framework for how elected officials utilize Town resources in the course of conducting official business. It reflects a broader commitment to transparency, fiscal responsibility, and accountability, while supporting officials in carrying out their roles effectively through defined guidance on allowable expenditures and administrative processes.

The policy also reinforces the Town’s emphasis on centralized oversight and public transparency, ensuring that financial activities are properly managed, documented, and

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accessible. At the same time, it introduces a more structured approach to procurement card issuance and use.

While the policy provides a strong foundational framework, several sections will benefit from additional direction and refinement to ensure clarity, consistency, and alignment with Council expectations. Further discussion will help solidify these areas and ensure the policy fully supports both operational efficiency and sound governance practices.

Best-Practice and Recommended Values

Based on research from peer municipalities, UNC School of Government (SOG), and other financial control standards across the State of North Carolina, below is a summarization of best practices and recommended values (e.g. \$250 per official, four (4) county boundary area, etc.)

P-Cards

- Elected Officials do not receive personal p-cards (few exceptions)
- A departmental p-card may be checked out for a specific travel/event purpose only through the Town Clerk's Office.
- Receipts must be provided to the Town Clerk within five (5) business days
- Monthly limit per official - \$250 – any amount above shall receive full Council approval

Mileage

- Boundary area or determined mileage for determining what is covered under an existing stipend.
- Mileage reimbursed at the **IRS Rate only** when outside of the stated area.
- Town vehicles are available for use by the elected member

Meals

- Must be in the transaction of public business and defined as an official function

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-
- Inside four (4) county boundary the stipend shall cover meals except those identified as an official function
 - A meeting recap noting those in attendance and the purpose of the meeting shall be provided to the Town Clerk for distribution to the full elected body within five (5) days of the meeting.

Lodging

- No Wake County lodging except for:
 - Disability-related accommodation
 - Weather emergencies
- Purchase of in-room entertainment prohibited
- Room service prohibited unless medically necessary

Training

- Annual Per-Member Budget Amount
- Out of State Travel Requires Council approval (consent agenda, etc.)

Stipends

- Mayor and Town Council receive monthly stipends
- Tiered Food/Event Limits:
 - Light Refreshments: up to \$75
 - Working Lunch/Dinner: \$150
 - Community Event/Meeting: \$400
- Reasonable expenses defined as:
 - Directly tied to Town business
 - Cost does not exceed standard business-meal norms
 - Comparable to local government benchmarks

Town Halls

- Covered expenses include food, water, printed materials, etc.
- Per Town Hall/Community Meeting Limit: \$400
- Annual Limit Per Member: \$1,500

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Documentation and Receipts

- Receipt submission to Town Clerk within five (5) business days
- Attendee names and general purpose required for official functions
- Missing receipt require an affidavit

In response to the above information, general discussion and direction are required for the following areas specific to the Town of Apex:

1. P-Card Use

- a. Individual Use or Departmental Card Checked out through Town Clerk's Office

2. Transportation

- a. Town vehicle preferred for Outside Stipend Area
- b. Mileage Reimbursement Outside Stipend Area

3. Meals

- a. Define Official Functions (staff, elected peers, other agencies, residents)
- b. Maximum threshold
- c. On p-card whenever practical
- d. Will reimbursements be issued?

4. Travel and Training

- a. Should there be Annual Per Member Training/Travel Caps?

5. Stipends

- a. Current Amount
 - i. Mayor = \$319.58/monthly
 - ii. Mayor Pro-Tempore = \$259.83/monthly
 - iii. Council Members = \$256.25/monthly
- b. Transportation within Four County boundaries (Wake, Chatham, Johnston, and Durham)
- c. Food/Meeting Supplies Covered (\$) – What dollar amount?

6. Town Halls, Task Forces, and Community Meetings

- a. Financial Support

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b. If so, amount per meeting?

PRESS RELEASES AND SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICE CONSIDERATIONS

Town elected officials use social media to inform, listen to, and engage constituents about matters of public business. When you use an account to conduct official business or give it “the trappings of office,” you are acting under color of law.

“Operating under color of law” refers to situations where an individual uses an account in a way that makes it appear official or connected to their government role. This includes using it to share official information, communicate with residents about public business, or rely on government resources. It also includes presenting the account with official identifiers—such as titles, government language or imagery, links to official websites, and frequent discussion of official matters—so that it is reasonably understood to represent an extension of their public office.

Government pages that permit public comment are treated as limited/designated public forums, where viewpoint discrimination is prohibited.

Golden rule: If you don’t want public commentary, don’t use social media for two-way communication; use the Town website or disable comments at posting time.

With that said, Elected officials retain full First Amendment rights, which means the Town has **very limited authority** to regulate what they say on social media or in press communications. Elected officials do not waive or reduce their speech rights as a condition of service; instead, their political expression—whether supportive, critical, or controversial—is at the core of what the First Amendment protects. Because they are accountable to voters rather than to the administrative structure of the Town, the government cannot discipline, restrict, or censor them for the content, tone, or viewpoint of their speech.

As a result, any social media or press-related policy for elected officials is **primarily guidance and best practices** rather than an enforceable code of conduct. The Town may define processes, clarify use of official resources, ensure compliance with public records and open-meetings laws, and set expectations for distinguishing personal views from

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official statements—but it cannot regulate political expression or impose penalties for protected speech. The policy therefore serves as a framework for transparency, consistency, and risk-reduction, not as a mechanism for controlling or limiting elected officials’ freedom of expression.

Below are the areas that require additional discussion and direction:

1. Account Type and Disclaimer
 - a. Distinguishing Town Accounts/Official Account vs. Personal Account
 - b. Disclaimer Language Encouraged
2. Comments and Public Interactions
 - a. Comments may be turned off when post is initially created (not after)
 - b. Respectful and courteous
3. Press Releases and Media Statements
 - a. Are approvals required before sharing press releases or official statements?
 - b. Disclaimer statement that this represents one viewpoint and not the view point of the body, unless otherwise known.
4. Crisis Communications
 - a. Preferred for Town to share information initially.
5. Public Records and Retention
 - a. Social Media Archiving Contract – Should elected officials be included?
6. Branding and Use of Town Resources
 - a. Standards for using official Town logos or those similar to logos of the Town.
 - b. Should branded materials created by an elected official be approved

Please see **Attachment A** to this memorandum which I will ask you to complete during the work session.

COMMUNITY TOWN HALL / ELECTED OFFICIAL EVENT CONSIDERATIONS

This policy establishes a consistent framework for community town halls, public events, and informal meetings conducted by elected officials. Its intent is to promote transparency, ensure coordination with Town operations, and support equitable access to public engagement opportunities while maintaining appropriate use of Town resources.

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This policy applies to all elected officials when hosting, sponsoring, or participating in community-facing events or meetings related to Town business, whether held in-person or virtually

Below are areas that require additional discussion and direction:

1. Level of Staff Support

- Extent of Town staff involvement (logistics only vs. active coordination/support)
- Whether staff attendance is required or optional

2. Use of Town Facilities

- Whether elected officials have priority access to facilities for certain events
- Any limits on frequency or scheduling priority

3. Branding and Messaging Standards

- Degree of restriction or allowance for use of Town logos and branding
- Whether standardized templates or disclaimers are required for all event materials

4. Frequency and Limits of Events

- Whether there should be a cap on number of Town Halls/events per elected official per year

6. Documentation Expectations

- Whether staff should prepare summaries or reports after each event
- Whether public input should be formally tracked or categorized

7. Role of Elected Officials vs. Town-Sponsored Events

- Clarification on when an event is considered “Town-hosted” versus “official-led”
- Whether Council approval is required for Town-branded events

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The Council adopted these guidelines in 2018. The purpose of this policy is to affirm the Town of Apex's commitment to open, transparent, and meaningful public participation by establishing clear, consistent, and respectful guidelines for public comment during meetings of the Town Council and Resident Advisory Boards. In accordance with North Carolina General Statutes, and in recognition of the Town's decision to provide public comment opportunities at each regular Council meeting, this policy sets forth reasonable procedures to ensure that public input is received in an orderly, accessible, and efficient manner.

This policy is intended to preserve the integrity of public meetings by promoting civility, fairness, and respect among participants while maintaining the ability of the governing body to conduct its business effectively. It does not limit the content of public comments, but instead establishes a structured framework that supports orderly participation, ensures equitable access to speak, and upholds decorum during public proceedings.

Together, these guidelines reflect the Town's ongoing commitment to listening to its residents while balancing the need for efficient governance and respectful engagement in the public decision-making process.

Amendments to the existing policy are proposed to clarify current practices, include preferred decorum practices, process for displaying and providing materials, and confirm the existing time limitations.

Below are points that need confirmation:

- All members participating in public forum or a public hearing must be in-person.
- Public Forum period at each regular meeting of Town Council
- Individual must identify by name those they are speaking on behalf of and they must also be present.
- Public Forum period is limited to 36 minutes or 12 speakers, whichever comes first. Beyond this limit requires action by a majority vote of the Town Council.
- Written comments shall be acknowledged by the Town Clerk during the regular meeting of the Town Council.
- Handouts and materials shall be provided to the Town Clerk
- Electronic presentations are not allowed

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-
- Posters, Signs, and Displays allowed only when not blocking others' view
 - These guidelines apply to Council Meetings, Advisory Board Meetings, Council Committees, and other meetings where official business is being considered.

Responses Overview Active


Responses

6 

Average Time

02:45 

Duration

0 Days 

1. Level of Staff Support



2. Is professional staff attendance required or optional?

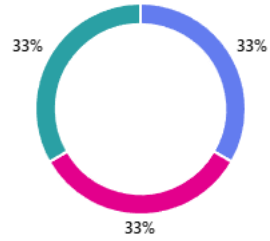


3. Should Elected Officials have priority access to facilities for events in their official capacity?



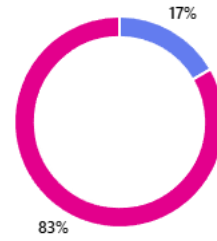
4. Should there be a limit on the number of Town Halls/Office Hours/Events per official?

- Yes 2
- No 2
- Maybe 2



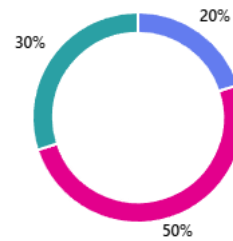
5. Should the Town promote Town Halls/Office Hours/Events?

- Yes - All 1
- Yes - when open to all members of the public 5
- Yes - When Open to ALL 0
- No 0



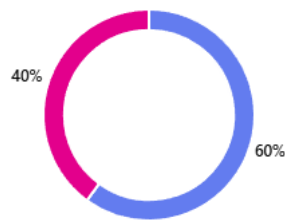
6. Should the event, office hours, and/or comment event be advertised?

- Yes - Website Only 2
- Yes - Website and Town Social Media Only 5
- Yes - Website Only and Printed Material at Facilities 3
- Other 0



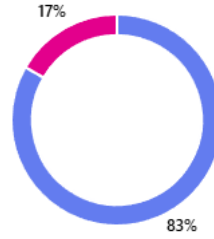
7. Is Council approval required?

- Yes 3
- No 2
- Other 0



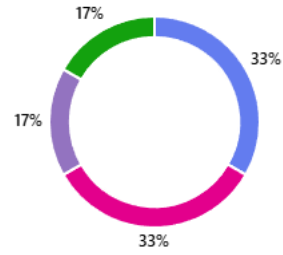
8. Should financial support be provided?

- Yes 5
- No 1



9. If yes, to what level

- Only Stipend Member Allowance 2
- Light Refreshments 2
- Meal (more than 10 expected) 0
- Event Specific Tiers 1
- Pending Council Authorization 1



Responses Overview Active

Responses

6

Average Time

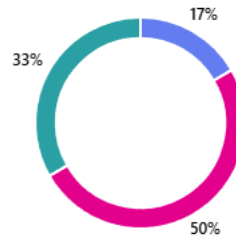
02:20

Duration

0 Days

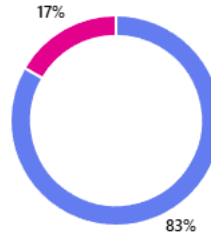
1. Should Elected Officials be issued a p-card

- Yes 1
- No - Department Card Only 3
- No - Reimbursement Only 2



2. Supportive of the four (4) County Boundary Area?
(Wake, Chatham, Johnston, and Durham)

- Yes 5
- No 1
- Other 0



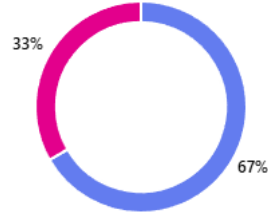
3. Should there be member caps on Travel, Events, Training?

- Yes 6
- No 0



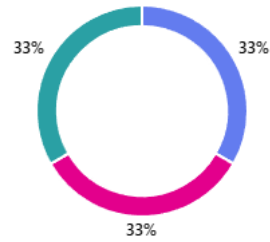
4. Stipend Levels

- Retain Stipend Amounts 4
- Increase Stipend Amounts 2
- Reduce Stipend Amounts 0



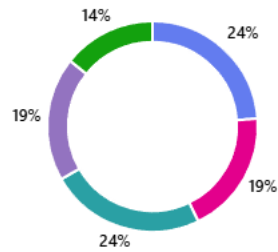
5. What should your stipend cover (select all that apply)?

- Meals (individual meetings) - up to \$50 5
- Local travel including parking, taxi, uber, transit services, etc. (within four county boundary) 5
- Community meeting supplies 5
- Other 0




6. Should Town funds be used to support (select all that apply)?

- Office Hours 5
- Task Force Meetings/Events 4
- Community Meetings 5
- Only if approved 4
- Promotional Materials (banners, flyers, etc.) 3




Responses Overview Active


Responses

6 

Average Time

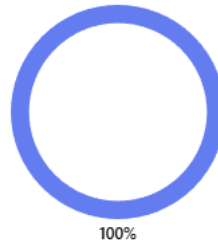
00:49 

Duration

0 Days 

1. Public Forum participants shall be:

- In-Person 6
- In-Person or Virtual 0



2. Public Forum Period shall be:

- Each Regular Meeting 6
- Each Work Session 0
- Once Per Month 0
- All meetings of the Town Council 0



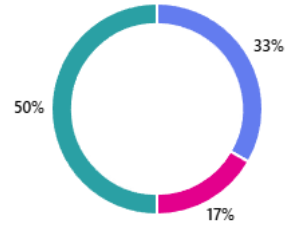
3. Public Forum Period shall be:

- Limited to 12 speakers or 36 minutes whichever comes first 6
- Limited to 12 speakers 0
- Limited to 36 minutes 0
- No limit 0
- Other 0




4. When more than 12 speakers have signed up or 36 minutes has been reached:

- a majority vote by the Town Council to continue 2
- Discretion of the presiding officer to continue 1
- a majority vote to amend the time limit (e.g. 3 minutes, 2 minutes, 1 minute, etc.) 3




Responses Overview Active


Responses

6 

Average Time

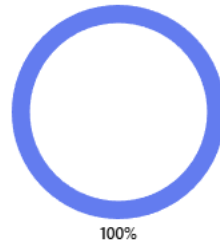
05:42 

Duration

0 Days 

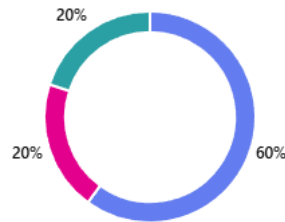
1. Prefer Disclaimer Statement on Official Social Media Accounts?

- Yes - All 6
- No - All 0
- Only certain platforms 0



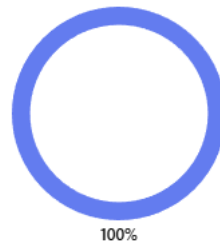
2. Allow comments on official accounts?

- Always 3
- Never 1
- Post-by-Post 1



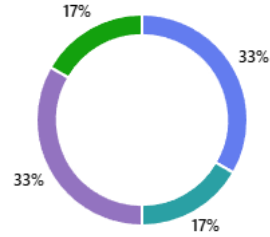
3. Should policy include professional conduct standards?

- Yes 5
- No 0



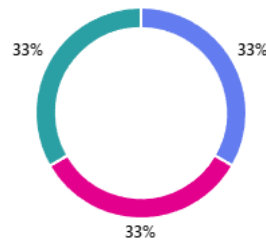
4. May elected officials issue individual press statements?

- Yes 2
- Yes - Notify All Council Email Group 0
- Yes - Notify All Council Email Group XX Hour(s) Prior to Distribution 1
- Yes - Including disclaimer 2
- No 1



5. Must officials notify All Council Email Group when responding to media requests?

- Always 2
- High-impact only 2
- No 2



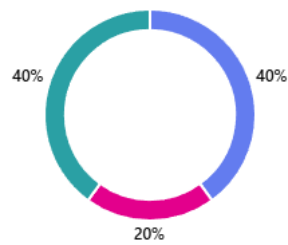
6. Officials speak only for themselves unless authorized?

- Yes 6
- No 0



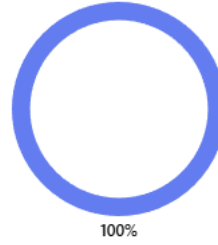
7. Can elected officials independently issue emergency statements?

- Yes - With disclaimer 2
- Yes - Restricted to topic 1
- No - share official Town communications only 2



8. Should the Town archive official-capacity social media posts for elected officials?

- Yes 5
- No 0



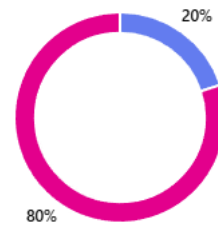
9. What archiving method should be used?

- Automated through Archive Social 5
- Screenshots 0
- None 0
- Other 0



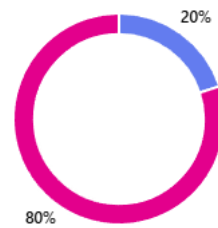
10. Forward/retain private messages involving Town business?

- Yes - to Town Clerk within XX days 1
- Yes - Upon request only 4



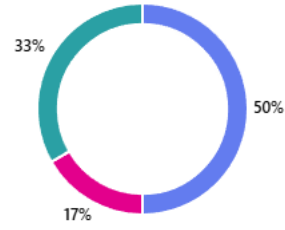
11. Engaging with Town Staff via Social media

- Yes 1
- No 4



12. Handling Constituent Requests

● Redirect to official channels (e.g. Town email)	3
● Discretionary	1
● Combination of	2



13. Can elected officials use Town logos, seals, etc. on official accounts?

● Yes - Always	1
● Yes - Only when speaking on behalf of a majority	0
● Yes - With Prior Approval	1
● No	3

