



Summary of Applicable City Council Meeting Decorum Rules

Duties of the Presiding Officer

The Mayor shall preserve strict order and decorum at all meetings of the Council, state questions coming before the Council, announce its decision on all subjects and decide all questions of order, subject, however, to an appeal to the Council as a whole, in which event a majority vote of the Council members present shall govern and conclusively determine such question of order. (Municipal Code Sec. 1-2-303)

Oral Communications

Rules of Debate

Every member of the Council desiring to speak shall address the chair, and upon recognition by the presiding officer, shall confine their remarks to the question under debate, avoiding all personal ties and indecorous language. (Municipal Code Sec. 1-2-311.B)

A member of the Council once recognized shall not be interrupted when speaking unless it be a call to order, or as herein otherwise provided. A member of the Council called to order shall cease speaking until the question of order be determined, and if in order, shall be permitted to proceed. (Municipal Code Sec. 1-2-311.C)

Except as otherwise provided in this [Municipal Code] chapter, Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall govern the conduct of the meetings of the Council. (Municipal Code Sec. 1-2-311.J)

Addressing the Council

Each person addressing the Council on agenda items shall step up to the microphone in front of the rail, give his or her name and address in an audible tone of voice for the record, and limit his or her comments to three minutes, unless further time is granted by the presiding officer.

No person, other than a member of the Council, and the person having the floor, shall be permitted to enter into any discussion without the permission of the presiding officer.

Whenever a group of persons wishes to address the Council on the same subject matter, it shall be proper for the presiding officer to request that a spokesperson be chosen by the group to address the Council and, in case additional matters that have been presented at the time by any other member of said group, to limit the numbers of persons addressing the Council, so as to avoid unnecessary repetition before the Council. (Municipal Code Sec. 1-2-313.B)

Public Comment

The City Manager shall include within each Council agenda an item providing for members of the public to address the City Council on items of interest to the public and within the subject matter jurisdiction of the City Council. The time allocated to each speaker shall be three (3) minutes unless extended by the Mayor or by a majority of the City Council. The time for public comment shall be reserved for the presentation of items which are not on the regular City Council agenda. Public Comment items on the agenda shall be taken at the time the matter is discussed by the City Council. (City Council Resolution No. 87-05)

The Council shall not discuss items which are raised by the public as a part of the public comment period and not included within the posted agenda, but such items may be referred to the City Manager for consideration and inclusion in a subsequent agenda, if necessary. Individual Council members may at any time request that the City Manager consider specific items which the City Manager will agendaize for subsequent meetings if Council action is required. (City Council Resolution No. 87-05)

Additional Communication / City Council Announcements

Under the Brown Act, no action or discussion shall be undertaken on any item not appearing on the posted agenda, except that members of the City Council may briefly respond to statements made or questions posed by persons exercising their public testimony rights.

In addition, on their own initiative or in response to questions posed by the public, a member of the City Council may ask a question for clarification, make a brief announcement, or make a brief report on his or her own activities.

City Councilmembers, or the City Council as a whole, may also provide a reference to staff or other resources for factual information, request staff to report back to the City Council at a subsequent meeting concerning any matter, or take action to direct staff to place an item on a future agenda. (California Government Code section 54954.2(a)(3))

Decorum

While the Council is in session, the members must preserve order and decorum; and a member shall neither, by conversation or otherwise, delay or interrupt the proceedings or the peace of the Council or disturb any member while speaking or refuse to obey the orders of the Council or the presiding officer, except as otherwise herein provided. (Municipal Code Sec. 1-2-314.A)

Persons who substantially impair or disturb a City Council meeting by intentionally committing acts in violation of the provisions hereof or of implicit customs or usages governing the conduct of City Council meetings shall be advised of such violation and requested to curtail such acts by the presiding officer. (Municipal Code Sec. 1-2-314.B)

Public Safety will assign one (1) officer to remain present through all City Council meetings. His/her responsibilities will include: security; maintaining the peace at all times; enforcement of the no smoking regulation; escorting Councilmembers to their vehicles if need be; and general enforcement of any order given by the Chief of Police or City Manager. The officer

shall at all times be noticeably visible to the public and Council. (City Council Policies & Procedures)

Seating Arrangements

The seating arrangement for the City Council shall be determined by the Mayor, unless overturned by a majority vote of the Council. (Adopted by City Council action on 4-08-75)

Motions

Whenever possible, motions of a substantive nature shall be drafted, copied and distributed on the dais at least one (1) hour prior to a Council meeting at which the motion is to be considered. Councilmembers must be notified by phone or in person that new material awaits them. This distribution and notification notice does not automatically indicate that appropriate time has been given for individual Councilmember's or staff's consideration, but serves to help address last minute information. (Amended by City Council action on 2-14-06)

Voting

By Council action roll call votes shall be taken by the use of electronic voting lights. (Adopted by City Council action on 1-10-95)

Supplemental Information

Councilmembers who wish to present supplemental information at a City Council meeting, i.e., overheads, visuals, handouts, etc., should provide that information to the City Manager no less than 24 hours prior to the scheduled City Council meeting to insure adequate time to arrange for the presentation. (Adopted by City Council action on 2-14-06)