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CITIZEN COMPLAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a specific procedure for processing and resolving a complaint by any person or persons in order to maintain the quality of services, to improve the relationship between the City and citizens, and to provide citizens with a fair and effective avenue for resolving their complaints.

POLICY

It is the policy of the City of Garrison to accept, investigate and resolve complaints by any persons. Complaints from anonymous sources will be accepted only if the complaint contains sufficient factual information to warrant investigation.

PROCEDURE

All civil claims, complaints, or ordinance violations: All traffic and criminal issues will be referred to the Benton County Sheriff's Office. Matters under this procedure are not limited to municipal infractions but are open to all manner of needs of residents. The City Clerk will direct each complaint to the appropriate City official for investigation and disposition.

1. Citizen addresses a complaint to Mayor, Council Member or Staff
 - a. Mayor, Council Member, or staff member will inform citizen to file a formal complaint at the City Office and the procedure for doing so.
2. Receipt of Citizen complaint:
 - a. All complaints must be documented on the Citizen Complaint Form and signed by the complainant. Complaints will be considered unsubstantiated if a formal complaint form is not completed and signed. Unsubstantiated complaints will warrant no action by the Mayor, Council or Staff.
 - b. Citizen fills out complaint form at City Office during normal business hours.
 - c. After initial review by the City Clerk, the completed Citizen Complaint Form will be forwarded to the appropriate department, who in turn will investigate and complete the Citizen Complaint Form.
3. Complaint and form will be reviewed by Mayor, Council, or appropriate department head. Complaint will be investigated for validity and resolution.
 - a. If found valid
 - i. AND this is the 1st complaint received, an abatement notice will be delivered or sent to the offender specifying the complaint and action required to be in

compliance with the Ordinances of the City of Garrison. Notice will also include a reasonable time frame for abatement.

- ii. Steps will be taken on non-violation issues to be resolved by the appropriate department. Example: matters involving street repairs will be referred to Maintenance, Council or Mayor. The matter will be directed to the City Council in the event that a simple resolution is not possible, and the Council will be kept apprised of issues in progress.
 - b. In the event that the abatement has not occurred in the time frame allowed or in the event of a second complaint, after the first abatement period has expired, a first offense citation will be issued. The appropriate municipal infraction citation will be issued for each occurrence thereafter.
 - c. Matters found not valid will be dismissed without action. Complainant will be notified of the City's decision not to pursue the complaint and why it is not being pursued.
4. Should citations be issued, the recipient must come to the City Office to pay fines associated with the municipal infraction citations or pay the Benton County Treasurer's Office in the case of fines that have been certified as liens against property.
5. Should the recipient dispute any portion of the citation and refuse payment, the citation will be forwarded to the appropriate court for action.
6. Offenders will have the right to a hearing before the Mayor and City Council. When concurrence on the matter cannot be reached, the offender will have the right to a hearing before the City Council as specified in the Code of Ordinances of the City of Garrison. All actions of the City Council will be final. Any matter remaining in dispute will be referred to the appropriate court for action.
7. Continued failure to abate the nuisance after the City Council has made its decision, shall constitute a new occurrence of the nuisance subject to notice of citation for a second or subsequent offense.
8. In all cases referred to the appropriate court, the property owner will be required to pay the court costs incurred by the city if the property owner is found to be in violation or if the property owner abates the nuisance before the court hearing and the hearing is canceled at the request of the City Attorney.
9. Completed Citizen Complaint Forms must be returned to the City Office for filing