

ORDINANCE 2024-16

**TO AMEND TITLE 2 OF THE BLOOMINGTON MUNICIPAL CODE ENTITLED
“ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL”**

Re: Amending BMC 2.04.120 (Limits on debate)

WHEREAS, the City of Bloomington Common Council (“Council”), as the legislative branch of government, recognizes the importance of meeting its responsibilities efficiently and responsively, in order to serve the best interests of the public; and

WHEREAS, current limits on debate among councilmembers are governed by Bloomington Municipal Code Section 2.04.120, which allows the Council to place time limits on debate by a two-thirds vote before debate on a particular item begins; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to supplement these rules to further limit the number and length of speeches permitted each member in debate in order to balance goals of meeting efficiency with robust public debate;

WHEREAS, council rules have prohibited introduction of legislation for council action after 10:30 p.m. without a two-thirds vote since 1980, and, with the Common Council’s adoption of Ordinance 21-34 on October 8, 2021, a motion to adjourn accompanied with a second made after 11:59 p.m. or after five and a half hours from the start of the meeting has the effect of immediately ending the meeting; and

WHEREAS, five regular sessions in 2024 (March 27th, April 3rd, April 10th, May 1st, and May 15th) have lasted longer than four hours, three of which (March 27th, April 3rd, and May 15th) lasted close to or longer than five and a half hours, which increased the risk that the meeting would end in the middle of business;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY ORDAINED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON, MONROE COUNTY, INDIANA, THAT:

SECTION 1. Section 2.04.120 of the Bloomington Municipal Code entitled “Limits on debate” shall be deleted in its entirety and replaced with the following:

2.04.120 - Limits on debate.

No member shall speak more than twice upon a question without leave of the council, and no more than once until every other member has had the opportunity to speak. No member shall speak longer than five (5) minutes for the first speech on a question and no more than two (2) minutes for a second speech on the same question, unless further time is granted by the council. The council may, before debate begins, decide by a two-thirds vote of all members to set time limits on debate upon a particular pending question, but time spent in answering questions shall not be counted against the speaker.

SECTION 2. If any sections, sentence or provision of this ordinance, or the application thereof to any person or circumstances shall be declared invalid, such invalidity shall not affect any of the other sections, sentences, provisions, or applications of this ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this ordinance are declared to be severable.

SECTION 3. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington and approval of the Mayor.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon this 18 day of June, 2024.



ISABEL PIEDMONT-SMITH, President
Bloomington Common Council

ATTEST:



NICOLE BOLDEN, Clerk
City of Bloomington

PRESENTED by me to the Mayor of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon this 20 day of June, 2024.



NICOLE BOLDEN, Clerk
City of Bloomington

SIGNED and APPROVED by me upon this 24 day of June, 2024.



KERRY THOMSON, Mayor
City of Bloomington

SYNOPSIS

This ordinance is sponsored by Councilmember Piedmont-Smith and would set limits on the number and length of speeches during debate of legislation in order to make Council regular session meetings more efficient. It would limit each councilmember's comment in the first round to three (3) minutes and allow councilmembers a second round of comments limited to one (1) minute each.

Note: At the June 18, 2024 Regular Session, the Council adopted Amendment 01 to this ordinance, which increased the time limits applicable to council speeches or comments to five (5) minutes for the first speech and to two (2) minutes for the second speech.

Distributed to: Clerk, Council Attorney, Legal, and Mayor.