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# **City Council Rules of Procedure**

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## 1. Introduction.

The purpose of these rules is to provide guidelines for the conduct of public business by the St. Louis Park City Council and for public participation. All meetings of the city council will be conducted in accordance with the Minnesota Open Meeting Law, the St. Louis Park Home Rule Charter, and the St. Louis Park City Code. The proceedings of the council will be conducted as outlined in the third edition of The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure, written by Alice Sturgis, and revised by the American Institute of Parliamentarians.

## 2. Meetings.

### a. Quorum.

A majority of all members elected to the council shall constitute a quorum to do business. Certain matters, however, may require more than a simple majority for passage.

*See Appendix A for additional information on voting requirements.*

- Total number of members elected = 7
- Simple majority = 4
- Super majority = 5 or more

### b. Location.

All meetings of the city council will be held at St. Louis Park City Hall, 5005 Minnetonka Boulevard, unless the meeting notice published in advance of the meeting designates a different location.

### c. Notice of meetings.

Notice of all meetings of the city council will be posted at city hall and published on the city website.

### d. Meetings to be public.

Meetings of the city council are open to the public, except for meetings that are authorized to be closed by Minnesota Statute for consideration of issues related but not limited to:

- Labor negotiations.
- Compliance with provisions contained in MN Data Privacy Act.
- Preliminary consideration of allegations or charges against an employee of the city (the employee has the right to ask that the meeting be public).
- Performance evaluation of an employee (the employee has the right to ask that the meeting be public).
- Pending litigation.
- Matters subject to attorney/client privilege.

#### e. Schedule.

A schedule of all city council meetings and recognized holidays is available at city hall and on the city website. If a meeting date falls on a recognized holiday, the meeting will be scheduled on the next succeeding day that is not a holiday, unless another day has been designated in advance.

#### f. Regular meetings.

The city council conducts business and acts on items on the agenda at regular meetings held on the first and third Mondays of each month at 6:15 p.m. Regular meetings can be cancelled or rescheduled at any time, provided council meets at least once per month.

#### g. Study sessions.

Study sessions are scheduled as needed at the discretion of the city manager. Start times will be noted on the meeting agenda. Study sessions are an opportunity for the city council to discuss issues in-depth, provide policy direction, and gather information from staff, consultants, or other sources concerning those issues. No formal council action occurs at study sessions. The council is not required to take public comment at study sessions regarding items on the agenda. The council may ask for comment from the public regarding any item on the agenda by agreement of at least four (4) council members. Study sessions may be cancelled at any time and need not be rescheduled.

#### h. Special meetings.

Special meetings of the city council may be held to conduct business that requires council action prior to the next regular meeting. The mayor or any three (3) members of the council may call a special meeting by filing a written statement with the city clerk. The city clerk must post notice of the date, time, place, and purpose of the special meeting at city hall, on the city website, and provide notice to all council members at least three (3) days prior to the meeting. The presence of any member of the council at a special meeting shall constitute a waiver of any formal notice requirement unless the councilmember appears only to object to the holding of such meeting.

#### i. Continued meetings.

Any meeting may be continued to a specified time, place, and date at the discretion of the council. Less than a quorum of councilmembers may continue or postpone a meeting to a fixed, future time. If the time, date, and place of a continued meeting is announced at an open meeting and that information is recorded in the minutes, no additional public notice is required. Otherwise, notice of the continued meeting is required. Continued meetings may themselves be continued to a later continued meeting. No continued meeting may be set for the same time as, or a time later than, the next regular meeting.

#### j. Emergency meetings.

An emergency meeting may be called due to circumstances which require immediate consideration to address issues related to health and safety. The city clerk may notify council by any means available. A good faith effort shall be made to provide notice of the meeting to the public. The notice shall include the date, time, location, and purpose of the meeting.

#### k. Annual meeting.

The council will hold its first meeting of the year on the first Monday in January to:

- Establish council meeting dates for the year.
- Designate the official city newspaper.
- Designate official depositories (banks).
- Appoint councilmembers to serve as mayor pro tem to perform the duties of the mayor in their absence, incapacitation, or, in the case of a vacancy in the office of mayor, until a successor has been appointed or elected.

#### l. Mayor pro tem.

Councilmembers appointed as mayor pro tem serve a four-month term beginning in January of each year. Appointments are made on a rotating basis, based upon seniority. For councilmembers elected at the same time, seniority is based on alphabetical order of last name. All councilmembers shall be appointed to a term as mayor pro tem before the rotation starts again with the most senior member. In the absence of the mayor and mayor pro tem, the most senior available councilmember will serve as acting mayor pro tem. If a councilmember is unable to or chooses not to complete their term as mayor pro tem, the next councilmember in the rotation will complete the term and continue to serve their term as scheduled.

### 3. Agenda and order of business.

#### a. Agenda preparation and items for consideration.

Items of business that require action or discussion by the council may be submitted by a councilmember, the city manager, or city attorney for placement on an agenda. All items will be reviewed and approved by the city manager or their designee prior to placement on an agenda. The city manager or designee will make the final determination regarding timing and placement of items on an agenda. No item of business will be considered by the council if it is not on the agenda. Items of business that are of an emergency nature and require immediate consideration may be added to the agenda at the meeting by a majority vote of the councilmembers present.

Members of the public may request items considered to be of concern to the city or related to the city's strategic priorities be placed on an agenda. All requests from the public must be submitted to the city clerk's office at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting. Prior to placement on an agenda, requests from the public will be reviewed by city staff. When appropriate or as directed by the city manager, staff will attempt to address or resolve the situation prior to placement on an agenda. Staff may also assist the individual(s) requesting the item to facilitate a

presentation or preparation of agenda materials. Matters that are civil in nature, not considered city business, or are not within the scope of the city's authority will not be placed on an agenda.

#### b. Types of items.

The following types of items generally appear on regular, special, or emergency meeting agendas because they require formal action by the council.

- *Ordinance* – used when the action of council regulates or governs people or property and provides a penalty for its violation. Any ordinance should be of general application within the city, and of a permanent and continuing nature. State statute and city charter also require certain actions to be in ordinance form. The city charter requires two readings of all ordinances, except emergency ordinances, prior to approval by the council. The first reading will generally be an item under regular business. The second reading will generally be a consent item unless additional discussion or separate action of the council is required. Members of the public can view proposed ordinances in a draft form on the city website at least 10 days prior to consideration by the council. Ordinances are official, permanent records of the city and make up the contents of the city code.
- *Resolution* – used for any action of a temporary or administrative nature when it is reasonably certain that the action to be taken is of significant historical value. Resolutions may appear on the agenda as a consent item or item of regular business. Resolutions are official, permanent records of the city.
- *Administrative* – items that can generally be approved by motion of the council, such as policy direction, and do not specifically require approval by ordinance or resolution. All actions of the council are recorded in the minutes of the meeting, which are official, permanent records of the city.

The St. Louis Park Home Rule Charter requires every ordinance and resolution to be presented in writing and read in full at a council meeting. However, the reading of a resolution or an ordinance may be dispensed with by unanimous agreement of the council.

The following types of items generally appear on study session agendas because they do not require immediate action by the council.

- *Discussion* – items that require policy direction and/or more in-depth discussion by the council. Many items on study session agendas eventually end up on regular meeting agendas for official action by council.
- *Written report* – items that are provided to the council for information purposes. Items of this type usually do not require immediate policy direction or council action. Generally, the council does not discuss items that are provided as written reports. The council reserves the right to ask questions about written reports or request that the topic of the written report be scheduled for future discussion. Written reports often serve as a preview for future discussion items or action items on a regular meeting agenda.



#### c. Delivery of the agenda.

The agenda will be provided to councilmembers by each Thursday prior to the scheduled meeting. The agenda and related materials not of a confidential nature will be available to the public by each Friday prior to the scheduled meeting. The public can access the agenda and all agenda materials on the city website or by contacting the city clerk's office.

#### d. Order of business for regular meetings.

The order of business for each regular meeting agenda will be as follows:

1. Call to order.
  - a. Roll call.
  - b. Pledge of allegiance.
2. Approve agenda.
3. Presentations.
4. Minutes.
5. Consent items.
6. Public hearings.
7. Regular business.
8. Communications and announcements.
9. Adjournment.

Unless objection is made by motion of the council, the presiding officer may modify the order of business to accommodate people present or to expedite the business of the council.

#### e. Call to order.

The mayor shall call the meeting to order. A roll call will be conducted, with any absences noted in the meeting minutes. The mayor will lead those who choose to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting minutes shall note when any councilmember absent for roll call arrives or leaves prior to adjournment.

#### f. Approve agenda.

The city council shall approve the items and order of business on the agenda by vote of a simple majority of councilmembers present, including any changes or additions.

#### g. Presentations.

This section of the agenda may include proclamations, service awards, and other presentations of general community interest by the city council, staff, or member of the public.

#### h. Minutes.

Written minutes are the official record of council meetings. Minutes are considered unofficial until approved by action of the council at a subsequent regular council meeting. Revisions may be offered by any councilmember and shall be approved by a majority vote of the council. Upon approval, the clerk will make revisions and enter the minutes into the public record as the official minutes of the council.

#### i. Consent items.

Consent items are considered routine items of business that generally do not require additional discussion or individual action. Consent items are approved by the council in one motion. A councilmember, staff member, or any member of the public may request a consent item be moved to regular business for separate action. However, consent items need not be moved to regular business if an individual simply desires to comment on the item and no separate action is requested or required.

#### j. Public hearings.

Public hearings are conducted when required by statute, charter, or city code. Notification of public hearings is provided according to the requirements in law and as directed by the city council or city manager. Members of the public can access all required notices in the city's official newspaper and on the city website.

#### k. Regular business.

Items placed on the agenda under regular business generally require discussion or separate action by the council.

#### l. Communications.

At this time council and staff may provide information of interest to council, staff, and the public. Communication items need not be placed on the agenda as they require no action by the council and are for informational purposes only.

#### m. Adjournment.

The mayor will ask those present if there are additional items of business. If there are no additional items and if no objection is heard from members present, the mayor will declare the meeting adjourned.

### 4. General rules of order and conduct.

#### a. Parliamentary procedure.

The proceedings of the city council shall be conducted in accordance with the third edition of The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure, written by Alice Sturgis and revised by the American Institute of Parliamentarians. Failure to comply with these rules does not invalidate council action unless at the time the action is taken or promptly thereafter, a councilmember or other interested person objects to the method of procedure and points out to the council the specific rule that was not observed.

#### b. Presiding officer.

The mayor shall be the presiding officer of the council. The mayor may make motions, second motions, or speak on any item. The mayor will vote on items like other members of the council. The mayor pro tem shall serve as presiding officer in the absence of the mayor.

#### c. Preservation of order and civility.

The mayor shall preserve order and civility at all meetings of the council.

Members of the council and anyone attending or participating in council meetings shall always speak and act respectfully. Discussion shall be limited to the topic or item under consideration. The use of foul, inappropriate, or derogatory language is prohibited. Disruptive behavior that interferes with the ability to conduct business or which creates an unsafe environment is prohibited. Any person behaving inappropriately or who becomes disruptive during the meeting may, at the discretion of the mayor or a majority of the council, be removed from the room and/or prohibited from further participation in or attendance at the meeting.

#### d. Points of order.

The mayor decides questions of order related to the conduct of business subject to the right of any councilmember to appeal to the council. In the event of an appeal, a majority vote of the council will govern and conclusively determine the question of order. The city attorney shall provide guidance, when appropriate, to ensure the meeting is conducted according to the requirements of law and the adopted rules of procedure.

#### e. Public comment.

Members of the public may speak to any item on a regular meeting agenda by attending the meeting in person or submitting written comments by noon on the days of the meeting. Each person addressing the council at a meeting will be asked to provide their name and address for accurate recording in the meeting minutes. Comments will be limited to three (3) minutes per person and should be addressed to the council as a body. Options for public participation in a regular meeting, including instructions for submitting written comments, are available on the meeting agenda or by contacting the city clerk's office.