



NORWICH
CITY COUNCIL

RULES OF PROCEDURE
2021-2023

**RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
NORWICH, CONNECTICUT**

I

Whenever the Council shall meet for the transaction of business, the Mayor, or in the Mayors absence, the Council President Pro Tempore, shall take the chair at the hour appointed for the meeting and immediately call the members to order; and on the appearance of a quorum, shall cause the journal of the preceding meeting to be read, unless by unanimous consent of the Aldermen or Alderwomen present, the reading shall be dispensed with. The presiding officer shall, after waiting no longer than twenty minutes beyond the scheduled time of the meeting, adjourn said meeting if there is an absence of a quorum.

II

The presiding officer shall preserve order and decorum and shall decide questions of order, without debate, subject to an appeal to the Council. The presiding officer shall rise to put a question, but may state it sitting. The question first moved and seconded shall be first put, and in all cases the sense of the members shall be taken upon the largest number or sum and the longest time proposed.

III

No member shall, in any way, interrupt the business of the Council while the journal or other papers are in reading, nor when any member is speaking in debate, nor while the presiding officer is putting a question.

IV

When a member is about to speak in debate or deliver any matter to the Council, he or she may rise when recognized and respectfully address himself or herself to the presiding officer.

V

No member shall speak more than twice upon the same question nor longer than five minutes at one time without leave of the Council, unless to explain.

VI

When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received but to adjourn, to lay on the table for the previous question, to postpone to the next meeting, to commit or to amend which several motions shall have precedence in order in which they stand arranged. No motion to postpone indefinitely, or to the next meeting or to commit, being once decided shall be again allowed at the same sitting. Once decided, a motion to postpone indefinitely or to a date certain may not be brought before the Council unless requested by a majority four (4) of the members of said Council.

VII

A motion to adjourn shall always be in order and that motion, as well as the motion to lay on the table, shall be decided without debate.

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VIII

On that motion to move the question, no debate shall be allowed; all incidental questions or orders arising after the motion is made, and while it is pending, shall be decided without debate. The previous question shall be in this form: "Shall the main question now be moved?" It shall be admitted only when demanded by a majority of the members present and its effect shall be to put an end to all debate and bring the Council to a direct vote upon the pending amendments, if any, and then upon the main question.

IX

When a question comprehends two or more distinct propositions, any member may have them divided.

X

When a motion has been made and seconded, it shall be stated by the presiding officer before any debate be had thereon, but every motion shall be reduced to writing if the Mayor or any member desires it.

XI

When a motion has been stated by the presiding officer or read by the Clerk, it shall be deemed to be in the possession of the Council, but may be withdrawn by the sponsor at any time before decision without leave of the Council, except that zoning matters may be so resubmitted only within 60 days of withdrawal and no more than once within the year. When a motion has been decided, either in the affirmative or the negative, any member of the prevailing side may move the reconsideration thereof and such motion shall take precedence of all other motions, except a motion to adjourn.

XII

On procedural motions when the question is put by the presiding officer, the members shall signify their assent or dissent by answering aloud "yes" or "no"; the presiding officer shall determine, if he or she can, from the sound whether the yeses or no's are in the majority and declare the vote accordingly; but if he or she doubts or a doubt may be expressed by any member, the question shall be determined by the members rising and being counted.

XIII

Every member present when a question is put shall vote, unless the Council for special reason shall excuse him or her from voting. Upon completion of every roll call vote, the Mayor shall announce the names of those Aldermen or Alderwomen who voted in the affirmative and the names of those who voted in the negative or those who abstained.

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XIV

When the presiding officer is putting a question or addressing the Council, no member shall walk out of or across the Council Chamber, nor in either of such cases or in case a member is speaking, shall entertain private discourse with any person; nor while a member is speaking pass between him or her and the chair.

XV

If any member is speaking or otherwise transgresses the rules of the Council, the presiding officer or any member may call him or her to order; and if speaking, the member so called to order shall take his or her seat unless permitted to explain. The Council, if appealed to, shall decide the case without debate. If no such appeal be taken, the decision of the chair shall be final.

XVI

Special committees of the Council shall be appointed by majority vote of the Council.

XVII

All matters referred to a committee at a regular or special meeting, shall be reported upon no later than at the next regular meeting unless in the vote, resolution or order making the reference, a different time is designated; but the time may, for sufficient cause, be extended by the Council.

XVIII

All final reports by any committee shall be submitted in writing.

XIX

The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order, as amended, shall govern the Council in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Charter and Ordinances of the City of Norwich and the Rules of Procedure of the Council.

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XX

At each meeting of the City Council held on the first Monday of each month, in an order set by the Mayor, the following items shall be taken up:

Adoption of minutes of previous meetings
Proclamations and Special Observances
Public hearings
Second reading and action on ordinances
previously presented
Petitions and communications
Reports of committees
City Manager's report
Unfinished business
Citizen comment on agenda items
New business (consent agenda)

Upon the adoption of a resolution establishing additional regular meeting dates, the following item may be added to the order of business for such additional regular meetings as a first order of business:

Citizen comment on non-agenda items of concern to the City and within the direct purview of the City Council (second meeting).

The time of commencement of such additional regular meetings and the duration, individually and in the aggregate, of comments under this item, may be established in such resolution. The Mayor may rule out of order any speaker whose comments are not directed to non-agenda items of concern to the City and within the direct purview of the City Council, or which are otherwise inappropriate.

The Mayor shall set the order by which the items listed in this Rule shall be taken up with such assistance as the Mayor may request for this purpose at 3:30p.m. on the Monday of the week preceding each regular meeting of the Council of the City of Norwich, except when the Monday for setting the order, or the Monday of the regular meeting, is a city observed legal holiday in which event the Mayor may select another date. This process shall take place at City Hall at such locations as the Mayor shall select. No more than two members of the Council of the City of Norwich may assist in setting the order with no more than one member of any party, other than the Mayor, being present. Any member of the Council intending to be present must notify the Mayor's Secretary at least two business days in advance of the setting of the order of business. If the Mayor's Secretary has not received such notification from at least two members of the Council the Mayor's Secretary shall give notice of the same to all members of the Council simultaneously, no later than 4:30p.m. on the Friday preceding the Monday of which the order of business is to be set. These notifications may be given by electronic means. At this point any available member of the Council of the City of Norwich may schedule their attendance.

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XXI

Except as hereinafter provided, no matter requiring action by the Council shall be considered unless the document initiating the matter has been filed with the City Clerk on or before 4:30 PM on the Monday preceding the day of the regular meeting at which the matter is to be introduced; provided, however, that this rule shall not apply to the introduction and consideration of emergency ordinances.

The City Clerk shall on the Tuesday preceding such regular meeting, prepare an agenda for such meeting and shall transmit such agenda together with copies of the documents filed with him or her under this rule to the Council, City Manager and Corporation Counsel.

Any person or group of persons, other than the Aldermen or Alderwomen, the City Manager and the Corporation Counsel, who files a document with the City Clerk as herein provided may explain such document at the council meeting at which the document is to be presented provided such person or group of persons, at the time of filing of such document, file with the City Clerk a notice stating the name or names of the person or persons who will appear at such meeting to explain such document. Not more than two persons may appear at such meeting to explain such document. Not more than two persons may appear for the affirmative and not more than two persons may appear in opposition. Such document and notice must be filed with the City Clerk in accordance with the first paragraph of this rule or the matter will not be heard until the next succeeding Council meeting.

In addition to citizen comment on non-agenda items of concern to the City and within the direct purview of the City Council, as provided for in Section XX, any person who wishes to address the City Council on a resolution or ordinance which appears on the council agenda for the specific meeting may do so, but any other requests to address the Council, other than in accordance with the preceding paragraph, shall be referred to the appropriate Council committee. No person shall speak longer than three minutes except for those making a presentation at the invitation of the Council.

XXII

(a) There shall be the following standing committees consisting of three (3) Aldermen or Alderwomen, each to be appointed by majority vote of the Council. The standing committees shall consist of:

- (1) Public Works and Capital Improvements Committee
- (2) Public Safety Committee
- (3) Appointment & Reappointments Committee

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(b) If a vacancy due to death, resignation, disability or disqualification shall occur in the office of any Aldermen or Alderwomen or of the Mayor, which vacancy requires a special election pursuant to Chapter V section 1(c) of the Charter of the City of Norwich to elect an alderman or alderwoman or Mayor, as appropriate, to serve for the unexpired portion of the term, the prior appointments to and makeup of the three (3) standing committees shall terminate as of the date of the special election, and the Council of the City of Norwich, within thirty (30) days of the special election, by resolution, shall make new appointments to the three (3) standing committees of the Council replacing and/or reappointing aldermen or alderwomen, and the Council of the City of Norwich may also fill by resolution the position of any alderman or alderwoman on city boards, commissions, or agencies which position has been rendered unfilled by the vacancy.

(c) This amendment to the Rules of Procedure of the Council of the City of Norwich and the requirements thereof shall apply retroactively and prospectively.

XXIII

All resolutions and ordinances submitted to the Council for action shall be in writing and shall contain therein the name of the Council member sponsoring same or the name of the City Manager, if sponsored by him or her, and appropriate substantiating information. In zoning matters, a map shall be provided.

XXIV

The Council may amend any of the foregoing Rules of Procedure by a majority four (4) votes of the Council.

For the purpose of facilitating business at Council meetings, such as the introduction, consideration and action on matters, changing the order of business and giving permission to members of the public to be heard, the foregoing Rules of Procedure may be suspended by the affirmative vote of at least four (4) members of the Council, except that the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the Council present and voting shall be required for the introduction of a resolution or ordinance.

XXV

A motion or resolution to reconsider prior action taken by the council, including votes on all motions, resolutions, and ordinances may be made on the same day on which the action is taken or at and before the adjournment of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Council of the City of Norwich. This section shall have prospective and retroactive effect as to the time in which a motion or resolution for reconsideration may be made but shall otherwise not amend the Rules of Procedure with respect to a motion or resolution for reconsideration.

History: Adopted 12/7/1999; Amended 1/18/2000, 12/4/2001 & 12/2/2003; Adopted; 12/8/2005; Amended & Adopted 12/17/2007; Amended & Adopted 12/6/2011; Amended & Adopted 12/3/2013; Adopted 12/1/2015; Amended & Adopted 1/3/2017; Amended & Adopted 12/5/2017; Amended & Adopted 12/3/2019; Amended 12/16/2019; Amended 12/7/2021; Amended 6/19/2023

(PUBLISHED BY THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE)