

CITY OF BELLE FOURCHE PUBLIC COMPLAINT POLICY

The City believes that complaints and grievances are best handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible, and that the City should be given an opportunity to consider the complaint and attempt to resolve the complaint prior to involvement of the Council and Mayor.

The City encourages patrons to express their concerns, to ask questions, and to take an active interest by attending Council meetings.

For the purposes of this policy (Policy 4.2), in the event the City does not have an employed City Administrator or if the grievance is about the City Administrator, the Mayor shall have the roles and responsibilities of the City Administrator as set forth herein.

INFORMAL PROCEDURES

Any individual wishing to express a complaint should first utilize normal channels of communication, such as discussing the matter with the appropriate Department Head to seek clarification of areas of concern or resolve the complaint. While those with complaints are encouraged to discuss the matter directly with employees closest to the complaint, the City also recognizes that anonymity and confidentiality are desired at times. In such cases, an individual should contact the Department Head regarding their complaint.

FORMAL PROCEDURES

Level One

If an individual is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint through the informal procedure, they can submit their complaint in writing to the Human Resources Office within ten (10) calendar days of conclusion of the informal procedure. The written complaint will be submitted to the Department Head of the department involved in the complaint or the City Administrator, if the complaint is about a Department Head.

If the complaint is about an employee, the employee identified in the complaint will be given a copy of the complaint and an opportunity for explanation, comment, and presentation of relevant information to the Department Head or their designee.

Upon receipt of the written complaint, the Department Head will meet with the complainant and the employee(s) (either jointly or individually), if an employee is involved, as soon as practicable after receipt of the written complaint. All parties should strive to remain objective and maintain a relaxed environment, focused on constructive resolution of the complaint.

Within five (5) calendar days of these meeting(s), the Department Head will render a decision in writing to the complainant and employee, if the complaint concerns an employee. Complaints that are not appealed to a higher level will be considered to be resolved

Level Two

If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the Department Head, (or the Mayor if the complaint is about a Department Head), the complainant may, within five (5) calendar days after the decision is rendered, request an appeal to the appropriate Common Council committee. Requests for appeal must be made in writing.

The Common Council Committee overseeing the applicable department will meet with the complainant and the Department Head (or City Administrator) for the purpose of resolving the complaint as soon as practicable. The Committee may prescribe additional procedures to help provide fair consideration of the complaint and to maintain appropriate decorum.

The Committee may investigate the complaint and will respond in writing within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the appeal.

Level Three

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision of the committee, they may, within five (5) calendar days after the decision is rendered, file a written appeal with the Common Council.

Within twenty (20) calendar days, the Common Council may hold a hearing or otherwise investigate the complaint. The Council may prescribe additional procedures appropriate for consideration of the complaint.

The Common Council will make a final decision on the matter at a regular or special City meeting. The Common Council will then provide the complainant with written notice of its decision.