



**City of Grass Valley  
City Council  
Agenda Action Sheet**

**Council Meeting Date:** January 24, 2012

**Date Prepared:** January 5, 2012

**Prepared by:** Daniel C. Holler, City Administrator

**Title:** Work Session on City Standards of Service

**Recommended Action:** Provide staff direction for completing a City Policy on Customer Service and setting standards of service.

**Agenda:** Administrative

**Background Information:** The City Council approved a customer service policy in September 2004. Currently, Council is looking to update the policy and develop a set of general City "Standards of Service". Staff has developed a draft policy and standards based on the City's current policy, a review of similar items from other agency's and a review of the initial drafts by front line employees. As proposed a two step approach is taken. First, the more detailed policy provides for both a continuation of the guiding principals providing for a customer service focus and outlining more specific standards based on the various types of customer interactions. From the policy a one page listing of specific standards was developed. The draft proposal is designed to set forth the base philosophy, guidelines and minimum standards for the City as a whole. As each department has different types of interactions with the community, more specific standards may be set at the departmental level as appropriate. The development of standards with employee participation provides for the creation of realistic standards that represent a commitment to customer service. Staff is requesting direction comments from the City Council to finalize the proposed policy and standards.

**Funds Available:** N/A

**Account #:**

**Reviewed by:** \_\_\_\_\_ City Administrator



## *City of Grass Valley*

### *Committed to Customer Service*

The City of Grass Valley Employees are committed to customer service and use the following for our interactions:

- *Employees will engage and acknowledge customers as quickly as possible.*
- *Employees will be available in all public service areas during normal business hours (8:00AM to 5:00PM Monday thru Thursday).*
- *Employees will seek to understand the problem or request by actively listening*
- *Employees will be proactive in seeking solutions to problems. Involving other staff, community members, departments or agencies as necessary.*
- *Employees will provide information and answer questions when able or will assist in contacting the correct employee who can be of further assistance.*
- *Employees will answer calls in person during regular business hours to the extent we are available.*
- *Employees will respond to phone calls, voice mails and e-mails as soon as possible, but at least within 2 regular business days.*
- *Employees will respond to written correspondence which requires a response within 10 regular business days.*
- *Employees will inform customers of the timelines required to process permits and the timelines necessary for other City commissions or agency review when known.*
- *Employees will give customers specific timelines in response to requests for field services.*
- *Employees will notify customers of changes or delays in set service times*

*"We maintain a strong and vital community, by continually satisfying customers and take pride in doing so"*

**CITY OF GRASS VALLEY ADMINISTRATIVE  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**



**Number:** 200.04  
**Effective Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Revised:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Authority:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**City Administrator:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SUBJECT: Customer Service (Draft)**

- I. **PURPOSE:** To establish expectations for customer service to be practiced by City employees.
- II. **POLICY:** It is the policy of the City Council that City Officials, Employees and Volunteers serve as part of a team striving to maintain a strong and vital community, by continually serving the public and accomplishing work with courtesy and respect.
- III. **EXPECTATIONS:**  
The City values meaningful and effective customer service, and uses the following for interactions:
  1. Seek to understand the problem or request by actively listening and questioning to clarify information. Learn and understand what the issue or problem is before responding to the individual.
  2. Take initiative to solve problems. Be proactive in seeking solutions, and involve other staff members, community members, departments or agencies as needed in composing solutions. Always keep the customer informed on how you're addressing their question or issue.
  3. Use sound judgment. Base your response on your knowledge, training and City policies. If you don't know, ask for assistance. Give an honest, direct response.
  4. Respond to customers as quickly as possible. If you or other staff members are occupied, make sure to acknowledge the customer and indicate that you will be with them shortly.
  5. Take responsibility to see that questions are answered. If you refer someone to another person, follow up to see that his or her interests were heard, understood and addressed.
  6. Respond to phone calls, voicemail and e-mails as soon as possible, but at least within 2 business days.
  7. Regularly examine your performance and efficiency. Use what you learn from your contact with other staff, departments and the public to improve service. Seek feedback from your supervisor, the public and your colleagues.
  8. If an employee is out for an extended period of time, voice mail message and e-mail response will direct customers to another appropriate staff person.
  9. Written correspondence requiring a response will be answered within 10 business days when possible.
  10. While employees respect everyone who contacts the City, contacts are often made for a sales or other solicitation that are not a part of the City's provision of services. These types of interactions may be addressed at the employee's discretion.

*Emergencies*

1. Calls that impact life, property and business are the priority for the City. Refer police fire medical or similar emergency calls to 911. If in doubt refer the call to 911.
2. Public Works related emergency calls are to be given to the Public Works Department counter staff during regular business hours. Use the emergency contact number for non-business hours.
3. Calls concerning sewer and water related issues aside from billing shall be treated as emergencies. Staff in the utility division shall be notified immediately and directly. Under no circumstances should contact be considered complete by leaving a phone message or a note.

*Service Requests and Permit Issuance Standards*

1. The City issues a wide variety of permits, with varying required processing standards. Customers will be informed of the time lines required to process permits and the time lines necessary for other commission or agency review if known.
2. Customers will receive specific time lines in response to requests for field services.
3. Customers will be notified of changes or delays in service.

The above expectations represent the desired minimum standards. City Employees are expected to meet and/or exceed these expectations.

- IV. **RESPONSIBILITY FOR REVIEW:** The City Administrator shall review this policy at least once every 5 years.

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