



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

*Approved: March 21, 2017; Revised: January 22,  
2019. Revised February 16, 2021*

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**Appendices:**

- A Rules of Order for City Councils (Amended Minnesota Mayors Association document)**
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## **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 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 City Council Members to communicate their thoughts on the agenda items before the City 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 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 Mayor and City Council and City staff. The Mayor or City Administrator may arrange a presentation by an individual or group to the City Council at a work session. There is no public comment at work sessions.

Remote attendance by City Council Members 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. Members 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.

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

The Administrator, in consultation with the Mayor, shall prepare the preliminary agenda for each City 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 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.

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 City Council 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 Councilor 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 Councilors that an item be placed on an upcoming City Council agenda.

In either case, the Councilor's 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. 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. City Council Members may ask questions for clarification of an item. If a 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 Reading of the consent agenda item titles.
  - o Items are approved by one motion unless a City 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 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.
  - o 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 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.

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 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. These comments are automatically sent to the 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.
9. City Administrator update
10. Mayor & Council reports  
The Mayor and Council provide updates on board/commission meetings, public comments received, and other items pertinent to City business.
11. 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 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 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. Speakers will be allowed to speak a maximum of two (2) minutes per item (not including interpreter's time).
  - 4. Speakers 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.
- 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 Chair will state if there is an extension of time for public input into the hearing. If not, the City 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.

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

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

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 City Council Members or City Staff.
- Public comment via electronic video/audio as provided during a health pandemic or other public emergency in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 13D.021.

### **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.

### **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 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 any individual member's opinion or decision; he/she 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 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 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**

Where discussions are being held with an organization, board or commission to which a City Council Member has been appointed as the City liaison or ex-officio, the City Council Member will be kept informed of these discussions. Unless otherwise provided by ordinance or other law, the 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.

## Rules of Order

### Preamble

- a. Purpose. The purpose of these rules is to foster debate and discussion in an orderly manner, not to suppress honest discussion with excessive formality. Without rules, confusion and disorderly proceedings would hamper all City action, no matter how well intended. Rules allow City business to be conducted as efficiently as possible, protect minority groups by giving every person a chance to be heard, prevent discussion of multiple topics at once, and allow decisions to be made by majority rule.
- b. Rights of the City Council. All City Council Members are equal and have the same rights to make motions; object to motions in a timely manner; participate in debate; have their votes counted; and speak, when recognized, free of interruption.
- c. Obligations of the City Council.
  1. The rights of individual City Council Members cannot be realized unless all City Council Members also recognize their obligations as members of the political body. City Council Members are obligated to receive the recognition of the chair before speaking, except as otherwise provided by these rules. No one has the right to speak at whim. City Council Members are obligated to speak directly on the subject being considered and observe time limits for comment. Finally, City Council Members are obligated to address all remarks to the presiding officer, avoid personal attacks, and refrain from using any insulting or demeaning language or indecent or threatening behavior.
  2. Inherent in the duties of holding public office is participation in City Council meetings and that includes voting. City Council Members have a general duty and obligation by virtue of holding public office to vote on business that comes before the body, unless a City Council Member has a disqualifying conflict of interest or other conflict of interest, which either requires abstention or for which the City Council Member desires to abstain, for example, in order to avoid the appearance of impropriety.
    - a. While a City Council Member has a duty to vote on matter before the body, a City Council Member cannot be compelled to vote on such a matter, and a City Council Member should not vote on a matter upon which the City Council Member has a disqualifying conflict of interest.
    - b. City Council Members who have a disqualifying interest are generally excluded when counting the number of votes needed to approve an action by a supermajority vote. Although City Council Members may be tempted to abstain from voting on a controversial matter, they should remember that the abstention will ultimately tend to pass or defeat the matter. The best advice is to avoid the kinds of problems that can arise from abstentions and vote, unless an abstention is required because a City Council Member has a personal interest in the matter.

- c. If any City Council Member, being present, chooses not to vote, the City Council Member shall verbally state "Present - Not Voting" and the minutes shall reflect this action.

**Rule 1. Motions.**

All formal actions of City Council must be by motion. A City Council Member may make only one motion at a time.

**Rule 2. Language for making a motion.**

The appropriate language for making a motion shall be substantially similar to "I move to \_\_\_\_\_."

**Rule 3. Procedure for consideration of a motion.**

A motion must be seconded. Once a motion has been made and seconded, the presiding officer shall restate the motion and (if applicable) open the motion up for debate, provided that the mayor determines that the motion is in order and no objections to the motion have been made pursuant to Rule 4. A motion is in order if it is made at a proper time in the proper format and does not violate any applicable rules of law, ordinance, or City policy, including City policies on decorum and civility, and is not made for the purpose of unduly delaying the proceedings. Debate shall follow the procedures in Rule 5. Once debate has concluded, the presiding officer shall restate the motion and call for a vote on the issue. A motion shall be considered passed if it receives a majority vote of those present at the meeting, unless otherwise required by law. A resolution or ordinance shall be considered passed if it receives a majority vote of all City Council Members (4), unless otherwise required by law.

**Rule 4. Objections to a motion.**

- a. Any member of the City Council may make an objection to a motion if he or she believes the motion is not in order. A motion is in order if it is made at a proper time, in the proper format and does not violate any applicable rules of law, ordinance, or City policy, including City policies on decorum and civility, and is not made for the purpose of unduly delaying the proceedings.
- b. An objection to a motion must be made immediately following the motion and at no other time. The objector does not need to be recognized by the presiding officer in order to voice their objection. The appropriate language for making an objection shall be substantially similar to "I object to the motion as being out of order, and call for a ruling by the presiding officer."
- c. A motion may be objected to as not being made at a proper time if the motion was made by a person not called upon by the presiding officer to speak, or if it does not follow the agreed upon agenda for the meeting.
- d. The presiding officer shall determine whether the motion is in order.
- e. In determining whether the motion is in order, the presiding officer shall let the objector to the motion speak once explaining his or her position. Next, the presiding officer shall let the

maker of the motion speak once to answer the concerns of the objector. Then the presiding officer shall make a formal ruling as to whether the motion was in order.

- f. If the motion is ruled out of order, the motion shall not be considered. If the motion is ruled in order, the presiding officer shall open the motion for debate (if applicable).
- g. The presiding officer's ruling may be appealed as provided in Rule 7.

**Rule 5. Debate.**

Generally only one motion may be considered at a time in debate. Once a motion has been made, the presiding officer shall restate the motion and open the motion for debate, if the motion is debatable. The presiding officer shall conduct the debate in accordance with the following:

- a. For initial comments, all comments shall be limited to five (5) minutes. For subsequent comments, all comments shall be limited to two (2) minutes.
- b. The maker of the motion shall be permitted to speak first on the issue.
- c. Everyone who wishes to speak on the issue must be permitted to speak once, before City Council Members who have already spoken are permitted to speak again.
- d. City Council Members shall avoid repeating points already made in the debate or other duplicative conduct that may delay the proceedings. Where a point has already been made, City Council Members may affirm agreement or disagreement.
- e. Generally only one motion may be considered at a time in debate. Debate may only be interrupted by a motion to:
  - 1. amend the original motion,
  - 2. take a brief recess,
  - 3. withdraw the motion by the motion's maker,
  - 4. divide a complex question,
  - 5. defer consideration to a later date,
  - 6. refer an issue to committee,
  - 7. motion for the previous question,
  - 8. limit debate,
  - 9. for a point of order.
  - 10. When debate is interrupted by any of these motions, the interrupting motion shall be resolved prior to resuming debate.

**Rule 6. Definitions of motions that may interrupt debate (secondary motions).**

As explained in Rule 5, only certain motions may interrupt debate on a motion. These are called secondary motions. When a secondary motion is made, the presiding officer must follow the same procedures in Rule 3 to consider the secondary motion. A secondary motion must be resolved, either by being ruled out of order by the presiding officer or debated and voted upon by the City Council, before debate on the main motion can resume. Secondary motions may also be made outside of debate, where appropriate. For example, a motion to take a brief recess can be made before, during, or after a debate.

- a. Motion to amend the original motion. The maker of the motion does not need to consent to a motion to amend. However, he or she may vote against the amendment or withdraw their motion via a motion to withdraw prior to any amendment being approved.
  1. Only two amendments may be made to an original motion to avoid confusion.
  2. The amendments should be voted on in reverse order, with the last amendment being voted upon first.
  3. To avoid confusion, complex language should be put in writing.
  4. A motion may not be amended so substantially as to essentially reject the original motion, though different language may be proposed so as to entirely substitute for the original language.

The appropriate language for making a motion to amend shall be substantially similar to “I move to amend the motion by inserting between . . . and . . .” or “I move to amend the motion by adding after . . .” or “I move to amend the motion by striking out . . .” or “I move to amend the motion by striking out . . . and inserting . . .” or “I move to amend by striking out the motion . . . and substituting the following.”

- b. Motion to take a brief recess is not a motion to adjourn or continue the meeting to another time or place. Instead, it is a motion to take a brief respite no greater than 20 minutes. If a motion to take a brief recess is granted, the presiding officer may set a time for the meeting to resume. In addition, the presiding officer is authorized to call for a brief recess on his or her own initiative, without a vote, to maintain order in the meeting.

The appropriate language for making a motion to recess shall be substantially similar to “I move to take a brief recess for \_\_\_\_ minutes.”

- c. Motion to withdraw a motion is not subject to debate, and it can only be made by the motion’s maker before a motion is amended.

The appropriate language for making a motion to withdraw shall be substantially similar to “I move to withdraw my motion.”

- d. Motion to divide a complex question may be used for complex items of business. It allows the City Council to break larger questions into smaller parts, which are considered separately.

The appropriate language for making a motion to divide a complex question shall be substantially similar to “I move to divide the question into \_\_\_\_ parts. Part 1 shall be \_\_\_\_.. Part 2 shall be \_\_\_\_.

- e. Motion to table or defer consideration to a later date is not subject to debate. It may be used to defer or delay consideration of a matter.

The appropriate language for making a motion to defer consideration shall be substantially similar to “I move to defer consideration of the main motion/this item until \_\_\_\_\_.”

- f. Motion to refer an issue to committee is not subject to debate. It may be used to refer an issue to a City committee, such as the park board or planning commission, for their report. The motion should contain an expected receipt day for the report.

The appropriate language for making a motion to refer an issue shall be substantially similar to “I move to refer the main motion/this issue to the \_\_\_\_ committee for its consideration and recommendation. The committee should report back to the City Council in \_\_\_\_ days/weeks.”

- g. Motion for call of the previous question is not subject to debate. It may be used only after all members of the City Council have been permitted to speak at least once on the motion. If approved by a super majority (5 of 7), a vote must be taken on the motion under debate immediately. Vote required –super majority (5 of 7).

The appropriate language for making a motion to call the previous question shall be substantially similar to “I move to call the previous question” or “I move for an immediate vote on this issue.”

- h. Motion to limit debate is not subject to debate. It may be used to establish time limits for debate.

The appropriate language for making a motion to limit debate shall be substantially similar to “I move to limit debate on this issue to \_\_\_ minutes per person” or “I move to limit City Council debate on this issue to no more than \_\_\_\_\_ minutes total.” Vote required –super majority (5 of 7).

- i. Motion for a point of order is not subject to debate. It may be used to signal to the presiding officer that the Council Member feels the proceedings have gotten disorderly.

The appropriate language for making a motion for a point of order shall be substantially similar to “I move for a point of order by the presiding officer.”

NOTE: Most secondary motions should not literally interrupt debate. They may not be made in the midst of the comments of a speaker duly recognized by the presiding officer, or silence the speaker’s speech. To make a secondary motion, the maker must be called upon and recognized by the presiding officer. There are two exceptions to this rule—a motion for a call of the previous question and a motion for a point of order. These motions may be made at any time—even in a manner that interrupts a speaker. However, these motions should be made only in the rare instance where a meeting has become out of control, strayed from the agenda, or become disorderly.

**Rule 7. Appealing procedural decisions of the presiding officer.**

- a. Any member of the City Council may appeal to the full City Council a ruling on order or procedure made by the presiding officer.
- b. Procedure for appeals. An appeal is made by motion. A second is needed for the motion. The member making the motion may speak once solely on the question involved, and the

presiding officer may speak once solely to explain his or her ruling, but no other City Council Member may participate in the discussion. Note: This procedure matches City Code Sec. 2-58(c).

- c. Once both the maker of the motion and the presiding officer have spoken, the matter must be voted upon by the City Council as a whole.
- d. The appeal shall be sustained if it is approved by a majority of the members present, exclusive of the presiding officer.

**Rule 8. Other special motions explained.**

- a. Motion to adjourn is not subject to debate. It may be used to suggest a conclusion to the meeting. The presiding officer may adjourn a meeting on his or her own initiative, without a vote, if necessary to maintain order.

The appropriate language for making a motion to adjourn shall be substantially similar to “I move to adjourn the meeting.”

- b. Motion to go into closed session may be used to close the meeting pursuant to the Minnesota Open Meeting Law. When the motion is made, the basis for closing the meeting and the applicable law must be stated into the record. The presiding officer may also close the meeting on his or her own initiative, without a City Council vote, if closing the meeting is mandatory under the law or if directed by the City Attorney.

The appropriate language for making a motion to go into closed session shall be substantially similar to “I move to close the meeting in order to consider \_\_\_\_\_ pursuant to \_\_\_\_\_ of the Minnesota Open Meeting Law.”

- c. Motion to leave a closed session may be used to conclude a closed session and return to an open meeting.

The appropriate language for making a motion to leave a closed session shall be substantially similar to “I move to open the meeting.”

- d. Motion to revive consideration of an issue may be used to request consideration of an issue previously tabled, deferred, or referred to committee at any prior meeting.

The appropriate language for making a motion to revive shall be substantially similar to “I move to revive consideration of \_\_\_\_\_ previously tabled/deferred/referred to committee.”

- e. Motion to reconsider may be made only at the same meeting where the issue was originally considered and voted upon. It may be made only by a person on the prevailing side of an issue. In the event of a tie vote, those voting against the issue shall be considered the prevailing side.

The appropriate language for making a motion to reconsider shall be substantially similar to “I move to reconsider \_\_\_\_\_.”

- f. Motion to rescind or repeal may be made at any meeting following the meeting where the issue was originally considered and voted upon. It may be made by any City Council Member, whether or not he or she was on the prevailing side. It may not be made when prevented by law or where substantial reliance on the City Council's previous decision has occurred (for example, in the area of contracts or hiring/termination of employees).

The appropriate language for making a motion to reconsider shall be substantially similar to "I move to rescind/repeal the City Council's previous action related to \_\_\_\_ as stated in resolution number \_\_\_\_."

- g. Motion to prevent reintroduction of an issue for \_\_\_\_ months is not subject to debate. It may be used to limit discussion of an issue that has been raised and/or moved for reconsideration several previous times.

The appropriate language for making a motion to prevent reintroduction shall be substantially similar to "I move to prevent reintroduction of this issue for \_\_\_\_ months."

- h. Motion to suspend the rules or to consider a motion informally should be used sparingly on issues likely to be uncontroversial. Complex motions and resolutions should still be put in writing. This motion may permit informal discussion of an issue (such as a roundtable discussion, brainstorming session, visioning session, etc.) where appropriate.

The appropriate language for making a motion to proceed informally shall be substantially similar to "I move that we suspend the rules and proceed informally in discussing the issue of \_\_\_\_." Vote required –super majority (5 of 7).

#### **Rule 9. Robert's Rules.**

These model rules are designed specifically for Minnesota City Councils. Further, these rules were drafted to be an appropriate level of regulation and formality for smaller governing bodies typically seen in Minnesota cities. Robert's Rules of Order will be used in the event that further guidance is needed. Where a situation arises that is not addressed by these rules, the intent of these rules, as expressed in the preamble, should be effectuated by the presiding officer, in consultation with the City Attorney.





## Rules of Decorum

City Council meetings are for the primary purpose of considering City Council action on matters pertaining to City business, public interest, the operation of the City, and the provision of City services. City Council meetings on important community issues may at times become contentious. Establishing rules of decorum to govern the conduct of all persons attending and/or participating in such meetings is in the public interest and helps to ensure orderly and respectful meetings as well as the safety of attendees and participants. On occasion, however, members of the City Council, public and/or staff may not follow the rules. On these occasions, the mayor's role as the meeting's presiding officer is particularly important. The mayor, as presiding officer, and any presiding officer of a meeting, shall be responsible for maintaining order and decorum of such meetings. All councilmembers, as well as members of committees, boards and commissions, as applicable, shall assist the presiding officer in preserving order and decorum at meetings and in providing for the efficient and orderly operation of meetings. The following rules of decorum shall apply to all persons attending and/or participating in a meeting, unless otherwise expressly noted. The following rules of decorum shall also apply to all persons attending and/or participating in a meeting of any City Council committee, and/or board or commission established by the City.

1. City Council meetings shall be conducted in a courteous manner that recognizes the validity of differing points of view and promotes the ideal of democratic discussion and debate free of insult, slander, and personal attacks and threats.
2. Participants shall conduct themselves at City Council meetings in a manner consistent with the following:
  - a. No person shall engage in conduct which delays or interrupts the proceedings.
  - b. No person shall hinder honest, respectful discussion and debate.
  - c. No City Council member shall engage in private conversation or pass private messages while in the chamber in a manner so as to interrupt the proceedings of the City Council.
  - d. In keeping with the intent of the Minnesota Open Meeting Law, the City Council shall not use any form of electronic communications technology, such as sending or receiving text messages or e-mail, to communicate with one another or third parties about the business of the meeting during a public meeting.
  - e. No person shall leave his or her seat or make any noise of disturbance while a vote is being taken and until the result of the vote is announced.
  - f. No person shall use profane or obscene words or unparliamentary language or use language that threatens harm or violence toward another person during a City Council meeting.
  - g. No person shall use dismissive body language (i.e. eye rolling, gestures, turning back to speaker, etc.)
  - h. No person shall speak on any subject other than the subject in debate.

- i. No person shall ask rhetorical or leading questions during City Council question period. Questions of clarification should be succinct.
- j. No person shall speak without being recognized by the chair; nor shall any person interrupt the speech of another person, except where permitted to raise a point of order.
- k. No person shall disobey the City Council Rules of Order and Procedure or a decision of the presiding officer on questions of order or practice or upon the interpretation of the rules of council.
- l. No person shall engage in disorderly conduct that interferes with the effective orderly conduct of any meeting by failing to comply with these rules of decorum or otherwise disrupting or impeding the meeting, where the interference is solely caused by the conduct of the person and not the content of the person's expression. Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, audible demonstrations of approval or disapproval; cheering or shouting; vulgar, profane, threatening, obscene, abusive, or disruptive conduct or unprotected speech; whistling, clapping, or stamping of feet; or, holding, displaying, or placing banners, signs, objects, or other materials in any way that endangers the safety of others, prevents the free flow of individuals within the meeting room or the ingress or egress from the meeting room or any emergency exits thereto, or otherwise obstructs or prevents the viewing of the meeting by other persons in attendance.
- m. All cell phones and other electronic devices shall be silenced during meetings.
- n. Persons should be addressed by use of title and/or last name.

### **Enforcing decorum:**

When a person, attendee or participant violate the above rules of order and decorum, the presiding officer is authorized to take any one or more of the following actions:

- Not recognize a violating or breaching person's, attendee's or participant's request to speak, or limiting their role in debate or comment, as applicable, until decorum is observed.
- Declare the person's, attendee's or participant's actions out of order.
- Temporarily recess the meeting until order is restored.
- Issue the person, attendee or participant a verbal warning and/or directive that the person, attendee or participant is out of order and shall follow the rules of order and decorum, be silent unless recognized to speak and/or immediately cease such conduct.
- If after issuance of a verbal warning as provided above, the person, attendee or participant continues to engage in prohibited conduct or otherwise fails to comply with the presiding officer's warning, the presiding officer may further direct or order the person, attendee or participant to immediately leave the meeting.
- If the person, attendee or participant so ordered as provided above does not immediately abide by the presiding officer's order or directive by leaving the meeting, and/or the person, attendee or participant continues such prohibited conduct, the presiding officer may direct any law enforcement officer to remove the person from the meeting

Members of the council may request action by the presiding officer to curb another member's conduct through a motion for a point of order. The motion may request a specific response to conduct by the

presiding officer. For example, “I make a motion for the presiding officer to call Councilmember \_\_\_\_ to order and to desist from making personal attacks.” Any member of the Council may appeal to the full council a ruling on order or procedure made by the presiding officer. The procedure is noted in Rule 7 of the Council Rules of Order.

Members may make a motion for adjournment or for a brief recess, if a participant’s actions are so offensive as to disrupt the orderly process of the meeting.

Generally any councilmember (including the mayor), may make a motion to censure a City Council member for conduct that breaches decorum. A censure often takes the form of a resolution adopted by City Council vote noting the member’s conduct and expressing disapproval of such conduct.

State law and City Code also prohibits persons, including City Council members, from disturbing public meetings, through fighting or threatening words and conduct. Persons or City Council members who engage in this unlawful conduct may be charged with a misdemeanor.

These rules of decorum shall be posted in the City Council Chambers.



## Public Participation Guide

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

- Public comment times 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 City Council and/or City Staff.
- Public comment via electronic video/audio as provided during a health pandemic or other public emergency in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 13D.021.

### **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 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 the City Council. City Council meetings are open to the public pursuant to the Minnesota Open Meeting Law. While City Council meetings are open to the public, opportunities for the public to participate in meetings are limited as provided in the publicly noticed meeting agenda as outlined in summary below.

The City Council has also adopted Rules of Decorum (copy attached) for City Council Meetings. The rules of decorum apply to all persons attending and/or participating in a meeting unless expressly noted. When persons, attendees and/or participants violate the adopted rules of order and decorum, the presiding officer is authorized to:

- Not recognize a violating or breaching person's, attendee's or participant's request to speak, as applicable, until decorum is observed.
- Declare the person's, attendee's or participant's actions out of order.
- Temporarily recess the meeting until order is restored.
- Issue the person, attendee or participant a verbal warning and/or directive that the person, attendee or participant is out of order and shall follow the rules of order and decorum, be silent unless recognized to speak and/or immediately cease such conduct.
- If after issuance of a verbal warning as provided above, the person, attendee or participant continues to engage in prohibited conduct or otherwise fails to comply with the presiding

officer's warning, the presiding officer may further direct or order the person, attendee or participant to immediately leave the meeting.

- If the person, attendee or participant so ordered as provided above does not immediately abide by the presiding officer's order or directive by leaving the meeting, and/or the person, attendee or participant continues such prohibited conduct, the presiding officer may direct any law enforcement officer to remove the person from the meeting.

The City Council meets:

- The first and third Tuesday of each month in regular session;
- The second Tuesday of the month in a work session;
- 6:00 – 9:00 pm;
- Council Chambers of the Northfield City Hall, 801 Washington Street, Northfield;

Citizens requesting items for an agenda may contact their elected representative or city staff to have their request considered.

The use of cameras, video, and other recording devices, is permitted during City Council meetings. However, these devices must be used in an unobtrusive manner that does not disrupt or delay the meeting. Cell phones and other devices must be silenced during meetings.

### **City Council Meeting Agendas/Opportunities to Speak at a Meeting:**

The typical 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**

**6. 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.

- o 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 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.

**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 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. These comments are automatically sent to the 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.

**9. City Administrator update**

**10. Mayor & Council reports**

**11. Adjourn.**

**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. Speakers will be allowed to speak a maximum of two (2) minutes per item (not including interpreter's time).
  4. Speakers 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.
- 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.
- 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 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.

**Documents/Recordings**

A complete City Council packet is typically available at City Hall and on the City's website [www.ci.northfield.mn.us](http://www.ci.northfield.mn.us) by noon on the Friday prior to a City Council meeting for the public to review. A complete paper packet is also placed in the Council Chambers prior to a City Council meeting for the public to review. A meeting notice list and agenda are posted on the bulletin board outside the Council Chambers located at City Hall.

Regular meetings, work sessions, and special City Council meetings are live streamed and recorded, if held at City Hall in the Council Chambers. Recordings, official records, and documents are available on the City's website [www.ci.northfield.mn.us](http://www.ci.northfield.mn.us).

**City Council Work Session:**

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 City Council at a work session. There is no public comment at work sessions.

**Please watch for publications on the City's Website ([www.ci.northfield.mn.us](http://www.ci.northfield.mn.us)) for any changes in date and times of meetings and work sessions.**

**Please contact the City Administration Office if you need special accommodations related to a disability while attending the City Council meeting.**

## Rules of Business Timelines Chart

<b>Item</b>	<b>Deadline*</b>
Request to add item to an upcoming agenda	11 calendar days prior to meeting
Remote Attendance Notification	6 days prior to meeting
Removal of Items from Consent Agenda**	Monday 12:00 Noon
Council Question Deadline for written responses	Monday 12:00 Noon
Supplemental Memo(s) Distributed***	Tuesday 12:00 Noon
Meeting packets available electronically	Friday prior to meeting by 12:00 Noon
eComment Closes	Tuesday 12:00 Noon
Information handed out at meetings uploaded to website	48 hours following meeting

\*No later than

\*\*If advance notice is not given, items must be removed during agenda approval.

\*\*\* Supplemental Memo information will be posted on the website following distribution to Council.