



NORTHFIELD CITY COUNCIL RULES OF BUSINESS & MEETING RULES

*Approved: March 21, 2017; Revised: January 22,
2019. Revised: February 16, 2021; January 4, 2022; Revised February 7, 2023;
Revised April 4, 2023; Revised February 6, 2024; Revised May 7, 2024*

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City Council Meetings:

The “City Council” is composed of the Mayor and six City Council Members. 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 City 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 the City Council to communicate their thoughts on the agenda items before them. 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 (prior to the regular Council meeting) a Council Listening Session will occur from 6:00 pm to 6:20 pm in the Council Chambers. This session is for the purpose of addressing items not included on that week’s City Council agenda and as a more inclusive way to address the City Council. Individuals wishing to address the City Council may speak or make presentations in this less formal, resident-friendly meeting format. Each speaker will be allowed two minutes to speak. More time may be granted depending upon the number of speakers that have pre-registered for the particular meeting. These sessions will not be recorded. Residents should pre-register to speak by either calling or emailing the City Clerk (phone number: 507.645.3001 or email: lynette.peterson@northfieldmn.gov) stating their name, address, contact information and topic they would like to speak about (for specific rules refer to the Procedures for Council Listening Sessions (Appendix E). Comments may also be made electronically until 12:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting through the eComment (electronic comment) system. These comments are automatically sent to the City Council 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 first and third Tuesday of each month in regular session;
- The meetings start at 6:30 p.m;
- The meetings end by 9:00 pm unless a simple majority (4) of the City Council votes to extend the time;
- The second Tuesday of the month in a work session;
- The ~~meetings~~ work sessions start at 6:00 pm;
- The ~~meetings~~ work sessions 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 and work sessions, whether open to the public or closed, will be posted and noticed as required by the Minnesota Open Meeting Law.

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Per City Charter Section 3.8, the Mayor shall:

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

The City 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 City 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 City Council and City staff. There is no public comment at work sessions.

Remote attendance by the City Council for a meeting shall be in accordance with the requirements of the Minnesota Open Meeting Law including but not limited to Minnesota Statutes Sections 13D.021 and 13D.02. Remote attendance must be requested to the City Clerk a minimum of six days in advance of the meeting to ensure compliance with proper notice of the meeting as well as preparing for the electronic needs of remote attendance. For example, for a Tuesday Council Meeting, the Mayor or a Council Member would need to notify the City Clerk by the end of the business day on the Wednesday before the meeting. The City is required to post notice of meetings at least 3 days prior to the scheduled meeting. In calculating the number of days for providing notice, the first day the notice is given should not be counted, but the last day should be counted. The Mayor or a Council Member must provide the address of the remote location which must be accessible to the public, a phone number where they can be contacted, and arrange for a time to test the connections with the IT Department at least 4 hours prior to the meeting. The City's policy is to restrict remote attendance and is limited to up to two members unless it is not practical due to a health pandemic or emergency declared under chapter 12.

In the event of the City Council not meeting in person due to a health pandemic or other emergency there will be instructions made available related to public participation.

The City Council can appear and participate in a meeting remotely using "interactive technology," defined as "a device, software program, or other application that allows individuals in different physical locations to see and hear one another." Skype, Zoom, WebEx, GoToMeeting and similar programs with an audio and video connection satisfy this requirement.

The City Council must meet the following six requirements to meet using interactive technology:

- At least the Mayor or one Council Member is physically present at the regular meeting location;
- The City Council must be able to hear and see each other and all discussion and testimony presented at any location at which at least the Mayor or one Council member is present;
- All members of the public participating at the regular meeting location must be able to hear and see all discussion, testimony and votes of all of the City Council;
- All votes are conducted by roll call so the Mayor and City Council Member's vote can be identified and recorded; and
- Each location at which the Mayor or a City Council Member is present must be open and accessible to the public.
- The minutes for the meeting must reflect the names of the City Council appearing by interactive television technology and state the reason or reasons for the appearance by interactive television technology.

A meeting satisfies the requirements of open meeting law even though a member of the public body participates from a location that is not open to the public if the Mayor or

City Council Member has not participated more than three times in a calendar year from a location that is not open or accessible to the public, and:

- The Mayor or City Council Member is serving in the military and is at a required drill, deployed or on active duty; or
- The Mayor or City Council Member has been advised by a health care professional against being in a public place for personal or family medical reasons. This clause only applies when a statewide state of emergency has been declared under section 12.31, and expires 60 days after the removal of the state of emergency.

Preparation of City Council Meeting Agendas:

The Administrator, in consultation with the Mayor, shall prepare the preliminary agenda for each City Council meeting. (Charter 7.3 Subd.10). An agenda is prepared with a "proposed consent agenda." The Mayor or 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 advance notice is not given, items must be requested to be removed during the approval of the agenda. The Mayor 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 Monday 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 Monday immediately before the meeting.

Questions:

If the Mayor or City Council Member would like a written answer from staff in response to their questions, questions should 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 the day of the meeting if possible.

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 City's website at the same time they are distributed to the City Council. Paper copies of Supplemental Memos and eComments will not be made for City Council unless requested. Requests should be made to the City Clerk.

There are two ways a Mayor or City Council Member can request an item be placed on a future City Council agenda:

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

In either case, the request for an item to be placed on a City 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. Presentations
4. 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. The Mayor or City Council Members may ask questions for clarification of an item. If a Mayor or City 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.
 - o Consent agenda item titles will be posted on the screen and not read during the meeting. Items are approved by one motion unless a Mayor or City Council Member requests separate action. All items approved by majority vote unless noted.
 - o All Ordinances pertaining to City Charter amendments or additions will be included as part of the Regular agenda and a roll call vote will be taken on the amendments. Charter Amendments should not be placed on the Consent Agenda.
- ~~5. Open Public Comment. Persons may take one opportunity to address the City 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.~~
- ~~Remote Public Comment. Persons who have preregistered to attend virtually may take one opportunity to address the City Council for two (2) minutes on any topic, even if on the agenda, with the condition that they may not speak on the same item later in the meeting. (See Citizen Participation section for preregistration process.) The Mayor will call upon those preregistered participants after in person comments are complete. Persons should follow the Rules of Etiquette for Hybrid Meetings listed in Number 8. 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.~~

~~Comments may also be made electronically until 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting through the eComment (electronic comment) system. These comments are automatically sent to the City Council 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.~~

~~6.5~~ Public Hearings. 6:00~~30~~p.m. or later (procedure listed below).

~~7.6~~ Regular agenda.

- Mayor Introduction/Staff Report
- City Council Questions
- Public Comment (See procedural instructions below)
- Mayor Requests Motion/2nd (If action item)
- City Council Discussion
- Vote

Public Comment Procedural Instructions for Regular Agenda Items: Persons are able to speak on a regular agenda item unless the item relates to action that has been presented at a prior public hearing of the City Council, as those hearings are intended to collect input on a particular matter and in some cases forms the legal basis of the action that is considered for action by the City Council. 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 attending virtually may also speak and should follow the Rules of Etiquette for Hybrid Meetings listed below. 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 automatically sent to the City Council 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 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 City 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 City 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.
- Persons cannot gift their 2 minute speaking time to other members of the public.

The virtual option is for those who intend to speak and have preregistered to speak (not for just watching the meeting):

Rules of Etiquette for hybrid meetings:

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- Once you have joined the meeting, please identify yourself once in the meeting (type your name in window).
 - Camera must be off and audio must be muted unless speaking.
 - Once the Mayor has called upon you to speak, you may unmute and introduce yourself.
 - There is a two-minute limit for addressing the City Council.
 - Rules of business applies for decorum.
 - The City of Northfield reserves the right to mute any meeting participant.
 - The City of Northfield reserves the right to remove any meeting participant for not following Rules of Business.
 - The City of Northfield reserves the right to turn off any meeting participant's camera and/or audio if they are on while not addressing the Council.
 - Persons cannot gift their 2 minute speaking time to other members of the public.
8. City Administrator update
 9. Mayor & City Council Member reports
The Mayor and Council Members 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 the City Council.

Any supplemental packet materials received and shared with the City 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 Mayor 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 Mayor will recognize a speaker at the podium and comments/conversation will be between the Mayor and speaker; and between the Mayor 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. 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 City Council 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.
 5. Persons cannot gift their 2 minute speaking time to other members of the public.
- E. 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 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 City Council provide for opportunities for further questions or clarifications from the City Council.
- F. Any material to be entered into the record shall be noted. Any written communication presented to the City Council during a City Council meeting shall be read into the record or summarized for the record or simply delivered to the City Council, as the City 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.
- G. Motion to Close Hearing- The Mayor will state if there is an extension of time for public input into the hearing. If not, the City Council Members will make a motion, second, and vote of the City Council 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.

City Council Recognition of Citizens/Groups/Events

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

~~Proclamations will either be in the form of a resolution and submitted to the City Council for consideration and approval or as a Mayoral proclamation that will just be initiated by the Mayor with no Council approval. Proclamations that would have intent or impact of establishing policy of the City shall be considered by the City Council. Any Mayoral proclamation that is submitted through the Mayor's office will be included in the following Council agenda under Reports from the Mayor and Councilmembers.~~

~~The Mayor or individual City Council Members may recognize citizens or groups during the presentations portion of the City 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 the Mayor or City Council Members or City Staff.
- Public comment via electronic video/audio as provided for during hybrid City Council Meetings with interactive technology with prior registration. For this option, members of the public wishing to offer comments during a City Council meeting would be required to preregister by contacting the City Clerk’s office by noon the day of the meeting. The individual would be required to provide their name, address and phone number and/or email. Name and address are also required for anyone who currently requests to speak in advance of the meeting or fills out a card prior to or during the meeting. Phone number and/or email would be requested as a way to contact the individual prior to the meeting to provide the virtual link and in case of technical difficulties during the meeting.
- Public comment via electronic video/audio as provided during a health pandemic or other public emergency in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 13D.021 with prior registration. For this option, members of the public wishing to offer comments during a City Council meeting would be required to preregister by contacting the City Clerk’s office by noon the day of the meeting. The individual would be required to provide their name, address and phone number and/or email. Name and address are also required for anyone who currently requests to speak in advance of the meeting or fills out a card prior to or during the meeting. Phone number and/or email would be requested as a way to contact the individual prior to the meeting to provide the virtual link and in case of technical difficulties during the meeting.

Mic Etiquette for Council 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 City Council calls for a break AV will do the following:

- Mute all microphones during the break.
- Project a visual “Council is on Break” image on camera for those watching at home.
- Unmute Mayor’s microphone in preparation for calling meeting back to order.

Capacity of Council Chambers

The City 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 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

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

Live Stream/Recording

Regular meetings, work sessions, and special City Council meetings are live streamed 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.

The following board and commission meetings are recorded based on their duties and responsibilities pursuant to Charter, State law and City Code as applicable: Charter Commission, Economic Development Authority, Heritage Preservation Commission and Housing and Redevelopment Authority, and Planning Commission and Zoning Boards of Appeals. Other meetings of boards and commissions may be recorded.

Role of the City Attorney related to the Mayor or individual City Council Members.

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

~~If the Mayor or an individual member has a question about a legal matter that the City Administrator or City staff is unable to respond to, the Mayor or a City Council Member may contact the City Attorney and the City Attorney will attempt to answer it if the process as 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 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 matters~~

~~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 the Mayor or any individual Council Member's opinion or decision; rather the City Attorney represents the majority decisions of the City Council.~~

Role of City Administrator related to City 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 Council Members are asked to copy the City Administrator and City Clerk on all questions related to City Council agenda items. Questions related to City Council agenda items (either e-mail or via telephone) should be directed to the respective staff members named on the report for the item and copied to the Department Director, City Administrator and City Clerk.

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

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

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

~~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 City 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.