



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

**Approved:**

**TO BE COMPLETED WHEN FINALIZED**

**Table of Contents**

City Council Meetings  
Preparation of City Council Meeting Agendas  
Meeting Agenda  
City Council Packets  
Public Hearing Procedure  
Assessment Hearing Procedures  
Citizen Participation  
Minutes  
Live Stream/Recording  
Role of the City Attorney related to individual City Council Members.  
Role of City Administrator related to Council and employees  
Boards/Commissions  
Suspension of Rules

Appendix

A –Rules of Order for Councils (Amended Minnesota Mayors Association document)  
B\_– Rules of Decorum for Councils  
C – Frequently Used Motions Table – To be completed at a later date  
D – Citizen Guide – Draft copy attached

### **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 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 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).

### **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.

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 during the approval of the agenda.
  - o Reading of the consent agenda item titles.
  - o Items are approved by one motion unless a Council member requests separate action. All items approved by majority vote unless noted.
6. 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 comment card. Persons wanting a response to a question must submit the question in writing to the recording secretary. Questions must include name, address, e-mail and phone number. Comments may also be made electronically until 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting through the eComment (electronic comment) system.
7. Public Hearings – 6:00 p.m. or later (procedure listed below).
8. Regular agenda: Persons that wish to speak on a regular agenda item must register name and address with the City by completing & submitting a comment card before the start of the meeting. 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/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:

- Preregister to speak before the start of the meeting;
- 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, address, e-mail and phone number.

9. City Administrator update

10. Mayor & Council reports

The Mayor and City Council provide updates on board/commission meetings, public comments received, Mayoral Proclamations issued and other items pertinent to City business. Mayoral Proclamations may also be made under presentations.

11. Adjourn.

### **City Council Packets:**

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

Any supplemental packet materials received and shared with the Council 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. Questions of Clarifications from City Council - This section will be used when there are questions of the presenter on the facts on which the public hearing is being held. Questions of should be succinct and avoid being rhetorical or leading in nature.
- 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**

Mayoral Proclamations – may be made by the Mayor with no vote of the City Council. Reporting of these items will be included under Mayor & Council reports and can be included on the Mayor's page of the website page. Mayoral Proclamations may also be made under presentations.

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, the City Attorney will attempt to answer it if the process will take an hour or less. The answer to the question will be shared with the City Council and City Administrator. If the matter will take more than an hour, the Attorney will need direction from the 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 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:

##### **OPTIONS:**

- A. Mayor decides
- B. 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)

- |
- C. At large members are seated on either side of the Mayor, ward members fill in the remaining seats in order starting with Ward 1 in the seat next to the City Administrator and continuing around the dais (as suggested by Councilor DeLong).
  - D. Randomly determined weekly seating (as suggested by Councilor Nakasian).
  - E. Other ?

### **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.