

South Tahoe council revises rules for itself

By Kathryn Reed

Stationary for council members, how to get an item on the agenda and receiving text messages during meetings. Those were some of the heady issues the South Lake City Council spent a chunk of time on this week.



It was all part of the council going over its protocols Feb. 8.

Apparently not realizing it doesn't take a degree in graphic arts to create letterhead or even knowing the city has stationary, the electeds spent a good amount of time debating how it should look. All their names? A disclaimer at the bottom saying it was just from one member?

Finally, they agreed to spend taxpayer dollars to create note cards, which all but Mayor Hal Cole seemed to think they needed to send thank yous and what not.

Councilman Bruce Grego got his way after a lengthy discourse to change the requirement so only two councilmembers need to think an idea is worthy of being placed on a future agenda.

The reasoning behind this is so more ideas are vetted in public and don't get discarded by a fractionalized council, as has been the case in the recent past.

Staff will bring back to the council a potential policy regarding social media, which will include how the Brown Act

controls text messages with the public during meetings, and the constraints on the five when it comes to making comments online about stories.

Councilwoman Claire Fortier wants cell phones off during meetings. Her colleagues didn't like that idea.

Councilwoman Angela Swanson's desire to have only electronic agendas fell flat.

Grego wants to punish any council member who gives closed session information to the media, and presumably to the public in any manner. He thinks a \$500 fine and removing their picture from what's called city hall would be appropriate.

He didn't get far with those ideas.

City Attorney Patrick Enright said the council's every other year ethics training is coming up and maybe that would stave off any desire by the current council to leak information.

Swanson was successful in getting the council to reverse its policy about broadcasting public comments. They will be televised and heard via the web for the next six months on a trial basis.