

**CITY COUNCIL POLICY  
CITY OF NATIONAL CITY**

**TITLE:** Rules of Procedure and Order for City Council Meetings

**POLICY #104**

**ADOPTED:** December 13, 1983

**AMENDED:** ~~October 5, 2021~~  
August 15, 2023

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## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to establish Rules of Procedure and Order for City officials, staff and members of the public at all meetings of the City Council to ensure that the business of the City is attended to in an open and orderly manner and in an environment safe for all persons in attendance. The policy establishes and delineates general meeting rules, roles and responsibilities, to allow for an orderly meeting where all individuals can exercise their Constitutional rights.

All meetings of the City Council will be conducted under Rosenberg's Rules of Order. In addition, such meetings will be governed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act (Gov. Code § 54950, hereinafter "the Brown Act") and other applicable State laws. Any question about proper procedure will be immediately referred to the City Clerk as parliamentarian.

This policy applies to all persons attending public meetings in the City Council Chamber or any other location where a meeting subject to this policy takes place. In the event of any inconsistency between this policy and State law or regulation, State law or regulation shall apply.

## II. RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important to recognize that the City Council acts as a legislative body. No member has extraordinary powers beyond those of other members. While the Mayor and Vice-Mayor may have additional ceremonial and administrative responsibilities, in the establishment of policies, voting and in other significant areas, all members are equal. Policy is established and direction is given to City staff by a majority vote of the Council.

While individual Councilmembers may disagree with decisions of the majority, a decision of the majority binds the Council to a course of action and provides staff with direction to follow. In turn, it is staff's responsibility to ensure the policy of the Council is implemented and upheld consistent with the wishes of the majority. Implementation of Council policy by staff does not reflect a bias against Councilmembers who held a minority opinion on an issue.

- A. Responsibilities of Presiding Officer/Mayor: The Presiding Officer of the City Council, shall be the Mayor, or in the Mayor's absence the Vice-Mayor, or in both of their absence any other member designated by the City Council. It shall be the duty of the Presiding Officer to ensure that the Rules of Procedure and Order contained herein are observed, The Presiding Officer shall maintain control of communication between Councilmembers and between the Council, staff, and members of the public. The Presiding Officer may make and second motions.

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- B. Responsibilities of Vice-Mayor: In the absence of the Mayor from the City or a Council meeting, the Vice-Mayor shall possess all the powers of the office of the Mayor, and be subject to all prescribed duties for that office.
- C. Responsibilities of City Council:
1. Members of the City Council shall review all meeting materials in preparation for City Council meetings and be prepared to discuss the agenda.
  2. Members of the City Council shall arrive on time for all City Council meetings, in the City Council Chamber or any other location where a meeting subject to this policy takes place. In the event of any inconsistency between this policy and State law or regulation, State law or regulation shall apply.
  3. Members of the City Council shall conduct themselves in an orderly, professional and businesslike manner to ensure that the business of the City shall be attended to efficiently and thoroughly and to ensure that the integrity of the deliberative process of the City Council is maintained at all times.
  4. Members of the City Council shall maintain a polite, respectful, and courteous manner when addressing one another, City staff, and members of the public during City Council meetings.
  5. As a courtesy, members of the City Council shall report upcoming absences to the City Manager as soon as possible to ensure that any necessary adjustments to the agenda may be made, and to ensure a quorum.
- D. Responsibilities of City Clerk:
1. The City Clerk shall serve as the Parliamentarian for the City Council meetings to advise the Presiding Officer. Within the limitations imposed by Rosenberg's Rules of Order, the Presiding Officer has the authority to determine proper parliamentary procedure.
  2. The City Clerk shall call and record roll call votes; and shall read ordinance titles and agenda items as requested by the Presiding Officer.
  3. The City Clerk shall keep minutes of the open meeting in accordance with City Council Policy No. 106, and permanent retention of video recordings of those proceedings as the archived record. Any written comment received for the meeting will be made available on the City website within 48 hours of the meeting.

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All retention per the City Records Retention Schedule.

E. Responsibilities of City Manager:

1. The City Manager's duties during City Council meetings include keeping a record of concerns raised by the City Council regarding direction for future staff action and facilitating the orderly presentation of staff reports.

F. Responsibilities of City Attorney:

1. The City Attorney's duties during City Council meetings include consulting with City Council on items of concern on the agenda, to proactively inform and protect Councilmembers from potential violations and conflicts of law, and to report on any final action taken in closed session.

### III. MEETINGS

- A. Regular Meeting: The City Council shall hold regular meetings on the first and third Tuesday of each month. The meetings shall be held in the Council Chamber of City Hall, 1243 National City Boulevard in the City of National City. The regular meeting shall begin at 6:00 p.m., or as otherwise scheduled due to the demand of business or for closed session.
- B. Adjourned Meeting: The City Council may adjourn any regular, adjourned regular, special, or adjourned special meeting to a time and place specified in the order of adjournment. If a quorum is not present, less than a quorum may so adjourn.
- C. Special Meeting: A special meeting may be called at any time by the Mayor whenever the public business may require it or upon direction by a majority of the City Council. The call and notice shall be posted at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the special meeting in a location that is accessible to members of the public.
- D. Emergency Meeting: Pursuant to the Government Code, the twenty-four (24) hour notice and posting requirements for a special meeting may be dispensed with under the following emergency conditions: work stoppage, crippling activity, or other activity that severely impairs public health, safety, or both, as determined by a majority of the members of the legislative body, except in the case of a dire emergency.

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- E. Recessed Meeting: Pursuant to the Government Code, a meeting of the City Council may recess to the following regular business day if the action is taken in good faith and not to circumvent the requirements of the Brown Act. The meeting may not be recessed to another day after that unless it is posted in accordance with the Brown Act.
- F. Closed Session Meeting: The City Council may hold closed sessions during a regular or special meeting, or at any time otherwise authorized by law, to consider or hear any matter which is authorized to be heard or considered in closed session in accordance with State law. If a closed session is included on the agenda, the description of the item must comply with Government Code Section 54954.5. For each closed session, the City Attorney must orally announce the subject matter of the closed session. If final action is taken in closed session, the City Attorney must report the action at the conclusion of the closed session, unless agendaized for that same Closed Session Meeting or list on the agenda for the Regular Meeting immediately following.

No minutes of the proceedings of the City Council during closed session are required. There shall be no closed session during any special emergency meeting. No person present in a closed session shall disclose, outside of the closed session, any information revealed in such closed session, without the prior authorization of a majority of the City Council. Any violation of this policy may be enforced by one or more of the actions delineated in City Council Policy No. 113.

- G. Quorum: A quorum at any meeting of the City Council will be established by the presence of three (3) members of the City Council. The Mayor shall count as a Councilmember for the establishment of a quorum.
- H. City Council Recess Periods: The City Council has traditionally observed a recess period during the summer to provide elected officials and staff an opportunity to catch up on work, reenergize after a lengthy budget and strategic planning process, and prepare for the start of a new fiscal year. For purposes of this policy, a recess period is defined as a period of time longer than twenty (20) days without a regular or special meeting of the Council.

During any recess period, the City Manager is authorized to take such ministerial action on matters of operational urgency as would normally be taken by the City Council during the recess except for those duties specifically reserved to the City Council by Government Code, and including such emergency actions as are necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety. The City Manager shall make a full and complete report to the City Council at its first regularly scheduled meeting following the recess of actions taken by the City Manager

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pursuant to this section, at which time the City Council may make such findings as may be required and confirm said actions of the City Manager.

- I. Cancellation of Meetings: Any meeting of the City Council may be cancelled in advance by a majority vote of the Council. In the event that the Mayor and/or Vice-Mayor are unable to cancel a meeting, in the case of an emergency the City Manager is authorized to cancel such meeting.
- J. Location of Meetings: Regular meetings of the City Council shall be held in the Council Chamber unless appropriate notice is given pursuant to, and the location of the meetings in accordance with, the Brown Act. The City Council may hold a special meeting at another location within the City, or locations outside the jurisdiction of the City, provided appropriate notice is given pursuant to and the location of the meeting is in accordance with the Brown Act.
- K. Holidays or Elections: In the event that the a regular meeting of the City Council is scheduled on the same day as a legal holiday, or an election day on which a National City candidate or National City measure appears on the ballot, no meeting will be held that week.. Any regular meeting may be dispensed with by a majority vote of the City Council.
- L. Adjournment: It is the policy of the City Council that that all evening meetings of the City Council, including special meetings and workshops, be adjourned no later than 10:30 p.m., which time is referred to as the normal time of adjournment. The meeting shall be extended no more than once and subsequently may be adjourned to a later date. No new item of business shall be taken up by the Council after the normal time unless the Council has determined by a super-majority vote to set aside this policy. In the event the entire agenda cannot be completed by the normal time of adjournment, the Council may take up and act upon the more pressing agenda items. All agenda items not considered at the meeting shall be on the agenda of the next regular, special, or adjourned regular meeting unless the Council directs otherwise.
- M. Taping or Broadcasting: Meetings may be broadcast, audio-recorded, video-recorded or live-streamed so long as the activity does not constitute a disruption of the proceeding.
- N. Teleconferencing: Teleconferencing shall be allowed as per Government Code section 54953. Teleconference meetings may be held under carefully-defined conditions. The meeting notice must specifically identify all teleconference locations, and each such location must be fully-accessible to members of the public.
- O. Agenda Exception: Special procedures permit a body to proceed without an agenda in



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the case of emergency circumstances, or where a need for immediate action came to the attention of the body after posting of the agenda. (Reference Section VIII, A.5 - Non-Agenda Items Requiring Immediate Action)

- P. Comfort Breaks: It is the policy of the City Council that the Presiding Officer will call comfort breaks of 5-10 minutes when a meeting is expected to last more than two hours. While it is not possible to predict the duration of a meeting, scheduled breaks allow participants to not miss any part of the meeting and help stay alert and maintain a high level of concentration and participation.
- Q. Use of Personal Electronic Devices: The use of personal electronic devices on the dais shall be limited to official agenda-related tasks and emergency notifications. If, in the opinion of the Presiding Officer, a Councilmember's use of an electronic device is disruptive to Council deliberations or disrespectful to the public, the Presiding Officer may request that the Councilmember cease the use of such device.
- R. Translation Services: Simultaneous Spanish interpreting services are provided at City Council meetings, through the use of headsets. A Spanish-language interpreter is also available to interpret and translate for speakers who wish to address the City Council. When the meetings are hosted as a webinar, a Spanish-language interpreter shall provide translation services for a minimum of two (2) hours. If, after providing translation services for two (2) hours, no member of the public is using those services, the translator may be dismissed by the Presiding Officer.
- S. Compliance with Brown Act: All regular, special, and adjourned meetings of the City Council shall be called, noticed and conducted in compliance with the Brown Act.

## IV. REMOTE ACCESS TO MEETINGS

- A. Internet Broadcast: Live-Streaming video of City Council meetings is available at [www.nationalcityca.gov](http://www.nationalcityca.gov). Archived meetings are also available online.
- B. E-Notification: Individuals may sign up via the City's website to receive email notifications of published City Council and Board, Commission, and Committee meeting agendas, City news, special events, and more.

## V. PUBLIC ASSISTANCE & ACCOMMODATIONS

Upon request, the City Council agenda and backup materials will be made available in alternative formats. Any person who requires a disability-related modification or accommodation to participate in the public meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, may

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request a modification, accommodation, aid, or service by contacting the City Clerk's Office either in person or by telephone no later than 10:00 a.m. on the day preceding the scheduled meeting.

## VI. PUBLIC MEETING COMMUNICATIONS

### A. Communications between City Councilmembers:

1. Councilmembers wishing to speak should request the floor by being recognized by the Presiding Officer before speaking. The Presiding Officer must recognize any Councilmember who seeks the floor when appropriately entitled to address the City Council.
2. No Councilmember shall speak again until all Councilmembers have had the opportunity to speak.
3. Councilmembers shall remember that the purpose of the City Council meeting is to conduct the business of the City. Councilmembers shall avoid repetition and shall limit their comments to the subject matter at hand. Councilmembers shall endeavor to express their views without engaging in unnecessarily lengthy debates.
4. When one Councilmember is speaking, other Councilmembers shall not interrupt, disrupt or disturb the speaker. During questions and deliberations, the Presiding Officer may vary the speaking sequence of Councilmembers from item to item.

B. Email Communications between City Councilmembers: Because email communications can ultimately lead to the exchange of information intended to, or which may, create collective concurrence among a quorum of Councilmembers, e-mail communications between Councilmembers relative to Council business should be avoided at all times.

C. Communications with Persons Addressing the City Council: Members of the public may address the City Council during the Public Comment period and/or prior to the consideration of any agenda item. Persons shall address the City Council as a whole and shall not engage in a dialogue with individual Councilmembers, staff, or with other members of the audience. Any person wishing to speak, whether during the Public Comment period or on an agenda item, is requested to complete a "Speaker Slip" form and submit the form to the City Clerk prior to the calling to order of the meeting or as soon thereafter as possible. Filling out a speaker slip is not required to participate.

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All those addressing the Council shall do so from the podium.

The City Council may not prohibit public criticism of the City in general, City staff, or members of the City Council, its policies, procedures, programs, or services of an agency or its acts or omissions. A speaker may not be stopped from speaking because either the Presiding Officer or Councilmembers disagree with the viewpoint being expressed.

1. Translation Services: Simultaneous Spanish interpreting services are provided at City Council meetings, through the use of headsets. A Spanish-language interpreter is also available to interpret and translate for speakers who wish to address the City Council. When the meetings are hosted as a webinar, a Spanish-language interpreter shall provide translation services for a minimum of two (2) hours. If, after providing translation services for two (2) hours, no member of the public is using those services, the translator may be dismissed by the Presiding Officer.
2. Public Comment (Non-agenda): At all regular City Council meetings, speakers shall have the right to address the City Council on any matter within the elected body's jurisdiction, subject to a three (3) minute time limit or less, depending on the number of speakers. The Council may listen to the speaker's comments, but cannot discuss or take action on communications not on the agenda. Non-agenda Public Comment may be referred to the City Manager for administrative action or placement on a subsequent agenda, with a majority vote of the Council.
  - a. At each regular Council meeting, up to 30 minutes shall be reserved for Public Comment.
  - b. The City Clerk will review the Speaker Slips and inform the Presiding Officer of the number of slips. If the number of speakers, at three (3) minutes each, exceeds the 30-minute allotted time for Public Comment, the Presiding Officer may reduce the time allotted to each speaker, extend Public Comment time, or continue remaining speakers to the end of the meeting.
  - c. Donations of time from one speaker to another are not permitted.
  - d. The Presiding Officer shall have the authority to reduce equally each speaker's time to accommodate a larger number of speakers.
  - e. Speaker Slips for Public Comment will be accepted by the City Clerk in the Council Chamber no earlier than 15 minutes before the meeting and up until

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the Public Comment portion of the agenda is finished.

- f. In order to ensure that non-English speakers receive the same opportunity to directly address the City Council, any member of the public who utilizes a translator shall be provided at least twice the allotted time to address the City Council, unless simultaneous translation equipment is used to allow the City Council to hear the translated public testimony simultaneously. (Government Code 54954.3)
  - g. Remarks shall be addressed to the City Council as a body.
  - h. If there is a group representing a common position, designation of a spokesperson is encouraged. The Presiding Officer may allot a mixed amount of time for presentations of this nature.
3. Public Comment (Agenda Items): Speakers shall have the right to address the City Council on items which appear on the agenda, subject to the 3-minute time limit.
- i. Donations of time from one speaker to another will not be permitted.
  - j. The Presiding Officer shall have the authority to reduce equally each speaker's time to accommodate a larger number of speakers, or to limit the total speakers' time on an agenda item.
  - k. Speaker Slips for agenda items will be accepted by the City Clerk in the Council Chamber no earlier than 15 minutes before the meeting and up until the public testimony on the item is finished. Included on the Speaker Slip shall be the option for individuals who do not wish to speak to register in support of, in opposition to, or neutral on the item. An individual must be present to register a position or opinion. The City Clerk will provide a tally of those who do not wish to speak on an item, but who do provide a position or opinion.
  - l. Remarks shall be addressed to the City Council as a body and not to any member of the City Council, staff or the public. No questions shall be asked of an individual member of the City Council, staff, or the public. The Presiding Officer may limit interaction between Councilmembers and public speakers to questions of clarification.
  - m. If there is a group representing a common position, designation of a spokesperson is encouraged. The Presiding Officer may allot a mixed amount
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4. Presentations to City Council: Any information presented to the City Council for its consideration in formats such as PowerPoint, Video, or other audio/visual media must be submitted to the City Clerk's Office no later than the Wednesday immediately prior to the City Council meeting in order to have the presentation facilitated for City Council viewing and broadcast. If presentations are submitted after that deadline, it will not be possible for them to be played or displayed during the meeting, although ten (10) hard copies may be submitted to the City Clerk for distribution to the City Council. Documents and presentations displayed during the City Council meeting shall become part of the public record and must be submitted to the City Clerk for retention. The City Clerk's Office will post any materials received at a City Council Meeting to the City website within 48 hours of the meeting.

## VII. AGENDA SEQUENCE AND ORDER OF BUSINESS

Generally, the agenda sequence and order of business of a regularly scheduled City Council meeting shall be determined by the City Manager's.

During the City Council Meeting the Order of Business shall be followed, unless otherwise reordered by the Presiding Officer with the consensus of the City Council during the City Council Meeting.

- A. Call to Order: The Presiding Officer officially calls the meeting to order.
  - B. Roll Call: Before the City Council shall proceed with the business of the Council, the City Clerk shall call the roll of the members and the names of those present shall be entered in the minutes. The later arrival of any absentee shall also be entered in the minutes.
  - C. Pledge of Allegiance: Each agenda of a regularly scheduled Council meeting shall provide an item for the recital of the "Pledge of Allegiance" to both the United States flag and the California flag.
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- D. Public Comments: Speakers shall have the right to address the City Council on any matter within the elected body's jurisdiction, subject to a 3-minute time limit or less, depending on the number of speakers. The City Council may listen to the speaker's comments, but cannot discuss or take action on communications not on the agenda. Non-agenda public comment may be referred to the City Manager for administrative action or placement on a subsequent agenda.
- E. Proclamations and Certificates: The agenda shall provide a time when proclamations directing attention to a person, organization or event may be presented. Proclamations will be issued subject to Section XIV, E - Proclamations.
- F. Awards and Recognitions: The agenda shall provide a time when recognitions may be presented.
- G. Presentations: The Presentations section of the agenda is for the purpose of allowing a brief (5 to 10 minutes each) opportunity at the beginning of a Council meeting for City Council to receive information from outside agencies or City staff. It is not meant for a topic that would require lengthy deliberation, debate, or action. Items may be placed on the Presentation section of the agenda at the request of the City Council or City staff with the City Manager's concurrence. Approval to place a presentation on the agenda that has been requested by a community member must be obtained through the City Manager's Office.
- H. Interviews and Appointments: The agenda shall provide a time for the City Council to interview and/or appoint members of the City Council or the public to City and/or external boards, commissions and committees.
- I. Regional Boards and Committee Reports: City Councilmembers report on meetings attended on behalf of the City. Councilmembers are limited to five-minutes.
- J. Consent Calendar: Items of a routine or generally uncontested nature may be approved by the City Council in a single motion by adoption of the Consent Calendar. The approval of the Consent Calendar shall signify the approval of each matter or recommendation included therein: Upon request of any Councilmember, staff, or public made through the Presiding Officer, an item may be removed from the Consent Calendar for separate discussion and/or action. Each item proposed for consideration as part of the Consent Calendar shall be described on the agenda posted for the meeting.
- K. Public Hearings: Ordinances & Resolutions: This portion of the meeting allows for a
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noticed public session to receive original evidence or testimony on applications regulated by this title. Scheduled public hearings shall be commenced at 6:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as possible. (Reference Section XI, Public Hearings)

- L. Non-Consent Resolutions: Items generally of a non-routine nature for City Council discussion and/or action.
- M. New Business: This portion of the meeting is devoted to discussion or consideration of items of business that have or have not previously been before the City Council.
- N. Staff Reports: This portion of the meeting provides the City Manager and staff the opportunity to give general comments, updates, and announcements.
- O. Mayor and City Council Reports: This portion of the meeting provides the City Council the opportunity to give general comments, announcements, or informational reports on any item not on the agenda. These matters may not be discussed or deliberated.
- P. Closed Session Report: At an Open Session following a Closed Session, the body must report on final action taken in Closed Session under specified circumstances.
- Q. Adjournment: It is the policy of the City Council that that all evening meetings of the City Council, including special meetings and workshops, be adjourned no later than 10:30 p.m., which time is referred to as the normal time of adjournment.

## VIII. AGENDA PROCESS

In order for both the City Council and City staff to be adequately prepared to discuss City business during City Council meetings, items for discussion shall be placed on the agenda in accordance with established City Council agenda deadlines and in compliance with the Brown Act. Generally, items not on the agenda cannot be discussed or considered during a City Council meeting. This section of the policy discusses how to place items onto the agenda, agenda setting, preparation and distribution.

### A. Preparation, Distribution and Posting

1. Agenda Items: In conjunction with City staff, the City Manager shall have the primary responsibility for preparing the City Council agenda and placing matters on the agenda in accordance with identified City needs and scheduling.

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- a. In the event an item is brought to the attention of the City Manager that requires immediate City Council attention after the agenda setting meeting and before the agenda is distributed, the City Manager will determine the need for the item to be added to the agenda.
2. **Agenda Review Meeting:** Prior to release and posting of a final City Council agenda, an agenda review meeting shall be held by the City Manager with the City Attorney and the Mayor, or another member of the City Council designated by the Mayor, to serve in their absence. The proposed agenda shall be reviewed at this meeting.
3. **Agenda Preparation:** Not later than the Thursday prior to the City Council meeting, the City Manager is responsible for preparing the agenda packet, which shall include the agenda plus all its corresponding duplicated agenda items. No item shall be considered if not included in the packet, except that a correction or supplement to an item already included in the packet may be considered in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act.
4. **Agenda Distribution and Posting:** Not later than the Thursday prior to the City Council meeting, the City Manager is responsible for distributing the agenda packet to each member of the City Council. Staff shall post each agenda at least 72-hours in advance of the meeting and shall post each agenda of a special meeting at least 24-hours in advance of the meeting on the official bulletin boards at City Hall and on the City's website.
5. **Non-Agenda Items Requiring Immediate Action:** Matters requiring City Council action must be placed onto a Council Agenda in a timely manner in order for Council to consider the matter. In accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act, off-agenda items requiring City Council approval will not be considered by the City Council except under the following two circumstances:
  - a. An emergency situation exists, as defined in the Government Code; or,
  - b. The City Council determines by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, or by a unanimous vote if less than two-thirds of the Council is present, that:
    - There is a need for immediate action, and
    - The need to take action on the item arose after the posting of the agenda.

If the City Council finds that the need to take action arose subsequent to the agenda posting, pursuant to the criteria above, it shall make those findings



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by separate motion, including the factual reasons supporting the findings. The findings shall be reflected in the City Council minutes.

## IX. VOTING

- A. Obtaining the Floor: Any Councilmember wishing to speak must first obtain the floor by being recognized by the Presiding Officer. The Presiding Officer must recognize any Councilmember who seeks the floor when appropriately entitled to do so.
- B. Voting Procedure: Any vote of the City Council, including a roll call vote, may be registered by the members by answering "Yes" or "Aye" for an affirmative vote, "Abstain" for an abstention, or "No" or "Nay" for a negative vote upon the member's name being called by the City Clerk; or an electronic vote may be registered by pressing the Councilmember button for an affirmative vote, an abstention, or a negative vote, upon a vote being called for by the Presiding Officer.

Following the vote, the City Clerk shall audibly announce the results of the vote by name indicating whether the item carried or was defeated. The same shall be recorded in the minutes as the vote. The Presiding Officer in his or her discretion may publicly explain the effect of a vote for the audience, or may direct a member of the staff to do so before proceeding to the next item of business.

- C. Disqualification for Conflict of Interest: Any Councilmember who is disqualified from voting on a particular matter by reason of a conflict of interest shall publicly state or have the Presiding Officer state, the nature of such disqualification in open meeting. Where no clearly disqualifying conflict of interest appears, the matter of disqualification may, at the request of the Councilmember affected, be decided by the other Councilmembers. A Councilmember who is disqualified by reason of a conflict of interest in any matter shall not remain in his or her seat during the debate and vote on such matter, but shall request and be given the permission by the Presiding Officer to step down from the Council dais. A Councilmember stating such disqualification shall not be counted as a part of a quorum and shall be considered absent for the purpose of determining the outcome of any vote on such matter.
- D. Failure to Vote: Every Councilmember should vote unless disqualified by reason of a conflict. The vote of a Councilmember who abstains absent a disqualifying conflict of interest shall be counted with the majority vote of the quorum on the question voted upon.
- E. Tie Vote: Any proposed measure that receives a tie vote from the members of the City

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Council shall be considered lost and may be reconsidered.

- F. Changing Vote: A Councilmember may change his or her vote only if the Councilmember makes a timely request to do so immediately following the announcement of the vote by the City Clerk and prior to the time that the next item in the order of business is taken up.
- G. Reconsideration: A motion to reconsider the vote on any action taken by the City Council at either this meeting or a previous meeting may be made only by one of the Councilmembers who voted with the prevailing side.
- H. Point of Order: An interruption of a meeting to question whether rules or bylaws are being broken, such as the speaker has strayed from the motion currently under consideration.
- I. Continuance of Discussion or Hearings: Any item being discussed or any public hearing at a City Council meeting may, by order, notice, or motion, be continued or tabled to any subsequent meeting.
- J. Rosenberg's Rules of Order: Rosenberg's Rules of Order have been adopted by the City Council and shall apply in all cases.
- K. Disclosure of Ex Parte Contacts: An "ex parte" contact or communication occurs when, prior to considering a matter on a public meeting agenda, a member or members of the City Council receives information, oral, written, or otherwise, pertaining to that matter outside the public meeting. (Reference City Council Policy No. 116-Procedure for Disclosure of Ex Parte Contacts)

## X. MOTIONS

Motions are the vehicles for decision making by a body. It is normally best to have a motion before the body prior to commencing discussion of an agenda item. There are three motions that are the most common and recur often at meetings:

1. The basic motion. The basic motion is the one that puts forward a decision for the body's consideration.
  2. The motion to amend. If a Councilmember wants to change a basic motion that is before the body, they would move to amend it.
  3. The substitute motion. If a Councilmember wants to completely do away with
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the basic motion that is before the body, and put a new motion before the body, they would move a substitute motion.

Motions may be made by any member of the City Council, including the Chair. Any member of the City Council may second a motion. (Reference *Rosenberg's Rules of Order* for a more detailed discussion on motions in general and sample motions.)

A. Procedure for Motions: The following is the general procedure for making motions:

1. The item is presented by staff or others followed by questions and discussion by Councilmembers.
2. A Councilmember who wishes to make a motion shall first obtain the floor.
3. A Councilmember who wishes to second a motion shall do so through a request to the Chair.
4. Before a motion can be discussed, it shall be seconded.
5. Once a motion has been properly made and seconded, the Chair shall open the matter for further discussion offering the first opportunity to the moving party and, thereafter, to any Councilmember properly recognized by the Presiding Officer.
6. Once the matter has been fully debated and the Presiding Officer calls for a vote, no further debate will be allowed, provided, however, any Councilmember may be allowed to explain his or her vote prior to the vote being cast.

B. Amendments to Motions: As previously discussed, when a motion is on the floor and an amendment is offered, the amendment shall be acted upon prior to acting on the main motion. No motion of a subject other than the agenda item under consideration shall be admitted as an amendment. A motion to amend an amendment shall be in order, but one to amend an amendment to an amendment shall not be in order. Action shall be taken on the amended amendment prior to any other action to further amend the original motion.

## XI. PUBLIC HEARINGS/ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS

A. Except as provided otherwise by law, public hearings shall generally be conducted as follows:

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1. Scheduled public hearings shall commence at 6:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as possible.
  2. Speakers are encouraged to complete a Speaker Request Slip; however, a Speaker Slip is not required in order to speak.
  3. At the beginning of each public hearing item, the Presiding Officer shall announce the item for the public hearing, request that staff present the staff report and any other relevant evidence, and open the public hearing. The presentation of the staff report prior to the formal opening of the public hearing shall not prevent its consideration as evidence. Any such evidence shall be made a part of the record of the public hearing.
  4. Following the staff report and opening of the public hearing, the Presiding Officer shall thereupon call upon the proponent (if other than staff) to present his or her presentation. Thereafter, the Presiding Officer shall inquire as to whether there are any persons present who desire to address the City Council on the matter. Any person desiring to speak or present evidence shall then make their presence known to the Presiding Officer and, upon being recognized by the Presiding Officer, may speak or present evidence relevant to the subject matter being heard.
  5. The applicant/appellant, and/or their representative shall speak first and shall have a sufficient amount of time to do so, any portion of which may be reserved and used for rebuttal.
  6. Each member of the public wishing to address the City Council, other than the applicant/appellant, shall then be allowed to address the City Council and shall have three (3) minutes to speak. Prior to declaring the public hearing open, however, when necessary because of the number of possible speakers, the Presiding Officer may establish a time limit for the entire public hearing, or establish time limits for the presentation of each individual speaker. All persons interested in the matter being heard by the City Council shall be entitled to submit written evidence or remarks, as well as other graphic evidence. All such evidence presented shall be retained by the City Clerk as part of the record.
  7. Councilmembers who wish to ask questions of the speakers, staff or each other, during the public hearing portion, may do so only after being recognized by the Presiding Officer in the manner set out in this policy.
  8. Councilmembers should be mindful that the purpose of the public hearing is to obtain testimony, and not to debate the merits of the item under consideration.
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Councilmembers should avoid debate and expressions of personal opinion until after the close of the public hearing.

9. Following the conclusion of such questions, the Presiding Officer shall allow the applicant/appellant the opportunity for rebuttal.
10. Following the rebuttal, the Presiding Officer shall close the public hearing and then allow each Councilmember to state his or her opinion on the item before asking for a motion to decide the matter.
11. Upon closing the public hearing by the Presiding Officer, no additional public testimony shall be solicited or received by the City Council without reopening the public hearing through the Presiding Officer with consensus of the City Council.
12. The Presiding Officer at all times shall conduct the public hearing in such a manner as to afford due process to all affected persons.

## XII. MEETING DECORUM & CONDUCT

Meetings of the City Council shall be conducted in an open and orderly manner and in an environment safe for all persons in attendance to ensure that the public has a full opportunity to be heard and that the deliberative process of the Council is retained at all times. The Presiding Officer shall be responsible for maintaining the order and decorum of meetings. This policy is not intended to deprive any person of his or her right to freedom of expression, but only to maintain, to the extent possible and reasonable, a safe and conducive place to conduct public business.

### A. Conduct:

1. Members of the audience shall not engage in disorderly or boisterous conduct, including the utterance of obscene, lewd, loud, threatening, repeatedly irrelevant or repetitious, or abusive language, including clapping, whistling, yelling, stamping of the feet, or other acts which disturb, disrupt, impede, or otherwise render the orderly conduct of the City Council meeting infeasible. A member of the audience engaging in any such conduct may, after warning by the Presiding Officer, at the discretion of the Presiding Officer or a majority of the City Council, be subject to removal from the meeting.
  2. Persons in the audience will refrain from creating, provoking, or participating in any type of disturbance involving unwelcome physical contact.
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3. Noise emanating from the lobby outside the Council Chambers which is audible within the Chambers shall not be permitted. The Sergeant-at-Arms is authorized to enforce this rule by requesting those in the lobby to remain silent or to leave the area.

## B. Authorized & Designated Areas:

1. No person shall stand or sit in the aisles. No person shall block any doorways or exits.
2. No person except City officials shall be permitted within the platform area in front of the City Council dais without the prior consent of the Presiding Officer or City Manager.

## C. Signs, Objects, or Symbolic Material:

1. Placards, signs, and posters may be brought into the Council Chambers unless such objects disturb, disrupt, impede or otherwise render the orderly conduct of the Council meeting infeasible, or block the view of any other person in attendance, in which case such placard, sign, or poster shall, at the discretion of the Presiding Officer or a majority of the Council, be moved to a different location or removed from the Chamber.
2. Packages, bundles, suitcases, or other large or potentially dangerous objects shall not, without the prior authorization of the Presiding Officer or City Manager, be brought into the City Council Chamber and are subject to search to determine that they do not pose a threat or as otherwise requested by the Sergeant-at-Arms.

D. Service Animals: Except as otherwise allowed by the City Council, no animals except for service animals shall be brought into the Council Chambers.

E. Photography/Videography: Photographs, audiotapes, and videotapes may be taken from the rear of the Council Chambers or from any seat within the Chambers, as long as such activity does not disrupt or disturb the audience, public speakers, Councilmembers or others on the dais, and interfere with the orderly conduct of the meeting. When a filming area has been designated by the Fire Marshal or Sergeant-at-Arms, filming shall occur in that area only. The Fire Marshal or Sergeant-at-Arms may designate an area for credentialed media only.

F. Cellular & Electronic Devices: Persons in the audience will refrain from using cellular

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phones and/or pagers while the City Council meeting is in session.

## XIII. ENFORCEMENT

- A. Sergeant-at-Arms: The Chief of Police or designee shall be the ex-officio Sergeant-at-Arms of the City Council. The Sergeant-of-Arms shall carry out all orders and instructions given by the Presiding Officer for the purpose of maintaining order and decorum in the Council Chambers. Any Councilmember may move to require the Presiding Officer to enforce the rules upon affirmative vote of a majority of the Council.
- B. Violations: Upon a violation of the Rules of Procedure and Order established herein, the procedure to enforce the rules are as follows:
1. **Warning**: The Presiding Officer shall first request that a person who is violating the rules cease such conduct. If, after receiving a request from the Presiding Officer, the person persists in violating the rules, the Presiding Officer shall order a recess. The Sergeant-at-Arms is authorized to warn the person that their conduct is violating the rules and that they are requested to cease such conduct. If upon resumption of the meeting the violation persists, the Presiding Officer may order another recess whereupon the Sergeant-at-Arms shall have the authority to order the person removed from the meeting and/or cited in violation of Penal Code Section 403.
  2. **Motion to Enforce**: Any Councilmember may call a Point of Order should the City Council fail to abide by the provisions of this policy, whereupon the City Council shall immediately act upon the Point of Order by roll call vote. If the Presiding Officer fails to enforce the Rules of Procedure and Order set forth herein, any member of the City Council may move to require the Presiding Officer to do so, and an affirmative vote of a majority of the City Council shall require the Presiding Officer to do so. If the Presiding Officer fails to carry out the will of the majority of the City Council, the majority may designate another member of the City Council to act as Presiding Officer for the remainder of the meeting, for the limited purpose of enforcing the rules established herein.
  3. **Clearing the Room**: Pursuant to Government Code section 54957.9, in the event that any meeting is willfully interrupted by a group of persons so as to render the orderly conduct of such meeting unfeasible and order cannot be restored by the removal of the individuals who are willfully interrupting the meeting, the Presiding

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Officer may order the room cleared and the meeting shall continue in session. Only matters appearing on the agenda may be considered in such a session. Credentialed representatives of the press or other news media, except those participating in the disturbance, shall be allowed to attend any session held pursuant to Section 54957.9.

4. **Violation of California State Law:** A person or persons who willfully and intentionally impair or impede the conduct of a City Council meeting by violating these Rules of Procedure and Order may be prosecuted under California Penal Code section 403, California Elections Code section 18340, or any other applicable State law for disturbing a public meeting.

## XIV. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

- A. City Council Seating Arrangement: The seating arrangement of Councilmembers on the dais is at the prerogative of the Mayor.
- B. Signing of Meeting Documents: The Presiding Officer shall sign all ordinances, resolutions, contracts, and other documents necessitating official signature which were adopted in their presence, unless unavailable, in which case the signature of the Vice-Mayor may be used.
- C. Copy of Recordings: The public may obtain from the City Clerk a copy, at cost, of an existing recording made by the legislative body of its public sessions.
- D. Ceremonial Matters: There are several different types of action the City Council may take to provide recognition or express appreciation:
  1. Certifications of Appreciation or Recognition: Commendations are typically issued to acknowledge the activities of a person or organization.
  2. Proclamations: Public announcements directing attention to a person, organization, event, or cause. Proclamations will be issued subject to the policy described below.
- E. Proclamations: It is the policy of the City Council to issue proclamations for certain individuals, organizations, events, or causes, when such a proclamation positively impacts the community and conveys an affirmative message to residents.
  1. Discretion should be used in determining whether or not to issue a proclamation. Proclamations that are political in nature, are controversial, or that likely would not



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enjoy a high level of community interest and support, are discouraged.

2. It is the policy of the City Council to process requests for proclamations in the following manner:
  - a. Requests for proclamations will be made through the Mayor's Office;
  - b. If the Mayor determines that the proclamation request is consistent with the policy stated above, the Mayor will direct his or her staff member to prepare the proclamation and the proclamation will be issued.
  - c. Upon receipt of the draft proclamation language, the Mayor will direct the City Manager to place the item on a meeting agenda depending on the nature and time-sensitive nature of the request.
  - e.d. Mayor and City Councilmembers will sign all Proclamations. The Mayor's Office will have an electronic file of each Councilmember on record to be used in the event that a City Councilmember is unable or unavailable to sign the Proclamation.

## XV. SOCIAL MEDIA

With the ever-growing use of social media, the City Council and City staff should be aware that comments, statements, opinions, etc. are still subject to the same restrictions identified in the California Government Code, including but not limited to (the Brown Act and the Public Records Act). While the City of National City strives to maintain community involvement and transparency in its government functions, certain State and local laws must be considered and kept in mind while using social media platforms. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and others can be viewed by other people including other Councilmembers. Councilmembers are encouraged to check the information they provide for accuracy.

Multiple Councilmembers cannot comment on the same conversation, as that can create a "serial meeting" of the City Council and is a direct violation of the Brown Act. If Councilmembers communicate on social media about "City business", as defined in City Administrative Policy No. 02.06, any such communication may be released to the public upon request.

Councilmembers should refrain from stating personal opinions on matters being brought before the City Council including, but not limited to: personal opinions on topics, declarations on how an official intends to vote for an item, debating with citizens on items, or presentation of the Councilmember's argument in support or opposition of an item, as those could be

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considered violations of the Brown Act, which can result in criminal and civil liabilities for the official.

Councilmembers should always maintain professionalism and common courtesy in posts and comments when commenting in their official capacity and should remain neutral in postings to prevent the interpretation that a decision has already been made outside of an open meeting, in violation of the Brown Act. Councilmembers should also be aware that there is inherent personal civil liability risk on all comments they make outside of official meetings. For example, if a Councilmember "blocks" a social media user, or deletes a comment from a social media user, the Councilmember risks violating the social media user's First Amendment rights.

Councilmembers should not use their official positions to make negative posts, voice personal opinions, etc. against any individual, business, entity, etc., as that could create negative feedback for the official and City and could potentially subject the official to personal civil liability for slander, defamation of character, or other civil remedies that could be determined by a court. Councilmembers should also refrain from using aliases or having fake profiles on social networking sites.

City Councilmembers and staff shall not use any official City media site, including but not limited to the City's Facebook page, the City's Twitter accounts, or to any other City media outlet for personal reasons or personal gain.

## IV. POLICY INTERPRETATION & APPLICABILITY

The Policy and Rules of Procedure and Order set forth herein shall be liberally construed to effectuate their purpose and no ordinance, resolution, proceeding or other action of the City Council shall be invalidated, nor the legality thereof otherwise affected, by the failure or omission of the City Council to technically comply with, observe, or otherwise follow such rules. Any provision of these rules not already governed by City ordinance or State law may be suspended by a majority vote of the City Council.

The rules set forth herein shall apply to all meetings of the City Council subject to the Brown Act and shall apply to the Council Chamber or any other location where a meeting subject to these rules takes place. In the event of any inconsistency between these rules and State law or regulation, State law or regulation shall apply.

## IV. DEFINITIONS

**Abstain**

To publicly refrain from voting usually because of a conflict interest.

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<b>Adjourn</b>	A privileged motion to officially close a meeting. A second is required and a majority vote is required to adopt it.
<b>Call to Order</b>	An announcement by the Presiding Officer to convene a meeting.
<b>Consent Calendar</b>	The routine parts of the agenda which are approved without discussion or dissent.
<b>Decorum</b>	To conduct oneself in a proper manner.
<b>Dire Emergency</b>	When a majority of the legislative body determines that a dire emergency exists, it may call an emergency meeting (Government Code Section 54956.5(a)(2)). A dire emergency, is defined as a crippling disaster, mass destruction, terrorist act, or threatened terrorist activity that poses peril so immediate and significant that requiring a legislative body to provide one-hour notice before holding an emergency meeting may endanger the public health, safety, or both, as determined by a majority of the members of the legislative body.
<b>Emergency Meeting</b>	When a majority of the legislative body determines that an emergency situation exists, it may call an emergency meeting (Government Code Section 54956.5). An emergency is defined as work stoppage, crippling activity, or other activity that severely impairs public health, safety, or both, as determined by a majority of the members of the legislative body.
<b>Legislative Body</b>	City Councilmembers are legislators. Together, the members of the City Council constitute a legislative body that is given authority by the State constitution and State law to make local law.
<b>Meeting</b>	Includes any congregation of a majority of the members of a legislative body at the same time and location, including teleconference location as permitted by Section 54953, to hear, discuss, deliberate, or take action on any item that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the legislative body. (Government Code § 54952.2(a).)
<b>Minutes</b>	The official record of what is done at a meeting.

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<b>Motion</b>	The vehicles for decision-making by a body used with a vote to indicate approval, denial, adoption, or direction.
<b>Ordinance</b>	A City law that generally requires two separate meetings and typically becomes effective thirty days after adoption.
<b>Parliamentarian</b>	One who advises the Officers, Committees, and Council Members on matters regarding parliamentary procedure.
<b>Policy</b>	The opinions, philosophy, or practices that are adopted by an organization.
<b>Public Hearing</b>	Items that are publicly noticed for a specific City Council meeting date, as generally required by law, and are designed to receive separate public input on a specific matter.
<b>Point of Order</b>	An interruption of a meeting to question whether rules or bylaws are being broken.
<b>Presiding Officer</b>	The officer conducting the meeting; Chair or Chairman.
<b>Public Hearing</b>	A noticed public session to receive original evidence or testimony on applications regulated by this title. Scheduled public hearings shall be commenced at 6:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as possible.
<b>Quorum</b>	The minimum number of members who must be present at a meeting to transact business legally.
<b>Ralph M. Brown Act</b>	The Ralph M. Brown Act, commonly known as the "Brown Act," governs meetings conducted by local legislative bodies, such as Boards of Supervisors, City Councils and School Boards. The Act represents the Legislature's determination of how the balance should be struck between public access to meetings of multi-member public bodies on the one hand and the need for confidential candor, debate, and information-gathering on the other. The purpose of the Brown Act is to facilitate public participation in local government decisions and to curb misuse of the democratic process by secret legislation by public bodies.

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<b>Recess</b>	A period of time longer than twenty (20) days without a regular or special meeting of the Council.
<b>Resolution</b>	A legislative or other type of action providing for the disposition of a particular item of business. Resolutions take effect upon passage by a majority vote of the City Council unless other law imposes a later effective date.
<b>Rosenberg's Rules of Order</b>	Written rules of parliamentary procedure which govern a meeting.
<b>Sergeant-at-Arms</b>	The Chief of Police or his or her designee shall be the ex-officio Sergeant-at-Arms of the City Council.
<b>Special Meeting</b>	In contrast with a regular meeting, a meeting called for a particular purpose that is stated when the meeting is called.

## SECTION XVIII. RELATED POLICY REFERENCES

### Related Policy References

- National City Municipal Code, Chapter 2.04
- National City Municipal Code, Title 16
- Ralph M. Brown Act
- Rosenberg's Rules of Order
- City Council Policy No. 102 - City Council Meeting Times
- City Council Policy No. 103 - Special Council Meetings
- City Council Policy No. 105 - Off Agenda Items and Placing Non-Agenda Items on the Agenda
- City Council Policy No. 106 - Preparation of City Council Meeting Minutes
- City Council Policy No. 113 - Unauthorized Disclosure of Information Revealed in Closed Sessions
- City Council Policy No. 116 - Procedure for Disclosure of Ex Parte Contacts
- Administrative Policy No. 02.06- Public Records Act Affecting Personal Electronic Devices & Accounts of City Users

### Prior Policy Amendments

June 11, 2013 (Revised – removed Robert's Rules of Order and replaced with Rosenberg's Rules of Order) Per meeting minutes

October 8, 2013 (Resolution No. 2013-147)

April 2, 2019 (Resolution No. 2019-37)

August 18, 2020 (Resolution No. 2020-152)

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**CITY COUNCIL POLICY  
CITY OF NATIONAL CITY**

**TITLE:** Rules of Procedure and Order for City Council Meetings

**POLICY #104**

**ADOPTED:** December 13, 1983

**AMENDED:** ~~October 5, 2021~~  
August 15, 2023