City Council Policy

Policy No.: A-27

Effective Date: 10/1/2010,

Amended: 7/24/2013; 1/11/2017;

6/14/2017; 5/8/2019

Subject

Rules of Decorum and Procedures for the Conduct of City Council and Commission Meetings

I. Purpose.

The purpose of this Policy is to establish rules of decorum and procedure for City Councilmembers and City Commissioners (collectively, "City Officials"), City employees and contractors (collectively, "City Staff"), and members of the public at all meetings of the City Council and Commissions to ensure that the business of the City is attended to thoroughly and efficiently with opportunities for orderly public participation.

II. Rules of Decorum.

A. Rules for City Officials.

- 1. <u>Decorum</u>: City Officials 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 legislative body is maintained at all times. City Officials shall maintain a polite, respectful and courteous manner when addressing one another, City Staff, and members of the public during City Council and Commission meetings. When a City Official, member of City Staff, or member of the public is speaking, City Officials shall not interrupt, disrupt or disturb the speaker and shall not engage in unnecessary sidebar discussions with other City Officials.
- 2. <u>Role of the Presiding Officer</u>: The Presiding Officer of the legislative body shall run the conduct of the Council or Commission meeting and be responsible for maintaining the order and decorum of meetings. The Presiding Officer of the City Council shall be the Mayor, or in the Mayor's absence the Mayor Pro Tem, or in both of their absence any other member designated by majority vote of the City Council. The Presiding Officer of City Commissions shall be the Chair, or in the Chair's absence the Vice-Chair, or in both of their absence any other member designated by majority vote of the Commission. It shall be the duty of the Presiding Officer to ensure that this Policy is observed. The Presiding Officer shall maintain control of communication between City Officials and between City Officials and members of the public and City Staff.

The Presiding Officer has the full right to participate in the debate, discussion and decision-making of the legislative body. The Presiding Officer should, however, strive to be the last to speak at the discussion and debate stage. The Presiding Officer may make and second motions when no other member does so.

The Presiding Officer shall serve as the parliamentarian and decide all questions of order under this Policy, with the assistance of the City Attorney. Any such decision shall be final unless overridden by a majority vote of the City Officials present and shall be binding and legally effective for purposes of the matter under consideration.

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3. Communications between City Officials:

- a) City Officials wishing to speak should request the floor by being recognized by the Presiding Officer before speaking. The Presiding Officer must recognize any City Official who seeks the floor when appropriately entitled to address the legislative body.
- b) City Officials shall remember that the purpose of the meeting is to conduct the business of the City. City Officials shall avoid repetition and shall limit their comments to the subject matter at hand. City Officials should endeavor to express their views without engaging in unnecessarily lengthy debates. During questions and deliberations, the Presiding Officer may vary the speaking sequence of City Officials from item to item.
- 4. <u>Communication with City Staff</u>: City Officials may question the appropriate member(s) of City Staff, through the City Manager, present at the meeting regarding any item on the agenda during consideration of that item. City Officials wishing to ask questions of City Staff should first be recognized by the Presiding Officer.

5. Communication with Members of the Public:

- a) City Officials may question any person addressing the legislative body at the conclusion of that person's testimony or all public testimony on that agenda item. A City Official wishing to ask questions of a member of the public should first be recognized by the Presiding Officer.
- b) City Officials shall not engage the person addressing the legislative body in a dialogue, but shall confine communication to a brief question and answer format.
- c) City Officials may not prohibit public criticism of the policies, procedures, programs, or services of the City or its acts or omissions. A speaker may not be stopped from speaking because either the Presiding Officer or other City Officials disagree with the viewpoint being expressed.

B. Rules for City Staff.

- 1. <u>Decorum</u>: City Staff shall conduct themselves in a polite, professional, and courteous manner. City Staff should limit sidebar conversations during meetings as much as possible, and should not speak "on-mic" during meetings without first being recognized by the Presiding Officer. City Staff should exercise prudence in determining when it is appropriate to request to speak and should not interrupt a City Official, member of City Staff, or member of the public who is speaking. Generally, City Staff should refrain from speaking during portions of the agenda that do not normally include City Staff reports (e.g., Student Liaison Report, Public Comment, City Council Communications), unless asked to do by a City Official and given the floor by the Presiding Officer. City Staff shall direct all comments and presentations to the Presiding Officer and City Officials in attendance.
- 2. Role of the City Manager: The City Manager's duties during City Council meetings include keeping a record of concerns raised by the City Council and facilitating the

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orderly presentation of Staff reports. For Commission meetings, the City Manager's role shall be fulfilled by the City Manager's delegate if the City Manager is not in attendance.

- 3. Role of the City Clerk: The City Clerk or a designee shall keep minutes of open sessions, shall call and record roll call votes, and shall read ordinance titles and agenda items as requested by the Presiding Officer.
- 4. <u>Role of the City Attorney</u>: The City Attorney or a designee duties shall assist the Presiding Officer with parliamentarian procedures, including this Policy, and advising on legal issues associated with Agenda items.

C. Rules for Members of the Public.

1. Within the Council Chambers:

- a) 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; clapping, whistling, yelling, stamping of feet, or other acts which disturb, disrupt, impede or otherwise render the orderly conduct of the 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 legislative body, be ejected from that meeting.
- b) No person shall stand or sit in the aisles. No person shall block any doorways or other exits.
- c) 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 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 legislative body, be moved to a different location or removed from the Council Chambers.
- d) Packages, bundles, suitcases or other large or potentially dangerous objects shall not, without the prior authorization of the Presiding Officer, be brought into the Council Chambers and are subject to search to determine that they do not pose a threat or as otherwise requested by the Sergeant at Arms.
- e) Except as otherwise allowed by City Council ordinance or resolution, no animals except for service animals shall be brought into the Council Chambers.
- f) Photographs, audiotapes and videotapes may be taken from the rear of the Council Chambers or from any seat within the Council Chambers, so long as such activity does not disrupt and disturb the audience, public speakers, City Staff and City Officials and interfere with the orderly conduct of the meeting. When a filming area has been designated by the Council, filming shall occur in that area only.
- g) Within the Council Chambers, all cell phone and pager ringers shall be turned off; no talking on cell phones is allowed; and all electronic equipment shall be operated

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in a manner which does not emit sound or disturb other members of public or disrupt the orderly conduct of the meeting. This rule shall not apply to on-duty or on-call public safety personnel.

2. <u>Noise adjacent the City Council Chambers</u>: Noise emanating from adjacent or outside the City Council Chambers which is audible within the Council Chambers shall not be permitted. The sergeant-at-arms is authorized to enforce this rule by requesting those in adjacent areas remain silent or to leave the area.

3. Persons Addressing the Legislative Body:

- a) Members of the public may address the legislative body during the Public Comment Period(s) or prior to the consideration of any agenda item. Any person wishing to speak, whether during the Public Comment Period or on an agenda item, is requested, but not required, to complete a "Speaker Request Form" and submit the form to the City Clerk prior to the calling to order of the meeting or as soon as possible thereafter. All those speaking shall do so from the podium.
- b) No person shall address the legislative body without first being recognized by the Presiding Officer. The Presiding Officer will ask the Clerk to call the names of the persons who submitted Speaker Request Forms one by one. Each person shall respond when his/her name is called and shall go to the podium to make his or her comments. Persons who did not submit a Speaker Request Form shall raise their hand to indicate that they wish to go to the podium to speak; such persons will be called to speak after all persons who submitted Speaker Request Forms have been called. Impromptu personal points of order, comments, objections or questions shall not be recognized, and if they persist, after the Presiding Officer has warned of the offense, a member of the public engaging in such conduct shall, at the discretion of the Presiding Officer or a majority of the legislative body, be subject to ejection from the meeting.
- c) The purpose of addressing the legislative body is to formally communicate to the body on matters within the subject matter jurisdiction of the body. Persons addressing the legislative body on an agenda item shall confine the subject matter of their remarks to the particular matter before the body. Persons addressing the City Council are requested to avoid unduly repetitious comments.
- d) Each person addressing the legislative body shall do so in an orderly manner and shall not engage in any conduct that disrupts, disturbs, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting. Any person who so disrupts the meeting may, after warning by the Presiding Officer, and at the discretion of the Presiding Officer or a majority of the legislative body, be ejected from that meeting.
- e) Persons addressing the legislative body shall address the legislative body as a whole and shall not engage in a dialogue with individual City Officials, City Staff, or with other members of the audience.
- f) Members of the public have the right to address the legislative body at any regular meeting on any subject that is within the legislative body's subject matter jurisdiction. The Presiding Officer may prohibit a member of the public from speaking on a matter

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not within the legislative body's subject matter jurisdiction.

- g) Members of the public addressing the legislative body are prohibited from requesting City resources, or using their own resources to exhibit any PowerPoint presentations during public comment or at public hearings. This rule shall not apply to individuals who have been asked by City Staff or City Officials to make a presentation. Printed materials may be distributed to the legislative body by handing the materials to the Clerk. Members of the public should bring at least 8 copies of all printed materials submitted (five copies for the legislative body members, one for the Clerk, one for the City Manager, one for the City Attorney).
- h) Any public requests for City Staff comment shall be made to the Presiding Officer, who may then direct such inquiries to the City Manager or City Attorney, as appropriate.
- i) When a question is addressed to a specific City Official by a member of the public, that question must go through the Presiding Officer. The Presiding Officer may respond or may pause to allow another City Official to ask to be recognized. If no Council member asks to be recognized, the Presiding Officer shall move on to the next agenda item or next public comment.

D. Enforcement of Rules of Decorum.

- 1. <u>Sergeant-at-Arms</u>: The head of the City's police agency or his/her designee shall be ex-officio sergeant-at-arms of the legislative body. The sergeant-at-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. The sergeant-of-arms shall enforce the rules of decorum or eject any person(s) from the Council Chambers upon the direction of the Presiding Officer, or upon his or her own discretion, as applicable.
- 2. <u>Violations</u>: Upon a violation of the rules of decorum established herein, the procedure to enforce the rules is as follows:
- a) <u>Warning</u>: 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 these 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 shall order another recess, whereupon the sergeant-at-arms shall have the authority to order the person ejected from the meeting and/or cited in violation of Penal Code Section 403.
- b) <u>Motion to Enforce</u>: Any City Official may call a point of order should the legislative body fail to abide by the provisions of this Policy, whereupon the legislative body shall immediately act upon the point of order by roll call vote. If the Presiding Officer of the legislative body fails to enforce the rules of decorum set forth herein, any member of the legislative body may move to require the Presiding Officer to do so, and an affirmative vote of a majority of the legislative body shall require the Presiding Officer to do so. If the Presiding Officer fails to

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carry out the will of the majority of the legislative body, the majority may designate another member of the legislative body to act as Presiding Officer for remainder of the meeting, for the limited purpose of enforcing the rules of decorum established herein.

- c) <u>Clearing the Room</u>: Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.9, in the event that any meeting is willfully interrupted by a group or groups of persons so as to render the orderly conduct of such meeting infeasible and order cannot be restored by the removal of the individuals who are willfully interrupting the meeting, by a majority vote of the City Officials the meeting room may be ordered cleared and the meeting shall continue in session. Only matters appearing on the agenda may be considered in such a session. 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.
- d) <u>Violation of the California Penal Code</u>: A person or persons who willfully and intentionally impair or impede the conduct of a legislative body meeting by violating these rules of decorum may be prosecuted under Penal Code Section 403 for disturbing a public meeting. Every person who violates Penal Code Section 403 is guilty of a misdemeanor.

III. Meeting Procedures.

- A. <u>Rules of Order</u>. City Officials will follow *Rosenberg's Rules of Order* (2011 Revised Edition), a copy of which is attached hereto. To the extent that any provision of this Policy conflicts with any provision of *Rosenberg's Rules of Order*, the provision of this Policy shall govern.
- B. <u>Quorum</u>. Three City Officials shall constitute a quorum to conduct business. At least three City Officials shall be present at the meeting at all times. If at any point in time there are less than three City Officials in the Chambers, the meeting shall be adjourned or recessed, as appropriate, until a quorum can be reestablished.

C. Voting.

- 1. <u>Voting Procedure</u>: After a motion is made and seconded, the Presiding Officer shall call for a vote. No vote shall be held on any motion that does not receive a second. A roll call vote shall be used in most cases, with the Mayor called last. Voice votes may be utilized when the Presiding Officer deems appropriate. As required by the Ralph M. Brown Act, the result of each vote and how each City Official voted shall be announced.
- 2. <u>Effect of Silence</u>: Unless a City Official audibly votes in the negative, disqualifies himself or herself, or expressly declines to vote, his or her silence shall be recorded as an affirmative vote on the matter before the Council.
- 3. <u>Legally Required Participation</u>: If a majority of the legislative is disqualified to vote on a matter by reason of potential conflicts of interest, the legislative body may utilize the "rule of necessity" consistent with the then-current Political Reform Act and FPPC Regulations, in consultation with the City Attorney.

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D. Agendas.

- 1. <u>Order of Business</u>: Generally, the order of business at regularly scheduled meetings of the City Council shall be as follows, unless otherwise re-ordered by the Presiding Officer:
 - (1) Call to Order
 - (2) Roll Call /Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance
 - (3) Presentations and Recognitions
 - (4) Student Liaison Report
 - (5) Public Comment
 - (6) Consent Calendar
 - (7) Public Hearings
 - (8) City Council Business
 - (9) City Manager/City Staff Report
 - (10) City Council Communications/Committee Reports
 - (11) Adjournment

Commission agendas need not follow this order or include all of the items listed above. City Staff preparing the agendas for Commission meetings shall have the discretion to determine the content and order of the agenda.

2. <u>Council Agenda Packets</u>: City Staff should assemble and distribute to each City Official the agenda packet, including all agenda item materials and supporting documentation, by 5:00 p.m., the Friday before the meeting. Any supplemental agenda item materials, exhibits, and/or other documents related to an agenda item, proposed to be distributed after the time agenda packets are sent, shall be distributed to each City Official no later than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting, provided however the City Manager may distribute supplemental materials after the twenty-four (24) hour period upon a determination of necessity.

3. <u>Time Limits</u>.

a) Meeting Start and End Times. Regular meetings of the City Council shall start at 5:30 p.m. for closed sessions or special study sessions/workshops, if any, and 6:30 p.m. for the regular session. Regular meetings of City Commissions shall start at 6:00 p.m. All City Council and Commission meetings shall end by 11:00 p.m. unless a majority of City Officials present vote to extend the time of the meeting. The Presiding Officer, beginning at 10:00 p.m. and thereafter if the majority requests it, will determine which issues will be completed at that meeting and which items will be continued to the next regular or special Council meeting. The meeting may proceed past 11:00 p.m. only if a majority of the City Officials in attendance votes to extend the meeting to a time certain because it is necessary or in the public interest to do so. All City Officials will use their best efforts to see that the agenda proceeds as promptly and efficiently as

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possible so that all scheduled items can be heard in the time allotted.

- b) <u>Individual Public Comment Limits</u>. Except as provided in paragraph G below regarding Public Hearings, members of the public addressing the City Council or Commissions during the Public Comment portion of the agenda or any agenda item shall have three (3) minutes to speak. The legislative body may, by majority vote, alter this time limit, however, the time limit may only be altered before public comment has begun for the agenda item. A person in attendance may donate their time to another, provided that no person may receive more than one time donation. A person speaking on behalf of a group or organization may speak for up to ten (10) minutes if no other person will be speaking on behalf of that group or organization and there are at least four (4) members present.
- c) Aggregate Public Comment Limits. In the event that the Presiding Officer, in consultation with the City Clerk, anticipates that there will be more than fifteen (15) minutes of comments by members of the public during Public Comment, the City Officials may vote to take the first fifteen (15) minutes of comment and then continue Public Comment until after Council or Commission business. In such cases, speakers will be called in the order in which they submitted a Speaker Request Form.
- d) <u>Presentations, Recognitions and Student Liaison Report.</u> In most circumstances, individual presentations and recognitions and the Student Liaison Report should be limited to no more than five (5) minutes. Staff should endeavor to schedule presentations and recognitions so that the total time for those items is no more than fifteen (15) minutes. Longer presentations may be included in the Presentations and Recognitions portion of the agenda at the discretion of the City Manager when the City Manager determines that a longer presentation will not unduly delay the consideration of scheduled Public Hearings or City Council Business items.
- 4. <u>Consent Calendar</u>: Items of a routine or generally uncontested nature may be approved by the legislative body 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 City Official 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, including any recommended action, shall be described on the notice and agenda posted for the meeting.
- 5. <u>City Official Communications</u>: The "Councilmember Communications" or "Commissioner Communications" portion of the agenda is the opportunity for City Officials to make brief announcements, brief reports on activities, provide references to staff or request information from staff, request a report back on an item at a future meeting, or direct that an item of business be placed on a future agenda, as allowed by the Ralph M. Brown Act. The procedure for directing staff to place an item on a future agenda is discussed in more detail in Section IV below. Officials should refrain from engaging in discussion regarding any matter brought up during Councilmember or Communications.
- 6. <u>Closed Sessions</u>: 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

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matter which is authorized to be heard or considered in closed session by State law. If a closed session is included on the agenda, the description of the item need only identify the statutory basis for the closed session, and need not include the specific topic which is the subject of the closed session, unless otherwise required by law. During closed session, the City Council may exclude any person or persons which it is authorized by State law to exclude from a closed session. 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.

- 7. <u>Public Hearings</u>. Except as provided otherwise by law, public hearings shall generally be conducted as follows:
- a) At the beginning of each public hearing item, the Presiding Officer shall announce the item for the public hearing, request that City Staff present the staff report and any other relevant evidence, and ask questions of staff. The public hearing shall be opened after all City Officials have concluded their questions for City Staff. 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.
- b) Following the staff report and opening of the public hearing, the Presiding Officer shall thereupon call upon the applicant or appellant (if other than staff) to present his/her its presentation. Thereafter, the Presiding Officer shall inquire as to whether there are any persons present who desire to address the legislative body 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. No person may speak without first being recognized by the Presiding Officer. It is customary for the Presiding Officer to recognize those speakers who submitted Speaker Request Forms first, and then recognize any others who indicate a desire to speak after all Speaker Request Forms have been called. After all public testimony has been taken, the Presiding Officer shall allow the applicant or appellant to present rebuttal testimony. Members of the public shall not be allowed to "rebut the rebuttal." The time limits in Section III.5.B above shall apply to the public hearing.
- c) All persons interested in the matter being heard by the legislative body shall be entitled to submit written evidence or remarks. All such evidence presented shall be retained by the City Clerk as part of the Clerk's record.
- d) City Officials 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. City Officials 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. City Officials should avoid debate and expressions of personal opinion until after the close of the public hearing.
- e) Following the rebuttal and any final questions by City Officials, the Presiding Officer shall close the public hearing and then allow each City Official to state his/her opinion on the item before asking for a motion to decide the matter.

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- f) Upon closing of the public hearing by the Presiding Officer, no additional public testimony shall be solicited or received by the legislative body without reopening the public hearing through the Presiding Officer with consensus of the legislative body.
- g) The Presiding Officer at all times shall conduct the public hearing in such a manner as to afford due process to all affected persons.

IV. Placement of Items on Meeting Agendas.

- A. The City Manager, in coordination with the City Attorney and appropriate City Staff shall be responsible for scheduling agenda items for Council and Commission meetings through a standing agenda review meeting.
- B. Individual City Officials can advise the City Manager or other City Staff that they are interested in a topic being placed on a future meeting agenda, however, individual City Officials do not have the authority to direct the placement of an item on a future agenda. The City Manager has the discretion to determine if and when to schedule items of interest to individual City Officials on an agenda.
- C. The City Council may direct the City Manager to place of an item on a future agenda of the City Council or a City Commission during the City Council Communications portion of the agenda. Such direction must occur by a vote approved by a majority of the entire membership of the City Council. City Commissions are not authorized to direct the City Staff to place an item of business on a future agenda.

V. Term of Appointments of City Councilmembers to Boards and Committees.

- A. Appointments to boards and committees are made at the first City Council meeting in December to be effective at the next calendar year.
- B. For appointments to regional agencies where specific rules or requirements exist with respect to appointments, those rules will be followed.
- C. The Mayor will provide a recommendation of proposed appointments to the City Manager for placement on an agenda prior to the first City Council meeting in December.
- D. At the first City Council meeting in December, the Mayor will ask the Council regarding their preferences to serve on any Boards and Committees.
- E. The Mayor with the support of one additional City Councilmember may thereafter consider changing any Board and Commission appointments during the year in compliance with item (2) above.

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VI. Suspension of the Rules.

Any provision of this Policy may be suspended by majority vote of the legislative body, provided that no provision may be suspended if suspension would result in a conflict with State or local law.

VII. Interpretation and Applicability.

The rules of decorum and procedure set forth herein shall be liberally construed to effectuate their purpose and no ordinance, resolution, proceeding or other action of the legislative body shall be invalidated, nor the legality thereof otherwise affected, by the failure or omission of the legislative body to technically comply with, observe, or otherwise follow such rules. This Policy shall apply to the City Council Chambers 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.