



# **RULES OF PROCEDURE**

# **NORWICH CITY COUNCIL**

2011-2013

**RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF**

**NORWICH, CONNECTICUT**

**I**

Whenever the Council shall meet for the transaction of business, the Mayor, or in his or her absence the Council President Pro Tempore, shall take the chair at the hour appointed for the meeting and immediately call the members to order; and on the appearance of a quorum, shall cause the journal of the preceding meeting to be read, unless by unanimous consent of the Aldermen or Alderwomen present, the reading shall be dispensed with. The Mayor shall, after waiting no longer than twenty minutes beyond the scheduled time of the meeting, adjourn said meeting if there is an absence of a quorum.

**II**

The presiding officer shall preserve order and decorum and shall decide questions of order, without debate, subject to an appeal to the Council. He or she shall rise to put a question, but may state it sitting. The question first moved and seconded shall be first put, and in all cases the sense of the members shall be taken upon the largest number or sum and the longest time proposed.

**III**

No member shall, in any way, interrupt the business of the Council while the journal or other papers are in reading, nor when any member is speaking in debate, nor while the presiding officer is putting a question.

**IV**

When a member is about to speak in debate or deliver any matter to the Council, he or she may rise when recognized and respectfully address himself or herself to the presiding officer.

**V**

No member shall speak more than twice upon the same question nor longer than five minutes at one time without leave of the Council, unless to explain.

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**VI**

When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received but to adjourn, to lay on the table for the previous question, to postpone to the next meeting, to commit or to amend which several motions shall have precedence in order in which they stand arranged. No motion to postpone indefinitely, or to the next meeting or to commit, being once decided shall be again allowed at the same sitting. Once decided, a motion to postpone indefinitely or to a date certain may not be brought before the Council unless requested by a majority four (4) of the members of said Council.

**VII**

A motion to adjourn shall always be in order and that motion, as well as the motion to lay on the table, shall be decided without debate.

**VIII**

On that motion to move the question, no debate shall be allowed; all incidental questions or order arising after the motion is made, and while it is pending, shall be decided without debate. The previous question shall be in this form: "Shall the main question now be moved?" It shall be admitted only when demanded by a majority of the members present and its effect shall be to put an end to all debate and bring the Council to a direct vote upon the pending amendments, if any, and then upon the main question.

**IX**

When a question comprehends two or more distinct propositions, any member may have them divided.

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**X**

When a motion has been made and seconded, it shall be stated by the presiding officer before any debate be had thereon, but every motion shall be reduced to writing if the Mayor or any member desires it.

**XI**

When a motion has been stated by the presiding officer or read by the Clerk, it shall be deemed to be in the possession of the Council, but may be withdrawn by the sponsor at any time before decision without leave of the Council, except that zoning matters may be so resubmitted only within 60 days of withdrawal and no more than once within the year. When a motion has been decided either in the affirmative or the negative, any member of the prevailing side may move the reconsideration thereof and such motion shall take precedence of all other motions, except a motion to adjourn.

**XII**

On procedural motions when the question is put by the presiding officer, the members shall signify their assent or dissent by answering aloud "yes" or "no"; the presiding officer shall determine, if he or she can, from the sound whether the yeses or nos are in the majority and declare the vote accordingly; but if he or she doubts or a doubt may be expressed by any member, the question shall be determined by the members rising and being counted.

**XIII**

Every member present when a question is put, shall vote, unless the Council for special reason, shall excuse him or her from voting. Upon completion of every roll call vote, the Mayor shall announce the names of those Aldermen or Alderwomen who voted in the affirmative and the names of those who voted in the negative or those who abstained.

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**XIV**

When the presiding officer is putting a question or addressing the Council, no member shall walk out of or across the Council Chamber, nor in either of such cases or in case a member is speaking, shall entertain private discourse with any person; nor while a member is speaking pass between him or her and the chair.

**XV**

If any member is speaking or otherwise transgress the rules of the Council, the presiding officer or any member may call him or her to order; and if speaking, the member so called to order shall take his or her seat unless permitted to explain. The Council, if appealed to, shall decide the case without debate. If no such appeal be taken, the decision of the chair shall be final.

**XVI**

Special committees of the Council shall be appointed by majority vote of the Council.

**XVII**

All matters referred to a committee at a regular or special meeting, shall be reported upon no later than at the next regular meeting unless in the vote, resolution or order making the reference, a different time is designated; but the time may, for sufficient cause, be extended by the Council.

**XVIII**

All final reports by any committee shall be submitted in writing.

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**XIX**

The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order, as amended, shall govern the Council in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Charter and Ordinances of the City of Norwich and the Rules of Procedure of the Council.

**XX**

At each meeting of the City Council, in an order set by the Mayor, the following items shall be taken up:

Adoption of minutes of previous meetings  
Proclamations and Special Observances  
Public hearings  
Second reading and action on ordinances previously presented  
Petitions and communications  
Reports of committees  
City Manager's report  
Unfinished business  
Citizen comment on agenda items  
New business (consent agenda)

**XXI**

Except as hereinafter provided, no matter requiring action by the Council shall be considered unless the document initiating the matter has been filed with the City Clerk on or before 4:30 PM on the Monday preceding the day of the regular meeting at which the matter is to be introduced; provided, however, that this rule shall not apply to the introduction and consideration of emergency ordinances.

The City Clerk shall on the Tuesday preceding such regular meeting, prepare an agenda for such meeting and shall transmit such agenda together with copies of the documents filed with him or her under this rule to the Council, City Manager and Corporation Counsel.

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Any person or group of persons, other than the Aldermen or Alderwomen, the City Manager and the Corporation Counsel, who files a document with the City Clerk as herein provided may explain such document at the council meeting at which the document is to be presented provided such person or group of persons, at the time of filing of such document, file with the City Clerk a notice stating the name or names of the person or persons who will appear at such meeting to explain such document. Not more than two persons may appear at such meeting to explain such document. Not more than two persons may appear for the affirmative and not more than two persons may appear in opposition. Such document and notice must be filed with the City Clerk in accordance with the first paragraph of this rule or the matter will not be heard until the next succeeding Council meeting.

Any person who wishes to address the City Council on a resolution or ordinance which appears on the council agenda for the specific meeting may do so, but any other requests to address the Council, other than in accordance with the preceding paragraph, shall be referred to the appropriate Council committee. No person shall speak longer than five minutes except for those making a presentation at the invitation of the Council.

**XXII**

There shall be the following standing committees consisting of three (3) Aldermen or Alderwomen, each to be appointed by the Mayor:

- (a) Public Works and Capital Improvements Committee
- (b) Public Safety Committee

**XXIII**

All resolutions and ordinances submitted to the Council for action shall be in writing and shall contain therein the name of the Council member sponsoring same or the name of the City Manager, if sponsored by him or her, and appropriate substantiating information. In zoning matters, a map shall be provided.

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**XXIV**

The Council may amend any of the foregoing Rules of Procedure by a majority four (4) votes of the Council.

For the purpose of facilitating business at Council meetings, such as the introduction, consideration and action on matters, changing the order of business and giving permission to members of the public to be heard, the foregoing Rules of Procedure may be suspended by the affirmative vote of at least four (4) members of the Council, except that the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the Council present and voting shall be required for the introduction of a resolution or ordinance.

Adopted December 7, 1999  
Amended January 18, 2000, December 4, 2001 & December 2, 2003, adopted December 6, 2005  
Amended & adopted December 17, 2007

*(PUBLISHED BY THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE)*