

Respondent Names
Sequim City Council Officials
Complainant Name
Jeff Tozzer
Complaint Description
To Whom It May Concern: I am concerned that Sequim City Council has violated Washington State law. On January 13th, 2025, a letter authored by Councilmember Dan Butler was discussed. In it, he expressed interest in holding a special meeting to determine whether the Council should officially support or oppose Sequim School District Propositions 1 and 2, a bond and levy. I cannot find any instance of the Council taking a stance on past issues, and I question if this is part of the Council's "normal course and conduct." Additionally, I believe the Sequim School District is an "outside agency" to the City of Sequim. Council member Kathy Downer said, "This came up when the hospital came to us because I wanted to support the hospital." Council member Vicki Lowe said, "The goal [of the special meeting] is to have a letter of support or something in the end." This indicates that the Council had already decided to support the School District before hearing from constituents. The City Clerk explained that the school superintendent's executive assistant had already provided a template for the letter of support. The motion to hold a special meeting to consider supporting the school district's ballot measures was passed. On January 18th, a legal notice was published in the local paper. It said a special meeting would be held to "take limited public comment regarding Sequim School District Proposition 1... and Proposition 2." The legal notice did not disclose that this was a special meeting to support the school district. On January 22nd, the special meeting was held and Council Rules 3.9(b) and (d) were waived.

3.9(b) reads:

“...the City Council will not during any part of any Council meeting consider requests from outside agencies for Council to support or oppose ballot measures; nor will Council permit any public comment on any proposed or pending ballot issue...”

3.9(d) reads:

“Council has chosen not to support or oppose ballot issues as those are left to the will of the people voting. The use of any of the City’s facilities, including the use of the Council chambers and/or broadcast system, would likely be construed as being in violation of RCW 42.17A.555 and therefore, general public comment on ballot issues, or proposed ballot issues will not be permitted.”

Of eight people providing public comment, all eight urged the Council to support the school district. I question whether the special meeting was noticed sufficiently. Speakers included school staff and school board members.

The Council unanimously passed a motion to offer a letter of support to the Sequim School District.

When public officials use public resources to take stances on ballot issues, residents feel that government decisions are being made with bias rather than neutrally or fairly. Officials are elected to represent all constituents, not just those who share their views. If they openly support or oppose a ballot measure, it alienates community members and creates division.

Please let me know if this action is a violation.

Respectfully,

Jeff Tozzer
Sequim, WA

Article about this event: <https://www.ccwatchdog.com/p/when-breaking-the-rules-is-okay>

What impact does the alleged violation(s) have on the public?

Sequim City Council decision to hold special meeting, begins at 2:06:00
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1MTNSpVvcM>

Special meeting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejwuKuPDjDg>

List of attached evidence or contact information where evidence may be found
List of potential witnesses with contact information to reach them
Certification (Complainant)
I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that information provided with this complaint is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.