

**CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT**

**RULES OF ORDER**

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CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT

**RULES OF ORDER**

**NOTE: Gender Neutral Terminology**

Unless the context otherwise demands, words importing any gender shall be interpreted to mean any genders (i.e. use of the masculine gender shall include the feminine and/or gender neutral).

**Rule I: Order and Appeal**

The presiding officer shall preserve order and decorum, may speak on questions of order in preference to other members, and shall decide questions of order, subject to an appeal to the Council by motion regularly seconded. No other business shall be in order until the question on the appeal shall have been decided.

**Rule II: Order of Motions**

When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received by the presiding officer except:

- Without Debate < <<<<<< < To fix the time of Adjournment.
- < To Adjourn.
- < To Reconsider.
- < To Lay on the Table.
- < For the Previous Question.

To Postpone to a certain Time.

To Commit or Re-commit.

To Amend, or

To Postpone indefinitely (unamendable) which several motions shall have precedence in the order in which they stand arranged. The presiding officer shall declare all votes; if a vote be doubted, the presiding officer shall order arising vote without further debate.

**Rule III: Limitation on Debate**

A motion to fix the time in which to adjourn, or such a motion not being before the meeting, then one to adjourn shall always be in order. A motion to adjourn, to fix the time in which to adjourn, to reconsider, to lay on the table and for the previous question shall be decided without debate and without amendment, except the motion to fix the time in which to adjourn, which can be amended by altering the time.

The presiding officer (for both the full City Council and any committees) shall call the question for vote on his own volition or may accept a call for the question from any single member.

When a member is about to speak in debate, he shall respectfully address the presiding officer; shall maintain a courteous tone; shall confine himself to the question under debate and shall avoid personalities or imputing to any member improper motives.

Without permission of the chairperson, no member can speak more than two times, until all other members have had an opportunity to speak to the matter.

It shall be unnecessary for a member to rise from his seat either to be recognized or to speak. Debate must be confined to the merits of the pending question and speakers shall address their remarks to the chairperson.

#### **Rule IV: Restrictions on Speaking**

At City Council meetings only members of the City Council may speak on any matter before the Council unless by a majority vote of all the members of the City Council, or at a duly scheduled Public Hearing.

At City Council committee meetings only members of the particular committee may first speak on any matter pending before the committee. Thereafter, any other Councilperson in attendance may speak as of right, subject to the debate limitations set forth in Rule III.

No other persons may speak at a committee meeting except at a duly scheduled Public Hearing or as permitted by a majority vote of all the members of the committee. However, City staff may speak as permitted by the Councilperson chairing the meeting when in the exercise of the chairperson's discretion it is deemed to be in the best interest of the committee to do so.

#### **Rule V: The Previous Question**

The previous question shall be in this form: "I move the previous question". It shall only be admitted when demanded by a majority of the members present, and until it is decided, shall preclude all amendments and debate of the main question, and after adoption of the previous question, the sense of the Board shall forthwith be taken upon all pending amendments in their order and then upon the main question.

#### **Rule VI: Amendments and Divisions**

No motion or proposition on a subject different from that under consideration shall be admitted under color of an amendment. All questions shall be divided - when the sense will admit of it - on demand of any member.

#### **Rule VII: Endorsements and Presentation**

All resolutions, ordinances or orders shall be endorsed with the name of the mover thereon, and shall be taken up in the order of their presentation, unless otherwise ordered by the Board, or unless the subsequent motion be previous in its nature; except that in naming sums and fixing times, the largest sums and the longest time shall be put first.

**Rule VIII: Calls to Order**

No member speaking shall be interrupted by another, except by a call to order or to correct a mistake. If any member, in speaking or otherwise transgress the rules of the Board, the presiding officer shall, and any member may, call to order, in which case the member so called to order shall sit down, unless permitted to explain. When there is an appeal to the Board, and a decision in favor of the member called to order, he shall be at liberty to proceed, but not otherwise.

**Rule IX: Motion to Reconsider**

The mover of a question may withdraw his motion at any time before a decision or amendment, and when a motion has been carried in the affirmative or negative, it shall be in order for any member who voted with the majority to move a reconsideration thereof at the same, or at a meeting next succeeding that at which the vote was passed; and such motion shall take precedence of all other questions except a motion to fix the time to which to adjourn, and to adjourn; but no question can be twice reconsidered, nor can a vote which has caused action that cannot be reversed or reconsidered. Upon passage of a motion to reconsider, the matter is back pending before the body for further action as appropriate.

**Rule X: All Must Vote**

No member shall be excused from voting on any question unless he is personally interested in the result, except by unanimous consent. Councilmembers should familiarize themselves with the provisions of Bridgeport Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2.38 *Code of Ethics*. When a Councilmember abstains from voting, he shall state generally the nature of the conflict of interest justifying such abstention. No member shall be permitted, under any circumstances whatever, to vote after the decision is announced from the chair.

**Rule XI: Motion in Writing**

When a motion is made and seconded it shall be stated by the presiding officer, or being in writing shall be read aloud, before debated. Every motion shall be reduced to writing, if the presiding officer or any member desires it.

**Rule XII: Council Committees**

At the commencement of the City Council year, the following standing committees, each to consist of seven councilpersons, shall be appointed by the President of the City Council and ratified by the City Council. The President may remove and/or reassign to a different committee any Committee Member upon ratification by the City Council. The reason (including but not limited to a pattern of poor committee attendance) for the removal or reassignment shall be stated for the record by the President prior to the City Council vote to ratify the President's action to remove or reassign. The first two (2) Councilpersons named on each standing committee shall be Co-Chairpersons of said Committee. The President of the City Council shall be an alternate for each member of each committee; but may only serve as an alternate for one committee member at each committee meeting. When serving as an alternate for a committee Co-Chairperson, the Council President shall exercise all the powers and authority and perform all the duties of the Co-Chair for whom he is serving as alternate, including presiding over the committee meeting in the event both Co-Chairs are absent. In the event both Co-Chairs and the

President all are absent from a committee meeting, but nonetheless there is a quorum of the committee present, those committee members in attendance shall elect (by majority vote) a temporary chairperson from amongst themselves to serve as presiding officer for the duration of the committee meeting.

Committee on Ordinances

Committee on Public Safety and Transportation

Committee on Contracts

Committee on Economic and Community Development and Environment

Committee on Miscellaneous Matters

Committee on Education and Social Services

Committee on Budget and Appropriations

Joint Committee

The Joint Committee becomes a single committee for the purposes of the item or items referred to it. The membership of the Joint Committee is comprised of the members of Committees it formed from, with any members serving on more than one of the committees from which the Joint Committee is formed, counting as a single member of the Joint Committee and having only a single vote on the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee shall be chaired by the Co-chairs of the committees from which it is formed, with the chairmanship being filled on a rotating basis, in an order agreed to by the co-chairs or by vote of the Joint Committee in the event the co-chairs cannot agree upon the matter.

### **Rule XIII: References to Committees**

Unless acted upon by the consent of two-thirds of those present, the following references shall be made of all matters presented to the City Council, except as otherwise noted in the case of the Committee on Public Safety and Transportation:

1. All bills for material or labor furnished to the City, and all matters of finance, excepting as herein otherwise referred, shall be referred to the Committee on Budget and Appropriations.
2. All resolutions or petitions concerning streets, sidewalks, sewers, bridges, the airport or matters relating to the transportation infrastructure of the City shall be referred to the Committee on Public Safety and Transportation.
3. All resolutions or petitions asking for tax refunds or other moneys or for monetary damages for injuries sustained through the negligence of the City, or because of any statutory claim for money against the City shall be referred to the Committee on Miscellaneous Matters; except for the purposes of deferred or tax abatements only, such matters shall be referred to joint committee of Miscellaneous Matters and Budget.

4. All resolutions or petitions relating to contracts to be entered into which require City Council approval, shall be referred to the Committee on Contracts.
5. All resolutions or petitions relating to printing of City Council proceedings, the celebration of holidays, Rules of Order of the City Council, appointments to any Boards or Commissions requiring City Council approval, except Police and Fire Commissioners or any other matter for the reference of which no other provision is herein made, shall be referred to the Committee on Miscellaneous Matters.
6. All resolutions or petitions relating to the adoption or amending of any ordinance or any matter relating to general government of the City, excepting as herein otherwise provided, shall be referred to the Committee on Ordinances.
7. All resolutions or petitions relating to education shall be referred to the Committee on Education and Social Services.
8. All resolutions or petitions relating to external and internal conditions affecting the health and welfare of the citizens of Bridgeport and the environment by pollutants or ecological poisons by any source, or grants and other funds or gifts from public and private agencies, including the State and Federal governments or the ecological balance of nature shall be referred to the Committee on Economic and Community Development and Environment.
9. All resolutions or petitions relating to matters involving economic development and community development shall be referred to the Committee on Economic and Community Development and Environment (ECDE). In the event a matter involves a proposed third-party contract, then it shall be referred to joint committee comprised of the members of the Committee on ECDE and the Committee on Contracts.
10. The Committee on Public Safety and Transportation (“the Committee”) and shall have sole or shared jurisdiction over all matters relating to the Police Department, the Fire Department and Emergency Management as follows:
  - A. The requested budgets of the Police and Fire Departments shall be reviewed by the Committee and the Committee will report its recommendations to the Committee on Budget and Appropriations.
  - B. All ordinances relating to public safety shall be reviewed by the Committee and the Committee will report its recommendations to the Committee on Ordinances.
  - C. All Appointments to the Police and Fire Commissions shall be the jurisdiction of the Committee.
  - D. The Committee shall review and recommend upon Police and Fire Department capacity issues as they relate to economic and community development issues and projects.
  - E. All Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) proposals (i.e., Phoenix Project) shall be handled by the Committee.
  - F. The Committee shall require the submission of an annual Emergency Management Plan and recommend modifications or acceptance by the Administration.

- G. The Committee shall request annual reports on the state of public safety from the Police Chief and Fire Chief to be submitted during the month of April.
  - H. The Committee shall review the certification of all special police officers for all municipal and quasi-municipal departments and agencies including the Board of Education, the Bridgeport Housing Authority, and the Bridgeport Transportation Center.
  - I. All grant applications regarding public safety shall be within the jurisdiction of the Committee.
  - J. The Committee shall review street lighting as it relates to crime prevention while being cognizant of the costs incurred by the City.
  - K. The Committee shall encourage and facilitate the efforts of the Bridgeport Police Department with any and all community policing initiatives.
  - L. The Committee shall establish and recommend a Public Safety Officer of the Year program with various categories in order to give recognition for outstanding service and to improve morale within the uniformed departments.
11. The City Clerk shall report to the City Council at the first meeting in October in each year, the substance of all resolutions, petitions or other matters then pending before the various committees.
12. Any communication, petition, report or resolution for presentation at a meeting of the City Council shall be filed at the Office of the City Clerk no later than 4:30 p.m. on the Wednesday preceding the Council meeting. When a legal holiday occurs on the Wednesday or Thursday prior to a City Council meeting, any communication, petition, report, or resolution for presentation at said meeting shall be filed at the Office of the City Clerk no later than 4:30 p.m. on the Tuesday preceding the holiday.
13. The Office of Policy and Management (OPM) shall submit with all requests for budget transfers between line items, all supporting documentation, including but not limited to, a written justification for said transfers and any contracts or agreements funded by said transfers.
14. In addition, each committee is hereby expressly authorized (without requirement of any prior referral of business via specific resolution or petition from the full City Council) to conduct information meetings to collect (via documentation), testimony, or otherwise) data concerning, and to discuss, such general substantive areas of legislative business for which they have been assigned jurisdiction herein. By way of example, the Committee on Contracts is authorized and empowered with respect to expiring City labor agreements to consult with the City's Director of Labor Relations and/or his designee(s) prior to the City entering into negotiations for successor agreements with the various unions representing City employees, for purposes of discussing employment related matters of concern to the City Council that are subject to collective bargaining. The Labor Relations Director shall notify the co-chairpersons of the Committee on Contracts not less than one hundred and eighty (180) days prior to the expiration of any City collective bargaining agreements.
15. All references to any committee by any City agency, board, commission and/or employee must include an executive summary or transmittal letter that sets forth the following data if and as applicable: (a) title of submission, (b) submitting entity, (c) contact person and information,



(d) deadline for approval and basis for same, (e) substantive summary of matter, (f) city council action requested, (g) financial impact analysis – to include best reasonable estimates as to all expenditure and revenue effects of the reference if approved as requested, (h) departmental budget line-item to which direct expenditures (including grant matching funds) are anticipated to be charged and (i) draft proposed motion(s) for city council adoption. Copies of all executive summaries shall be distributed to each councilperson electronically and by hardcopy when the matter is referred by the full city council to committee for review.

#### **Rule XIV: Duties of Committees**

It shall be the duty of each Committee, Board or City Officer to whom may be referred any petition, matter or thing with instruction to report, to present their report thereon within sixty (60) days after such reference, or sooner if specially directed, or ask for further time. If the report has not been forthcoming within ninety (90) days, four (4) members of the Committee in question may submit a written petition to the Council President to call a Special Committee Meeting. If the Petition is accepted, the Council President shall establish the date, time and location of the meeting for Committee membership and public notification.

#### **Rule XV: Committee Reports**

All reports of Committees, Boards or City Officers shall be in writing and accompanied by such order, resolution or bill as said Committee, Board or Officer reporting shall recommend for the action of the Board. Upon the reading of a report, if no motion is made, the question shall always be upon the order question is disposed of, upon the acceptance of the report. Orders, resolutions or bills reported by any Committee, Board or Officers may be recommitted, together with the report, at anytime before their passage or rejection. A failed Committee vote on a motion to approve any item referred by the City Council to the Committee (absent any further action by the Committee) shall constitute a recommendation by the Committee for denial and shall so constitute the majority report of the Committee. However, in the event that the defeat of the motion to approve is subsequently followed at the same meeting by further Committee action on the item (i.e. passage of motion to reconsider or to amend, and subsequent motion to approve or deny), the subsequent action would constitute the Committee's majority report. Further, in the event that the defeat of the motion to approve is subsequently followed at the same meeting by passage of motion to table, then the matter would remain tabled in Committee until further Committee action.

#### **Rule XVI: Committee Purchases**

No committee shall enter into any contract with any of its members, nor purchase nor authorize the purchase of any articles of any such member.

#### **Rule XVII. Committee Clerks**

The Clerk of the Board to which any petition, order or resolution shall be first presented, shall endorse thereon a statement of the contents or object of such petition, order or resolution, and action taken thereon, together with the date thereof.

#### **Rule XVIII: Committee Appointments**

All Special Committees (except as otherwise provided for) shall be appointed by the President of the City Council and ratified by the City Council; said appointment to be announced

during a session of the Council. The first two (2) Councilpersons named on each special committee shall be co-chairpersons of said committee. The President of the City Council shall be an alternate for each member of each special committee, but may only serve as an alternate for one committee member at each committee meeting. When serving as an alternate for a committee Co-Chairperson, the Council President shall exercise all the powers and authority and perform all the duties of the Co-Chair for whom he is serving as alternate, including presiding over the committee meeting in the event both Co-Chairs are absent. In the event both Co-Chairs and the President all are absent from a committee meeting, but nonetheless there is a quorum of the Committee present, those committee members in attendance shall elect (by majority vote) a temporary chairperson from amongst themselves to serve as presiding officer for the duration of the committee meeting.

### **Rule XIX: Minority Reports**

Whenever a minority report is submitted by any committee of the City Council the same shall be acted upon by this body, pursuant to Robert's Rules of Order. A majority vote is required to receive a minority report; the question is undebatable. When the minority report is presented it is for information, and it cannot be acted upon except by a motion to substitute it for the report of the committee. Whether the views of the minority are formally presented or not, however, any member can move that resolutions proposed by the committee be amended or that some other appropriate action be taken.

### **Rule XX: Order of Business**

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting.
2. Mayor's Message - Veto.
3. Rules.
4. Public Hearings.
5. Election of Officers.
6. Bills and Communications.
7. Reading of Petitions.
8. Reading of Reports:
  - Board of Police Commissioners.
  - Board of Fire Commissioners.
  - Board of Park Commissioners.
  - Board of Appraisal of Benefits and Damages.
  - Committee on Budget and Appropriations.
  - Committee on Ordinances.
  - Committee on Public Safety and Transportation.
  - Committee on Economic and Community Development and Environment.
  - Committee on Miscellaneous Matters (Public Affairs, Appointments and Claims).
  - Committee on Contracts.
  - Committee on Education and Social Services.
  - Special Committees.
  - City Attorney.
  - Comptroller/Finance Director.
  - Public Facilities Director.
  - City Engineer.
  - Miscellaneous Reports.
9. Unfinished Business.

All matters previously tabled by the Council which the council has expressly stated should not be referred to committee.

10. Orders and Resolutions.

This order of proceeding shall be adhered to as a rule except in the case of special assignments which shall be heard at the time assigned.

**Rule XXI: Robert's Rules of Order**

All differences of opinion in regard to points of order or modes of proceeding not herein otherwise provided for, shall be governed by Parliamentary practice as set forth in Robert's Rules of Order.

**Rule XXII: Change of Rules**

Any of the foregoing rules may be repealed or amended or new ones added, by a majority vote of all the members of the City Council, provided descriptive notice of so doing has been given in writing at the last preceding meeting.

**Rule XXIII: Suspension of Rules**

These rules shall not be suspended at any City Council meeting, except upon a majority vote of those present and voting; and the motion to do so shall state just what rule it is proposed to suspend and for what purpose, and shall be decided without debate or amendment.

**Rule XXIV: Interview of Prospective Appointees**

A. Each committee, before taking any action shall interview, in person, any prospective appointee to any board or commission, or any department head seeking creation of any new position or increase in salary for any position.

B. All reappointments to any Board or Commission, which are submitted to the Committee on Miscellaneous Matters, shall not have to be interviewed a second time during the confirmation process. An exception to this rule will be when a minimum of five (5) City Council Members request an interview to be done with candidates prior to reappointment at a committee meeting. All prior attendance records, background and ethics checks for the previous term shall be submitted to the Committee prior to the reappointment at a committee meeting.

**Rule XXV: Public Speaking Forum**

There shall be a public speaking forum before the City Council on each night that the City Council meets in regular session commencing one-half hour prior to the scheduled commencement of the Council meeting. The right to address the City Council shall be granted to a maximum of ten (10) speakers. Each speaker shall be a Bridgeport resident or taxpayer of the city or a duly authorized representative of a city-based organization or company speaking on behalf of such organization or company.

Any such person desiring to address the City Council at such forum shall be permitted three (3) minutes to speak. In order to be eligible to speak, one must either: (a) contact the City Council, through the City Clerk's Office no later than 4:30 p.m. on the Wednesday preceding the City Council meeting or (b) sign up on the day of the meeting at the City Council chambers prior

to the 6:30 p.m. start of the public speaking forum. Such requests shall be honored on a first come, first served, basis. When signing up to speak, persons shall identify the subject upon which they will be speaking; with subject matters on that meeting's City Council agenda preferred.

The minutes of said forum shall be recorded by the Council stenographer and attendance of the Councilpersons at said forum shall be taken prior to the convening of said forum.

In addressing the City Council, speakers shall: confine their address to their listed topic or subject matter; refrain from personal character or political attacks on Councilpersons or other persons; be courteous and not use unbecoming, abusive, inflammatory, defamatory or unparliamentary language; and shall avoid personalities. Any speaker who violates these rules of decorum may have his opportunity to address the City Council at this and future meetings suspended or revoked by the Council President.

#### **Rule XXVI: Conduct in City Council**

In speaking, City Council members shall refrain from mentioning any other member by name, shall confine themselves to the question, shall be courteous and not use unbecoming, abusive, or unparliamentary language, and shall avoid personalities.

Any member who, in debate or otherwise, indulges in personalities or makes charges reflecting upon the character of another member, shall make an apology in open session at the meeting at which offense is committed, or at the next succeeding regular meeting, and, failing to do so, shall be named by the President or held in contempt, and suspended from further participation in debate until said apology is made.

#### **Rule XXVII: Council President's Term**

Beginning at the first Council Meeting in December 1993 the term of the Council President shall be two (2) years. The Mayor cannot break a tie in the event of a Council tie for the election of Council President.

#### **Rule XXVIII: Salaries of Elected Officials**

The City Council must review the salaries of elected officials in even numbered years.

#### **Rule XXIX: Consent Calendar**

There shall be a consent calendar consisting of such items that have been unanimously approved out of committee. Those items shall be placed on a list to be voted on together as one vote. Any item can be removed from said calendar by a simple request from any council member.

The items remaining on the consent calendar will be read into the record by the City Clerk and voted upon as one consolidated item. The removed items will be presented by the respective committee chairpersons, discussed, and voted on individually.

**Rule XXX: Sale of Surplus City Property**

Whenever City Council permission is sought for authority to dispose of surplus municipal real property, the submission to the City Council shall include either:

- A. An AIA (American Institute of Architects) appraisal of FMV (fair market value) or
- B. A Report from the City Tax Assessor setting forth the then current assessed value for taxation purpose.

No approval of such proposed sale shall occur absent such required valuation data, except upon two-thirds vote of the entire City Council.

**Rule XXXI: Withdrawal of Matters**

Once a matter has been submitted to the City Council, including those referred to a committee for report, any request to withdraw must be made in writing by the submitting party; and the withdrawal of such pending City Council matter is subject to approval by the City Council.

**Rule XXXII: Biennial Annual Review of Rules of Order**

In December of each even-numbered year, the President shall appoint a Special Committee on Rules, comprised of seven (7) Councilpersons. The committee shall review the current set of rules and recommend to the full City Council any proposed amendments thereto for adoption.

**Rule XXXIII: Rules Subordinate to City Charter and Code of Ordinances**

In the event that any of these Rules of Order conflict with the provisions of the Bridgeport City Charter (in particular Chapter 5) or Code of Ordinances, the terms of the Charter or Code shall prevail.