



CITY OF COLLEGE STATION

## **POLICY ON COUNCIL MEETING PROCEDURES**

Upon adoption of this policy by the City Council, the following rules and order of business will be adhered to. Such action is in accordance with Section 32 of the Charter of the City of College Station, which states that the Council shall determine its own rules and order of business.

### **MEETINGS**

Regular Meetings will be held on the second and fourth Thursday of each month. Such meeting will be held at City Hall in the Council Chambers commencing at 7:00 pm. Special meetings shall be called, upon request of the Mayor or a majority of the members of the City Council as prescribed by the City Charter Section 30. Should the City Manager identify a need for a special meeting, he shall consult with the Mayor to schedule said meeting. All meetings shall be subject to the provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, V.T.C.A., Government Code, Ch. 551, Open Meetings, as amended.

Work Study Sessions will generally commence on the Monday preceding the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month at 3:00 p.m. This time is subject to change at the discretion of the City Council. Items presented at this meeting will relate to Council Strategic Initiatives. Periodic Work sessions will also be scheduled to provide City Council time to discuss short term and long term goals. The general public can, of course, attend such meetings, but may not participate in the proceedings unless invited to do so by the Mayor.

Executive Sessions are an exception to the general rule that all meetings are open to the public. Executive Session shall be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month at 5:00 p.m. unless a special meeting is called by the Mayor and the City Manager. The Open Meetings Act allows closed meetings in a few specific instances where privacy serves the public interest - i.e. to discuss real estate, economic development, personnel matters. The Council must keep a record of the meeting and it shall be certified by the Mayor to assure that all matters discussed in executive session were properly recorded. The executive session will recess or conclude at 6:45

p.m. to allow adequate time for Council members to prepare for regular meeting.

### **AGENDA**

Agendas are prepared and posted for every meeting of the governmental body. The Work Study Session agenda provides for Council members to submit future agenda items. Notice on the Work Study Session agenda shall read as follows: (A Councilmember may inquire about a subject for which notice has not been given. A statement of specific factual information or the recitation of existing policy may be given. Any deliberation shall be limited to a proposal to place the subject on an agenda for a subsequent meeting. A Council member may make a motion to recommend an issue be placed on a future agenda. Upon seconded and passed by a majority, the City Manager will assign the item to a future agenda.)

A three-month planning agenda calendar shall be provided to the Council by the City Manager's office.

The Mayor, working in conjunction with the City Manager, will exercise the best judgment in determining what other items of business should come before the Council. Any member of the city staff wishing to have an item placed on the agenda shall submit that item to the City Manager's office for approval.

Staff will deliver agenda packets for all Work Study Sessions and Regular Meetings on the Friday afternoon preceding the week of scheduled meetings. This should afford ample time for all Council members to inquire into the nature of each matter to be discussed or to personally investigate the matter so as to be better informed before a Council meeting.

The Public Communications and Marketing Department assumes the responsibility for issuing a copy of the agenda to newspapers, radio, and television stations.

The City Secretary's office assumes the responsibility for compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

First two items on the regular Council agenda shall be to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and the invocation.

These procedures shall apply to all meetings of the City Council. The Mayor shall be the presiding officer at all meetings of the City Council and have a voice in all of its proceedings. Council members shall speak only upon being

recognized by the presiding officer whose recognition shall not be unreasonably withheld. In the event of the absence of the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem, the Mayor shall designate the presiding officer. In the event the Mayor has failed to designate the presiding officer, the council member with the most seniority shall serve as presiding officer. In the event of equal seniority, the council member with the lowest numbered place shall preside.

### **PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE**

In regular and special meetings, Robert's Rules of Order **Newly Revised 10<sup>th</sup> Edition (2000)** will be followed. The following are commonly used procedures:

1. MAIN MOTION: A formal proposal that certain action be taken.

Step 1. Addressing the Chair. (Begin the discussion by having a member make the motion. Motion should be made and seconded. After this, debate can be conducted. (Ex: "Mayor, I move the following...").

|                 |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| SECOND REQUIRED | Yes      |
| DEBATABLE       | Yes      |
| AMENDABLE       | Yes      |
| VOTE REQUIRED   | Majority |

Step 2. Assigning the floor (Mayor recognizes the member)

Step 3. Making the motion.

Step 4. Seconding the motion.

Step 5. Stating the motion. (Mayor states the motion)

Step 6. Debating the question. (Mayor allows debate, with maker of motion speaking first in debate).

Step 7. Putting the question. (Mayor takes the vote after debate is complete)

Step 8. Announcing the result of vote. (Mayor announces the vote, members for and against).

2. TO TAKE FROM THE TABLE. To enable an assembly to take up and consider a motion that was postponed temporarily during the same meeting. Maybe used at a future meeting if the item that was tabled was posted.

|                 |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| SECOND REQUIRED | Yes      |
| DEBATABLE       | No       |
| AMENDABLE       | No       |
| VOTE REQUIRED   | Majority |

3. AMENDING A MOTION. Any motion may be amended as follows: "Mayor, I move that we amend the motion by (adding, striking out, etc. the words...)." The amendment must be seconded and then it can be discussed. When discussion ends, the amendment is voted on first. If the amendment passes,

the original motion is then put to a vote as amended. If the amendment fails, the original motion is put to a vote.

SECOND REQUIRED Yes  
 DEBATABLE Yes  
 AMENDABLE Yes  
 VOTE REQUIRED Majority

4. TO OFFER A SUBSTITUTE AMENDMENT. Another way to change an original motion is by use of the Substitute Motion. A substitute motion is just an amendment that changes an entire sentence or paragraph. It must be seconded and then discussed. It may be amended and differs only from an amendment in that if the substitute motion passes it does away with the original motion.

SECOND REQUIRED Yes  
 DEBATABLE Yes  
 AMENDABLE Yes  
 VOTE REQUIRED Majority

5. LAY A MOTION ON THE TABLE. Sometimes a board or committee may wish to defer action on a motion. One way to accomplish this is to lay a motion on the table. It is in order to move that a main motion be laid on the table when discussion on the main motion has or is about to end. A tabled motion can be brought from the table during the same meeting but is usually done so at a later meeting when unfinished business is being considered.

SECOND REQUIRED Yes  
 DEBATABLE No  
 AMENDABLE No  
 VOTE REQUIRED Majority

6. MOTION TO CLOSE DEBATE (call for question). To prevent or stop discussion on the pending question, and to bring the pending question or questions to an immediate vote.

SECOND REQUIRED Yes  
 DEBATABLE No  
 AMENDABLE No  
 VOTE REQUIRED 2/3 (5 of 7 members present)

7. POINT OF ORDER. Anytime a member feels an incorrect procedure is being used, he can interrupt with a point of order request that requires the mayor to decide what the correct procedure is. Can have no motion applied to it except the motion to withdraw.

SECOND REQUIRED No  
 DEBATABLE No  
 AMENDABLE No  
 VOTE REQUIRED Mayor must concede or deny.

**RIGHTS IN DEBATE**

Robert's says that debate is the discussion regarding a motion that occurs after the presiding officer has restated the motion and before putting it to a vote.

When a pending question is presented for consideration to the Council, the presiding officer shall recognize the member who made the motion to speak first and the member who seconded the motion to speak second. When two or more members wish to speak, the presiding officer shall name the member who is to speak first. No member of the Council shall interrupt another while speaking except to make a point of order or to make a point of personal privilege. No member shall speak more than five minutes on any amendment to the question except as further provided in this rule.

No member shall speak more than the time limits provided herein on any subject or amendment, and such member may use his or her time in any combination, in separate speech or comments totaling the number of minutes permitted. The Mayor shall not be obligated to recognize any Council member for a second comment on the subject or amendment until every Council member wishing to speak has been allowed a first comment.

Council members shall also have the right to yield a portion of time to another member.

Any member deciding to speak more than five minutes on any question or more than five minutes on any amendment to the question shall be accorded the privilege without objection upon motion supported by two-thirds of the Council. No member shall be permitted to interrupt while another member is speaking.

No Council member shall be permitted to indulge in personalities, use language personally offensive, arraign motives of members, charge deliberate misrepresentation, or use language tending to hold a member of the City Council up to contempt.

If a member is speaking or otherwise transgressing the rules of the Council, the presiding officer shall or any Council member may call him or her to order in which case he or she shall immediately be quiet unless permitted to explain. The Council shall, if appealed to, decide the case without debate. If the decision is in favor of the member call to order, he or she shall be at liberty to proceed, but not otherwise.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Each Council member should be aware of the conflict of interest regulations, including Charter provisions and state statutes.

When a Council member has a conflict of interest with an agenda item, he or she should submit the required affidavit (if required) prior to the beginning of the meeting at which the agenda item is scheduled. Upon introduction of the agenda item, the Council member with the conflict of interest should announce that he or she has a conflict of interest and will not participate in discussion or consideration of the agenda item. It is not necessary that the Council member leave the meeting room.

### **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

#### **GENERAL**

Staff will assist the public as they arrive to a Council meeting to briefly explain the meeting procedures and direct citizens who want to address the Council on a city related subject or an agenda item. The public attending any called meeting will be invited to sign a guest register. The City Secretary as a matter of record will add their names to the minutes of said meeting.

If an individual does not wish to address the City Council, but still wishes to be recorded in the official minutes as being in support or opposition to an agenda item, the individual may complete the registration form provided in the lobby by providing the name, address, and comments about a city related subject. These comments will be referred to the City Council and City Manager.

The following rules will be enforced by the Mayor during any called meeting of the City Council.

#### **HEAR VISITORS**

**The Hear Visitors section is listed on the Regular Meeting Agenda to give the public the opportunity to address the City Council on any item which does not appear on the posted Agenda.** Registration forms

are available in the lobby and at the desk of the City Secretary. This form should be completed and delivered to the City Secretary by 6:45 p.m. Limit remarks to three minutes. A timer alarm will sound after 2 1/2 minutes to signal that you have thirty seconds remaining so that you may conclude your remarks. The City Council will receive the information, ask staff to look into the matter, or place the issue on a future agenda. Topics of operational concerns shall be directed to the City Manager.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Individuals who wish to address the City Council on an item posted as a public hearing shall register with the City Secretary prior to the Mayor's announcement to open the public hearing. Registration forms are available in the lobby and at the desk of the City Secretary. The Mayor will open the public hearing and recognize individuals who wish to come forward to speak for or against the item. The speaker will state their name and address for the record and allowed three minutes. A timer alarm will sound after 2 1/2 minutes to signal thirty seconds remaining so that the speaker may conclude your remarks. After a public hearing is closed, there shall be no additional public comments. If Council needs additional information from the general public, some limited comments may be allowed at the discretion of the Mayor.

The Development Services staff shall make a report on all zoning cases and development issues including recommendations. The applicant will then present a brief overview of the project responding to suggested topics provided by Development Services. Council will ask questions of the applicant and staff, if necessary.

When a large number of participants have indicated an interest in addressing the council on a zoning case or another regular agenda item, the Mayor or Mayor Pro Tem may set a maximum time limit for the proponents and opponents and a time limit for rebuttal, if necessary.

**CONSENT AND REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS**

Individuals who wish to address the City Council on a consent or regular agenda item not posted as a public hearing shall register with the City Secretary prior to the Mayor's reading of the agenda item. Registration forms are available in the lobby and at the desk of the City Secretary. The Mayor will recognize individuals who wish to come forward to speak for or against the item. The speaker will state their name and address for the record and allowed three minutes. A timer alarm will sound after 2 1/2 minutes to signal thirty seconds remaining so that the speaker may conclude your remarks.

**WORK STUDY AGENDA**

Generally work study meetings are for the Council to discuss issues. If the Mayor and Council believe public input is needed, the Council may allow public input.

APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL, 7/25/66  
REVISED BY THE CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE, 4/3/80

REVISED BY CITY COUNCIL 6/11/81  
REVISED BY THE CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE, 2/86  
REVISED BY THE CITY COUNCIL, 11/10/88  
REVISED BY THE CITY COUNCIL, 2/7/90  
REVISED BY THE CITY COUNCIL, 5/23/96  
REVISED BY THE CITY COUNCIL, 8/13/98  
REVISED BY THE CITY COUNCIL, 6/24/99  
REVISED BY THE CITY COUNCIL, 7/12/01  
REVISED BY THE CITY COUNCIL, 6/13/02  
REVISED BY THE CITY COUNCIL, 4/8/04  
REVISED BY THE CITY COUNCIL, 7/28/2005  
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