



# **NORTHFIELD CITY COUNCIL RULES OF BUSINESS & MEETING RULES**

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Updated:

DRAFT

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### Appendices:

- A Rules of Order for Councils (Amended Minnesota Mayors Association document)
- B Rules of Decorum for Councils
- C ~~Frequently Used Motions Table~~
- D Citizen Guide

## City Council Meetings:

Meetings of the City Council are where the business of the City is conducted and vital decisions for the City's future are made. The main objective of the Council in the proper conduct of its meetings is to ensure the public's business is conducted in an efficient manner with full opportunity for Council members to communicate their thoughts on the agenda items before the Council. City Council meetings are typically open to the public pursuant to the Minnesota Open Meeting Law.

The City Council meeting schedule is approved annually by resolution and remains in effect until changed. The Northfield City Council typically meets as follows:

- The first and third Tuesday of each month in regular session;
- The second Tuesday of the month in a work session;
- The meetings start at 6:00 pm;
- The meetings end by 9:00 pm unless a simple majority (4) of the City Council votes to extend the time;
- Meetings are held in the Council Chambers of the Northfield City Hall, 801 Washington Street, Northfield;
- On occasion the City Council will call a special meeting or adjust the approved meeting schedule; and
- All meetings, whether open to the public or closed, will be posted and noticed as required by the Minnesota Open Meeting Law.

Per City Charter Section 3.8, the Mayor shall:

- Be the presiding officer of the Council;
- Have a vote as a member of the Council;
- Act as chief spokesperson for the Council;
- Exercise leadership of the Council in the formulation of policy.

The Council shall choose a Mayor Pro Tem, who shall serve as Mayor in case of the mayor's absence or temporary disability. (Section 3.9)

The Rules of Order for City Councils attached as Appendix "A" will be used as a simplified guideline for City Council 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). It is the intent of the Council that these rules will be used in a flexible manner with the goal of ensuring that the will of the majority is fulfilled and the rights of the minority are protected.

The work session is used by the City Council to discuss various upcoming issues. Decision items are forwarded to regular City Council meetings for consideration of approval. Work

sessions are for discussion by the Mayor and City Council and City staff. The Mayor or City Administrator may arrange a presentation by an individual or group to the Council at a work session. There is no public comment at work sessions except through eComment (electronic comments).

Remote attendance by City eCouncil members for a meeting shall be in accordance with the requirements of the Minnesota Open Meeting Law. Remote attendance must be requested to the City Clerk -a minimum of six~~even~~ days in advance of the meeting to ~~accommodate~~ensure compliance with proper notice of the meeting the address of the remote location, which must be accessible to the public, as well as preparing for the electronic needs ~~for~~of remote attendance. Members must provide the Address of the remote location, a phone number where they can be contacted and ~~must be included as well as cell phone number for it to~~arrange for a time to ~~test~~ the connections with the IT Department at least 4 hours prior to the meeting.

#### **Preparation of City Council Meeting Agendas:**

The Administrator, in consultation with the Mayor, shall prepare the preliminary agenda for each Council meeting. Charter 3.7. An agenda is prepared with a "proposed consent agenda." City Council 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 Mayor, City Administrator, and City Clerk by noon on the Monday 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 ~~not~~advance notice is not given, items must be requested to be removed during the approval of the agenda. The Mayor determines placement of the to be removed item(s) on the regular agenda and will note placement prior to approval of the agenda. Advance notice provides staff time to prepare if a presentation or discussion is needed. In addition, supplemental information can be distributed prior to the meeting if needed.~~

Questions must be submitted to staff by noon on the Monday immediately prior to the meeting date. City Staff will try to respond to questions by 9 am on ~~Tuesday~~the day of the meeting if possible. Staff will also work to be prepared to answer questions submitted after the deadline or ~~followup~~follow-up on questions at the meeting.

Supplemental memo(s) will be distributed no later than 12 noon on ~~Tuesday~~the day of the scheduled meeting.

Supplemental and eComments paper copies will not be made for City Council unless requested. Requests should be made to the City Clerk.

There are two ways a Councilor can request an item be placed on a future Council agenda:

1. Submit a request for consideration to the Mayor or City Administrator. (Charter 3.7); or
2. Request by two or more Councilors that an item be placed on an upcoming Council agenda.

In either case, the Councilor's request for an item to be placed on a Council 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/Roll Call/Notification of Quorum
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes
4. Presentations
5. Consent agenda. The purpose of a consent agenda is to allow for routine motions, resolutions, and ordinances to be passed with one motion when no discussion is needed. Council Members may ask questions for clarification of an item. If a Council Member wants to discuss an item, it should be removed from the consent agenda by advance notice by noon on the Monday immediately prior to the meeting date to the Mayor, City Administrator, and City Clerk, or without said prior notice, during the approval of the agenda.
  - Reading of the consent agenda item titles.
  - Items are approved by one motion unless a Council member requests separate action. All items approved by majority vote unless noted.
  - Open Public Comment. Persons may take one opportunity to address the Council 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 Mayor 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.
  - 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. Questions will not be responded to during the comment period.

- Comments may also be made electronically until 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting through the eComment (electronic comment) system.
6. Public Hearings. 6:00 p.m. or later (procedure listed below).
  7. Regular agenda. Persons that wish to speak on a regular agenda item must provide name and address by completing & submitting a sign up card. Persons may also use the electronic register to speak option on the City's website or contact the City Clerk no later than 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting. Persons may also provide comments through the eComment (electronic comment) system no later than 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting. The Mayor 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 Council's time. Members of the public wishing to speak must adhere to the following guidelines:
    - Speak only once for no more than two minutes (not including interpreter's time) on the topic unless the speaker is addressed by the Council;
    - Identify your relationship to the topic;
    - Have a spokesperson or two for your group to present your comments;
    - Persons wanting a response to a question must submit the question in writing to the City Clerk, 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.**
    - Questions will not be responded to during the comment period.
    -
  8. City Administrator update
  9. Mayor & Council reports  
The Mayor and City Council provide updates on board/commission meetings, public comments received, and other items pertinent to City business.
  10. Adjourn.

**City Council Packets:**

Packets are available electronically no later than 12:00 Noon on the Friday prior to a City Council meeting.

Supplemental memo information will be available on the City's website as soon as it is distributed to Council.

Any supplemental packet materials received and shared with the Council 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 the City Council to solicit the public's comments on various projects or City operation procedures.

- 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 Council 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. CitizensSpeakers will be allowed to speak a maximum of two (2) minutes per item (not including interpreter's time).
  - 4. CitizensSpeakers who have material to be handed out to the City Council members will pass the material to the City Administrator. The City Administrator will then pass the information to the appropriate people. A minimum of twelve (12) copies are needed.
- ~~DE.~~ Questions ~~or~~ Clarifications from City Council — After the public input of the public hearing is completed, the City Council may request questions or clarifications prior to closing the public hearing. This section will be used when there are questions ~~of the presenter on the facts related to the topic~~ on which the public hearing is being held. Questions ~~of~~ should be succinct and avoid being rhetorical or leading in nature. Subsequent actions of the Council provide for opportunities for further questions or clarifications from the Council.
- E. Any material to be entered into the record shall be noted. Any written communication presented to the Council during a Council meeting shall be read into the record or summarized for the record or simply delivered to the Council, as the Council may determine. They shall then be recorded in the minutes by title and filed with the minutes in the office of the City Clerk.
- F. ~~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. Chair will recognize speaker at podium and conversation will be between Chair and speaker; and Chair and Council 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. Citizens will be allowed to speak a maximum of two (2) minutes per item (not including interpreter's time).~~
  - ~~4. Citizens who have material to be handed out to the City Council members will pass the material to the City Administrator. The City Administrator will then pass the information to the appropriate people. A minimum of twelve (12) copies are needed.~~
- G. Motion to Close Hearing- The Chair will state if there is an extension of time for public input into the hearing. If not, Council will make a motion, second, and vote on closing the public hearing.

#### **Assessment Hearing Procedures:**

Assessment Hearings are similar to the Public Hearing procedure except written notice of objection pertaining to assessments is required prior to adjournment of the public hearing.

#### **Council Recognition of Citizens/Groups/Events**

Proclamations will be in the form of a resolution and submitted to the council for consideration and approval.

Individual Council Members may recognize citizens or groups during the presentations portion of the Council agenda.

#### **Citizen Participation:**

The Northfield City Council invites the public to express their views and comments on issues with the City Council through the following ways:

- Open public comment at City Council meetings
- eComment through the City's website on agenda items
- Meetings of various Boards or Commissions
- Phone calls, e-mails, letters and/or visits with Council Members or City Staff.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of a public body are not a transcription of the proceedings of the meeting, but capture the actions taken during a 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

Council 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, Council attendance, time, date, and location will be kept and filed with the Council.

### **Live Stream/Recording**

Regular meetings, work sessions, and special Council meetings are live streamed and recorded, if held at City Hall in the Council Chambers.

### **Role of the City Attorney related to individual City Council Members.**

If an individual member has a question about a legal matter that the City Administrator or City staff is unable to respond to, a council member may contact the City Attorney and the City Attorney will attempt to answer it if the process will be estimated by the City Attorney will take an hour or less in a 30 day period. The answer to the question will be shared with the City Council and City Administrator who shall determine whether a memorandum from the City Attorney should be prepared on the subject matter of the question and submitted to the City Council, for purposes including but not limited to, protecting any attorney/client privileged communications and/or confidential or non-public data. If the matter will be estimated by the City Attorney to take more than an hour within a 30 day period, the City Attorney will need direction from the City Council as a whole or the City Administrator or another authorized staff member. The City Attorney is available to help but does not represent any individual member's opinion or decision; he/she represents the majority decisions of the City Council.

### **Role of City Administrator related to Council and employees**

The City Administrator coordinates activities of all City officials and supervises City department directors/managers, Charter 7.3. To assist the Administrator in these roles, the Mayor and City Council are asked to copy the City Administrator and City Clerk on all questions related to Council agenda items. Questions related to Council agenda items (either e-mail or via telephone) should be directed to the respective department manager staff members named on the report for the item and copied to the City Administrator and City Clerk. List of Department Managers are as follows: Public Works Director/City Engineer Dave Bennett, Finance Director Melanie Lammers, City Clerk Deb Little, Police Chief Monte Nelson, Community Planning & Development Director Chris Heineman, Communications and Human Resources Manager Michelle Mahowald, Library & IT Director Teresa Jensen.

### **Seating Assignments**

Mayor and Council seating shall be determined as follows:

- Council members shall occupy the chairs assigned to them by the presiding officer, but two council members may exchange seats by joining in a formal request to the presiding officer (Minnesota Mayors Handbook).

### **Boards/Commissions**

Where discussions are being held with an organization, board or commission to which a Council member has been appointed as the City liaison, the Council member will be kept informed of these discussions.

Insofar as practical, City boards and commissions shall be governed by these rules of procedure unless they adopt other rules of procedure which shall be approved by the Council.

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.

### **Suspension of Rules**

These rules may be suspended or amended at a meeting by a super majority vote (5 of 7) of all elected members.