

City Council Rules of Business

City Council Meetings:

Typically the City Council meets the first and third Tuesday of each month. If a Tuesday is a legal holiday, the meeting is held in combination with the next Tuesday's work session. The City Council meeting schedule is adopted annually. The meetings start at 7:00 p.m. and 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. All meetings will be posted and noticed as required. All regular City Council meetings end by 10:00 pm unless a 5/7 majority of the city council vote to extend the time.

The Mayor shall be the presiding officer of the council. The mayor shall have a vote as a member of the council. The mayor shall act as chief spokesperson for the council and shall exercise leadership of the council in the formulation of policy. City Charter 3.8.

The City Council will be guided by the parliamentary procedures of the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order. 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 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 and the public to communicate their thoughts on the agenda items before the Council.

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. The deadline for all items to be submitted is 12:00 noon on Wednesday one-week prior to the meeting. The agenda is finalized by the City Administrator and Mayor Tuesday afternoon. An agenda is prepared with a "proposed consent agenda" which is published in the Northfield News on the Saturday prior to the Tuesday meeting. Citizens requesting items for an agenda may contact their elected representative or city staff to have their request considered. City Council Members may request items listed on the consent agenda be removed for discussion purposes.

There are two ways a Councilor can request an item be placed on a future Council agenda: submit a request to the Mayor or City Administrator or 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 the motion to be considered and some background information.

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. Council reports
6. Consent agenda.
 - a. Reading of the consent agenda.
 - b. Public Comments on consent agenda items only. Persons commenting on consent agenda items may use this opportunity to speak. Speakers must identify themselves by providing their name and address and completing a comment card. Comments are limited to two (2) minutes.
 - c. Items are approved by one motion unless a Council member requests separate action. All items approved by majority vote unless noted.
 - d. Approval of consent agenda.
7. Open public comments - Persons may take one opportunity to address the council for two (2) minutes on any topic, even if on the agenda (not including interpreter's time), 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 and phone number.
8. Public Hearings – 7:10 p.m. or later (procedure listed below).
9. Regular agenda - Persons that wish to speak on a regular agenda item must register name and address with the recording secretary before the meeting or prior to the start of the regular agenda. The Mayor will ask for public input after the staff report on the 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 (interested citizens included);
 - Have a spokesperson or two for your group to present your comments.
10. City Administrator update
11. Adjourn.

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.

City Council Preparatory Packets:

The council agenda is finalized the Wednesday afternoon the week prior to the regularly scheduled City Council meeting. All information and reports to be included in the preparatory packet are due by 12:00 Noon Wednesday prior to the Tuesday council meeting. Preparatory packets are delivered to the City Councilors on Thursday prior to a City Council meeting. A complete City Council preparatory packet is also placed in the Council Chambers and at the Public Library on the Thursday prior to a City Council meeting for the public to review. Packet materials are posted on the City's web site www.ci.northfield.mn.us. A meeting notice list and agenda are posted on the bulletin board outside the Council Chambers located at City Hall. An agenda is published in the Saturday edition of the Northfield News.

Any supplemental packet materials received and shared with the Council prior to 12:00 noon on Monday, will be assembled and posted on the City's website. Any additional materials will be available in paper form at the meeting. Items received after 12:00 noon on Monday or distributed at the meeting, 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.
- 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 citizen 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). However, a citizen may speak more than once on a topic provided everyone has had an opportunity to speak and the person is recognized by the Chair.
 - 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, the public hearing will be adjourned.

Assessment Hearing Procedures:

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

Council Report and Discussion Items:

The Mayor and Council Members may provide comments on items of interest, public comments received.

Council Recognition of Citizens/Groups

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 microphone at City Council meetings
- * Meetings of various Boards or Commissions (i.e.: Park Board, DAB, HPC, HRA, EDA, etc.)
- * Phone calls, e-mails, letters and/or visits with Council Members or City Staff.

Record of the Council Meeting

In order for items to be considered part of the official record, formal action needs to be taken in the form of a motion, resolution or ordinance.

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. retreats, special topic discussion, etc., do not need to be recorded or have formal minutes, but a summary of meeting purpose, council attendance, time, date, and location will be filed with the Council.

Recording

Regular, work session, and special council meetings are live streamed, if held at City Hall, and recorded.

City Council Work Session:

The work session is used by the City Council to discuss various upcoming issues and to give direction to staff. Comment from the public and staff can be requested by the City Council as needed. Decision items are forwarded to the regular City Council meetings for formal approval. Work Sessions are generally scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month. 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.

Any councilor can make a request/recommendation to the mayor or city administrator concerning who to invite to the council table for discussion on work session agenda items. The Mayor will lead the work session discussions and determine which non-city resources to involve in the discussions.

Role of the city attorney related to individual city councilmembers.

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 procedure for contacts and communications between the Mayor and City Council and city employees will be coordinated through the City Administrator. If an elected official wishes to consult with a city director/employee on City business they will contact the City Administrator.

It is understood that there are often informal discussions between elected officials and employees that are not business related.

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.

Please watch for publications in the Northfield News or the City's Website for any changes in date and times of meetings and work sessions.

Please contact the City Administrator's Office if you need special accommodations related to a disability while attending the City Council meeting.