



# **NORTHFIELD BOARD/ COMMISSION RULES OF BUSINESS & MEETING RULES**

*Approved: April 4, 2023; Revised April 16, 2024*

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- A Rules of Order (Amended Minnesota Mayors Association document)
- B Rules of Decorum
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E City Council Policy 1.06 Proclamations and Resolution Policy

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F City Council Policy 1.07 Role of City Attorney Related to City Council and Board and Commission Members Policy

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G City Council Policy 1.08 Council Liaison and Ex-Officio Member Policy

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## **Meetings:**

Meetings of Boards and Commissions are where important business of the City is conducted and where recommendations for the City's future are made. The main objective of Boards and Commissions in the proper conduct of their meetings is to ensure their designated responsibilities and duties related to their public role is conducted in an efficient manner with full opportunity for Board and Commission Members to participate in and communicate their thoughts on agenda items before the Board and Commission. Board and Commission meetings are open to the public pursuant to the Minnesota Open Meeting Law, with only limited exceptions allowed by the Open Meeting Law.

This policy shall apply to all Advisory Boards and Commissions, with the exception to the Charter Commission and Hospital Board. Additionally, the following Boards and Commissions have existing bylaws which unique procedural provisions shall supersede this policy: Economic Development Authority, Environmental Quality Commission, Heritage Preservation Commission, Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Human Rights Commission, Planning Commission, Library Board, Park and Recreation Board, and the Northfield Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention.

The Board and Commission meeting schedule is approved annually by the Board and Commission and remains in effect until changed. Meeting schedules should be adopted by the Board/Commission by December of the preceding year. The majority of the Boards/Commissions meet at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Northfield City Hall, 801 Washington Street, Northfield as per the attached calendar. There may be exceptions to the time and place of Board/Commission meetings and this will be indicated on the calendar at [www.northfieldmn.gov](http://www.northfieldmn.gov). The Board/Commissions typically meet as follows:

- A majority of the meetings start at 6:00 pm;
- The meetings end by 7:30 pm unless a simple majority (4) of the Board/Commission votes to extend the time (exception: Planning Commission limit is 2.5 hours (8:30 pm) prior to motion to extend);
- A majority of the meetings are held in the Council Chambers of the Northfield City Hall, 801 Washington Street, Northfield;
- All Board/Commission meeting dates/times are posted on the calendar at [www.northfieldmn.gov](http://www.northfieldmn.gov).

On occasion a Board or Commission may call a special meeting or adjust the approved meeting schedule. All meetings, whether open to the public or closed, will be posted and noticed as required by the Minnesota Open Meeting Law.

The Rules of Order attached as Appendix "A" will be used as a simplified guideline for Board and Commission meetings. In the event that further guidance is needed, Robert's Rules of Order, most recent edition, will be used. (City Code, Sec. 2-58). The Boards and Commissions shall use these rules in a reasonable and flexible manner with the goal of ensuring that the will of the majority is fulfilled and the rights of the minority are protected.

Work sessions can be used by the Board/Commission to discuss various upcoming issues. Decision items are forwarded to regular Board and Commission meetings for consideration of approval. Work sessions are for discussion by the Board and Commission members and City staff. The Chair or Staff Liaison may arrange a presentation by an individual or group to the Board or Commission at a work session. There is no public comment at work sessions. Work Sessions should only be scheduled by the Staff Liaison with input from the Board/Commission Chair. Remote attendance by Board and Commission members is not permitted. With the City noticing meetings at least 3 days prior to the meeting and the requirement that members must provide the address of the remote location which must be accessible to the public, the Council decided remote attendance at board/commission meetings is not feasible at this time.

#### **Preparation of Board/Commission Meeting Agendas:**

The Staff Liaison, in consultation with the Board/Commission Chair, shall prepare the preliminary agenda for each Board/Commission meeting. An agenda may include a "proposed consent agenda." Board and Commission Members may request items listed on the consent agenda be moved to the regular agenda for discussion purposes. No formal vote is required for removal of an item from the consent agenda to the regular agenda. Advance notice of removal is requested to the Board Chair and Staff Liaison by noon on the day immediately prior to the meeting date. The requestor should state whether the item is being removed from consent for purposes of a separate vote only or for purposes of discussion and separate vote. The purpose of this advance notice if discussion is sought is to provide City staff sufficient time to prepare a presentation on the item and to allow City staff to prepare supplemental information and distribute the same where needed. If advance notice is not given, items must be requested to be removed during the approval of the agenda. The Chair determines placement of the removed item(s) on the regular agenda and will note placement prior to approval of the agenda.

As a general rule, items added to the agenda after 12:00 noon on the day prior will not be placed on the consent agenda. Limited exceptions may include routine items. These items are required to be distributed in a supplemental memo no later than noon on the day of the meeting and immediately before the meeting.

#### **Questions:**

If the Board or Commission Members would like a written answer from City Staff in response to their questions, questions should be submitted to staff by noon on the day immediately prior to the meeting date. City staff will try to respond to questions by 9 am on the day of the meeting if possible.

City Staff will also work to be prepared to answer questions submitted after the deadline or follow-up on questions at the meeting.

Supplemental memo(s) will be distributed no later than 12 noon on the day of the scheduled meeting. Supplemental memos will be posted on the Board or Commission materials page at

the same time they are distributed to the Board or Commission Members. Paper copies of Supplemental Memos and eComments, if applicable to the Board or Commission, will not be made for Board or Commission unless requested. Requests should be made to the Staff Liaison.

There are two ways a Board/Commission Member can request an item be placed on a future agenda:

1. Submit a request for consideration to the Chair and Staff Liaison ; or
2. Request by two or more Board/Commission Members that an item be placed on an upcoming agenda.

In either case, the Board/Commission Member's request for an item to be placed on a Board/Commission agenda should be in writing, with some background information provided, and submitted a minimum of 11 calendar days prior to the meeting.

**Meeting Agenda:**

The order of agenda items is as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call/Notification of Quorum
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes
5. Presentations
6. Consent agenda. The purpose of a consent agenda is to allow for routine motions, resolutions (if applicable), and ordinances (if applicable) to be passed with one motion when no discussion is needed. Board or Commission Members may ask questions for clarification of an item. If a Board or Commission Member wants to discuss an item, it should be removed from the consent agenda by advance notice by noon on the day immediately prior to the meeting date to the Chair and staff liaison, or without said prior notice, during the approval of the agenda.
  - o Consent agenda item titles will not be read during the meeting.
  - o Items are approved by one motion unless a Board or Commission Member requests separate action. All items approved by majority vote unless noted.
7. Open Public Comment. Persons may take one opportunity to address the Board or Commission for two (2) minutes (not including interpreter's time) on any topic, even if on the agenda, with the condition that they may not speak on the same item later in the meeting. No notification of the Chair is required. However, speakers are asked to complete a sign up card. Persons wanting a response to a question must submit the question in writing to the recording secretary. Questions must include name and information on how to contact. You may use the back side of the comment cards available in the meeting room. Persons cannot gift their 2 minute speaking time to other members of the public.

Questions will not be responded to during the comment period but will rather be

followed up by staff at a future time. Staff will determine appropriate responses based on whether there is a need for a formal data request, is a policy debate versus a question or simply a question that can be responded to.

For some Boards or Commissions, comments may also be made electronically, if applicable, until 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting through the eComment (electronic comment) system. The comments are available on the City's website as well as in paper form at the meeting for the public.

8. Public Hearings. 6:00 p.m. or at meeting start time as applicable or later (procedure listed below).
9. Regular agenda.
  - o Chair Intro/Staff Report
  - o Board/Commission Questions
  - o Public Comment (See procedural instructions below)
  - o Chair Requests Motion/2<sup>nd</sup> (If action item)
  - o Board/Commission Discussion
  - o Vote
10. Public Comment Procedural Instructions for Regular Agenda Items: Persons that wish to speak on a regular agenda item must provide name and address by completing & submitting a sign up card. For certain Boards or Commissions, persons may also use the electronic register to speak option on the City's website or contact the staff liaison no later than 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting. For certain boards/commissions, persons may also provide comments through the eComment (electronic comment) system no later than 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting. These comments are sent to the staff liaison when they are submitted through the eComment system. The comments are available on the City's website as well as in paper form at the meeting for the public. The Chair will call up individuals to speak, based on preregistration and cards submitted, after the staff report on an item.

Please be respectful of the public's and the board or commission's time. Members of the public wishing to speak must adhere to the following guidelines:

- o Speak only once for no more than two minutes (not including interpreter's time, if applicable) on the topic unless the speaker is addressed by the board or commission;
  - o Identify your relationship to the topic;
  - o Have a spokesperson or two for your group to present your comments;
  - o Persons wanting a response to a question must submit the question in writing to the staff liaison, including name and how you would like to be contacted. You may use the back side of the comment cards available in the meeting room.
  - o Questions will not be responded to during the comment period.
  - o Persons cannot gift their 2 minute speaking time to other members of the public.
11. Staff updates
  12. Board member and Commissioner reports  
The Board members and Commissioners provide updates on board/commission meetings, public comments received, and other items

pertinent to board/commission business.

13. Adjourn.

**Board/Commission Packets:**

Packets are available electronically at least 3 days prior to the meeting at [www.northfieldmn.gov](http://www.northfieldmn.gov).

Supplemental memo information will be available on the City’s website as soon as it is distributed to the Board or Commission.

Any supplemental packet materials received and shared with the Board or Commission at the meeting will be available in paper form at the meeting. Supplemental materials will be posted on the City’s website within 48 hours after the meeting.

**Public Hearing Procedure:**

A Public Hearing is used by certain Boards/Commissions to solicit the public's comments on various projects or issues as authorized for the board or commission by their enabling authority provided in charter, state law, city code or City Council enabling resolution.

- A. The Chair will open the hearing by identifying the subject.
- B. Staff Presentation- staff will give a presentation on the subject.
- C. Applicant's Presentation- if needed.
- D. Public Input- The public will have the opportunity to speak for or against the issue. The public may ask questions, make comments, voice support, agree or disagree with the issue.
  - 1. The Chair will recognize a speaker at the podium and comments/conversation will be between the Chair and speaker; and between the Chair and Board/Commission Members.
  - 2. At the podium the speaker must give their name, address, and if representing a business, must give the name of the business or corporation. If an Attorney or consultant is representing a client, the client must be identified for the record.
  - 3. Speakers will be allowed to speak a maximum of two (2) minutes per item (not including interpreter’s time, if applicable).
  - 4. Speakers who have material to be handed out to the Board/Commission Members will pass the material to the Staff Liaison. The Staff Liaison will then pass the information to the appropriate people. A minimum of twelve (12) copies are needed.
  - 5. Persons cannot gift their 2 minute speaking time to other members of the public.
- E. Questions or Clarifications from Board/Commission – After the public input of the public hearing is completed, the Board/Commission may request questions or clarifications prior to closing the public hearing. This section will be used when there are questions related to the topic on which the public hearing is being held. Questions should be succinct and avoid being rhetorical or leading in nature. Subsequent actions of the Board/Commission provide for opportunities for further questions or clarifications from the Board/Commission.

- F. Any material to be entered into the record shall be noted. Any written communication presented to the Board/Commission during a meeting shall be simply delivered to the Board/Commission and not publically read at the meeting. They shall then be recorded in the minutes by title and filed with the minutes in the office of the Board/Commission liaison.
- G. Motion to Close Hearing- The Chair will state if there is an extension of time for public input into the hearing. If not, the Board/Commission will make a motion, second, and vote on closing the public hearing. Following the public hearing, the Board/Commission members shall deliberate and vote on the matter.

**Board/Commission Recognition of Citizens/Groups/Events**

Recognition of Citizens/Groups/Events will follow Policy 1.06 Proclamations and Resolution Policy (Appendix E).

~~Proclamations will be in the form of a resolution, acted on by motion with majority approval and submitted to the City Council as a recommendation for consideration and approval.~~

~~Individual Boards/Commissions should not initiating and approving proclamations on their own.~~

**Citizen Participation:**

Board/Commissions invite the public to express their views and comments on issues with the Board/Commission agenda items through the following ways:

- Open public comment at Board and Commission meetings
- eComment through the City’s website on agenda items, if applicable for Board/Commission
- Meetings of various Boards or Commissions
- Phone calls, e-mails, letters and/or visits with Board and Commission Members or City Staff.
- Public comment via electronic video/audio as provided during a health pandemic or other public emergency in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 13D.021, as applicable.

**Mic Etiquette for Board/Commission Members and Citizen Participation**

- Mute your microphone when you are not speaking. This is to help keep the background noise to a minimum.
- Be mindful of background noise. Also, be mindful during the meeting if someone else is talking and their microphone is muted, alert them that they are muted and ask them to unmute themselves.
- Position your microphone in a comfortable position (6-12 inches away from your mouth) and remember to speak towards the microphone when speaking.
- When speaking into the microphone, speak at a normal volume.

**AV Protocol for Breaks**

When the Board/Commission calls for a break Meeting Associate will do the following:

- Mute all microphones during the break.
- Unmute Chair's microphone in preparation for calling meeting back to order.

### **Capacity of Council Chambers**

The Council Chambers will be set up not to exceed the legal occupancy as set by the Building Official. The room set up will take into account all current Minnesota Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines in place. If needed, additional conference room space will be available for seating showing the live stream of the meeting for the public to view.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of a board/commission are not a transcription of the proceedings of the meeting, but capture the actions taken during a meeting. The City of Northfield has a data practices policy that requires permanent retention of all recorded public meetings as of January 1, 2023 that are made that can serve as additional reference of the full board/commission meeting.

Minutes will include:

- a) Time and place of the meeting
- b) Members present
- c) Summary of all decisions made
- d) Who moved and seconded each item
- e) Who voted for and against each item
- f) Names of all persons other than members who spoke at the meeting, and subject on which they spoke

Board/Commission meetings which are informal in nature e.g. strategic planning sessions, retreats, special topic discussion, etc., are not generally recorded. However, minutes including a summary of meeting purpose/items discussed, Board/Commission attendance, time, date, and location will be kept and filed with the Staff Liaison.

### **Live Stream/Recording**

Regular meetings, work sessions, and special Board/Commission meetings are intended to be live streamed as practical and recorded, if held at City Hall in the Council Chambers. Off-site meetings are not recorded, however may be on an as-needed staff basis.

### **Role of the City Attorney related to Boards/Commissions.**

[Board/Commission members should follow Policy 1.07 Role of the City Attorney Related to City Council and Board and Commission Members Policy \(Appendix F\).](#)

~~Staff Liaisons will make direct contact with the City Attorney on matters that need to be reviewed or when an opinion is requested from the City Attorney when authorized by City Administration. Contracts, Resolutions, Ordinances and other items will be reviewed by the City Attorney as requested by City Administration. Individual Board/Commission members will not contact the City Attorney directly.~~

### **Role of Staff Liaison related to Board/Commission members**

A city staff member(s) will be assigned by the City Administrator to assist boards and commissions with their work as a staff liaison. Board/Commission Members may not direct the tasks of the Staff Liaisons but can request assistance to complete initiatives. The duties of the staff liaison include, but are not limited to:

- Setting the meeting agenda with input from the Chair.
- Preparing for meetings by reserving meeting rooms, setting up meeting rooms as needed, and coordinating with Communication/IT regarding A/V needs.
- Advising board and commission officers and members of proper parliamentary procedures.
- Recording and preparing meeting minutes (or delegate the responsibility to another city staff member).
- Editing meeting videos, if applicable (or delegating the responsibility to another city staff member).
- Providing technical expertise and/or ensuring other staff members are brought in when needed.
- Preparing staff reports/background memos for agenda items.
- Drafting resolutions and ordinances and ensuring review and approval by the city attorney.
- Present staff reports at meetings and provide background information for other agenda items.
- Serving as a bridge between the City Council and the Board/Commission by communicating information and directives.
- Responding to board or commission inquiries or constituent concerns in a timely manner or forward on as necessary.
- Providing orientation material to newly appointed members.

Board/Commission staff liaisons shall cause notice of meetings, agendas, minutes and related materials to be posted on the City's website and preserved according to City procedures.

Questions related to Board/Commission agenda items (either e-mail or via telephone) should be directed to the staff liaison.

### **Seating Assignments**

Board/Commission seating shall be determined as follows:

- The Chair of the Board/Commission should be seated in the center of the dias. The Chair and staff liaison will determine the remainder of the seating chart. This arrangement will remain throughout the year. Only voting members, including youth voting members, are seated at the dias. All other non-voting members should be seated on the staff side of the dias as room allows.

### **Boards/Commissions – Council Liaisons or Ex-Officio Members**

Council Liaisons and Ex-Officio Members should follow Policy 1.08 Council Liaison and Ex-Officio Member Policy (Appendix G).

~~Where discussions are being held with an organization, board or commission to which a City Council Member has been appointed as the City liaison or ex-officio, the City Council Member will be kept informed of these discussions. Unless otherwise provided by charter, state law, city code or City Council enabling resolution, as applicable, the Council liaison attends the meeting to facilitate a close working relationship, but is not a formal member of the board/commission. However, an ex-officio City Councilor shall be a non-voting fully participating member unless otherwise provided by the appointment to a board or commission pursuant to the governing charter, state law, city code or City Council enabling resolution, as applicable.~~

### **Governing Law**

Boards and Commissions shall operate and exercise their respective duties in accordance with Northfield Code, Chapter 2 – Administration, Article VI. – Boards and Commissions, Division 1 and their governing authority as contained in charter, state law, city code or City Council enabling resolution, as applicable.

### **Updates to Rules**

These rules will be reviewed periodically by the City Council and may only be updated by the City Council.