

# Guidelines for Productive Decision-making Meetings

1. Adopt a process that all agree on and follow it; make sure it is built on respect of all and contributions of all.
2. Evaluate meetings after a few to see if it is working and then adjust as needed
3. Create clear agendas with a purpose or goal for each item
4. Make sure all parties are fully informed prior to meeting with all materials needed to make decisions
5. Allot enough time for each item but make sure that time is followed
6. Limit those who hijack and derail discussions. Encourage self-monitoring and use a time-keeper if needed.
7. Encourage speaking one at a time and limit interruptions
8. Agree to be respectful and define it for your group
8. Affirm all ideas by all participants as important to getting to a good decision or having an important discussion
9. Summarize final decisions and next steps on each item
10. Determine an acceptable Consequence for those in the meeting who choose to continually violate the above guidelines.

1-5-2-5: - Presiding Officer.<sup>[5]</sup>

- A. The presiding officer of the City Council shall be the Mayor, who shall be elected by the members of the Council at the first meeting following each general Municipal election.
- B. The presiding officer shall preserve strict order and decorum at all regular and special meetings of the Council. The Mayor shall state every question coming before the Council, announce the decision of the Council on all subjects, and decide all questions of order, subject, however, to an appeal of the Council, in which event a majority vote of the Council present and voting shall govern and conclusively determine such questions of order. The Mayor shall vote on all questions, his/her name being called last. The Mayor shall sign all ordinances adopted by the Council during his/her presence.
- C. At the said first meeting following each general election, the Council shall elect a Mayor Pro Tem who shall act as Mayor during the absence of the Mayor. In the event of the absence of the Mayor, the Mayor Pro Tem, as presiding officer, shall sign ordinances as then adopted. In the event of the absence of both the Mayor and the Mayor Pro Tem, the presiding officer selected pursuant to the provisions of Section 1-5-2-7B of this chapter, shall sign ordinances as then adopted.

(Code 1985, § 1-5-2-5)

## Footnotes:

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City Charter Article III §§ 24, 25.

## 1-5-2-8: - Rules of Debate.

- A. *Presiding Officer.* The Mayor or such other member of the Council as may be presiding, may move, second and debate from the chair, subject only to such limitations of debate as are by these rules imposed on all members, and shall not be deprived of any of the rights and privileges of a Councilman by reason of his acting as the presiding officer.
- B. *Getting the Floor.* Every member desiring to speak shall address the chair, and upon recognition by the presiding officer, shall confine himself to the question under debate, avoiding all personalities and indecorous language.
- C. *Interruptions.* A member, once recognized, shall not be interrupted when speaking unless it be to call him to order, or as herein otherwise provided. If a member, while speaking, be called to order, he shall cease speaking until the question of order be determined and if in order, he shall be permitted to proceed.
- D. *Privilege of Closing Debate.* The Councilman moving the adoption of an ordinance or resolution shall have the privilege of closing the debate.
- E. *Motion to Reconsider.* A motion to reconsider any action taken by the Council may be made at any time, subject only to the following limitations. Passage of an ordinance may be reconsidered at any time prior to the time such ordinance becomes effective. Any action of the Council having as its ultimate purpose the vesting of any contractual or quasi-contractual right may be reconsidered at any time before the actual vesting of such right. A motion to reconsider must be made by one of the prevailing side, but may be seconded by any member, and may be made at any time and have precedence over all other motions or while a member has the floor; it shall be debatable. Nothing herein shall be construed to prevent any member of the Council from making or remaking the same or any other motion at a subsequent meeting of the Council.

- F. *Remarks Entered in Minutes.* A Councilman may request, through the presiding officer, the privilege of having an abstract of his statement on any subject under consideration by the Council entered in the minutes. If the Council consents thereto, such statement shall be entered in the minutes.
- G. *Synopsis of Debate.* The Clerk may be directed by the presiding officer, with the consent of the Council, to enter in the minutes a synopsis of the discussion on any question coming regularly before the Council.
- H. *Rules of Order.* Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the procedure of the meeting in all cases where applicable and where not inconsistent with the Charter or the rules and procedures herein fixed by the Council or other provisions of this Code.

(Code 1985, § 1-5-2-8)

1-5-2-10: - Decorum.

While the Council is in session, the members must preserve order and decorum, and a member shall neither, by conversation or otherwise, delay or interrupt the proceedings or the peace of the Council nor disturb any member while speaking or refuse to obey the orders of the Council or its presiding officer.

(Code 1985, § 1-5-2-10)