

STANDING RULES FOR THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LAUREL, MARYLAND

COUNCIL MEETINGS

1. OPEN MEETINGS

Meetings and work sessions of the Mayor and City Council shall be open to the public except when such meetings are held in executive session pursuant to the provisions of the City Charter and the State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Open Meetings Law. Citizens of the City shall have a reasonable opportunity to be heard at open meetings in regard to any matter being considered. Any citizen desiring to speak on a matter being considered by the Council shall enter his/her name on the sign-up sheet before the meeting is called to order. When recognized, such citizen shall state his/her name and address and shall confine himself/herself to the question at hand, avoid personalities, and refrain from impugning the motives of any member's argument or vote, or the statements of any other citizen or person. No citizen shall speak more than once upon any subject until every other citizen choosing to speak thereon shall have spoken.

The President of the City Council may, at his/her discretion, recognize any member of the general public who has failed to enter his/her name on the sign-up sheet as hereinbefore provided.

2. NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING OR WORK SESSIONS

A statement that a special meeting or work session will be held, together with the date, time and location, as well as the purpose of such meeting or work session, shall be posted conspicuously at City Hall within 48 hours of such meeting or work session. Failure to post such notice shall not invalidate any action taken at such meeting or work session.

3. ELECTION OF PRESIDENT

The City Council shall elect by majority vote one of its members as President of the City Council at the second Mayor and City Council meeting in November. In the event that the President is unable to attend meetings or work sessions of the City Council he/she shall appoint a President pro tem to conduct meetings or work sessions in his/her absence during his/her term. In the event of the temporary absence of both the President and the President pro tem, the three remaining City Council members shall appoint, by motion, a President pro tem to conduct such meetings or work sessions.

4. PRESIDENT

The President of the City Council, or in his/her absence, the President pro tem, shall preside at all meetings or work sessions of the Mayor and City Council. At the hour appointed for the Mayor and City Council to meet, the President or in his/her absence the President pro tem, shall take the chair and immediately call the members to order. The roll shall be called by the Clerk who shall enter in the minutes of the meeting the names of the members present.

DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERS

5. RIGHT OF FLOOR

Before speaking on any matter a member shall seek the floor by addressing the presiding officer. When recognized by the presiding officer, a member shall confine himself/herself to the question under debate, avoid personalities, and refrain from impugning the motives of any other member's argument or vote. No Council member shall interrupt another Council member in debate without his/her consent, and to obtain such consent he/she shall first address the presiding officer.

6. RIGHT OF APPEAL

Any member may appeal to the Council of a ruling on the decision of the presiding officer. The member making the appeal may briefly state his/her reason for appeal, and the presiding officer may briefly explain his/her ruling, but there shall be no debate on the appeal. The presiding officer shall put the question, "Shall the decision of the presiding officer be sustained?" If a majority of the members present vote "Yes, the ruling of the presiding officer is sustained; otherwise, it is overruled.

7. VOTING

Every member present, when a question is put, shall vote either "Yes", "No", or abstain. Each member may make a brief statement explaining the reasons for his/her vote. No motion to suspend the rules with respect to voting on ordinances or resolutions shall be in order exactly as provided in Rule 33.

8. DISORDERLY CONDUCT OR VIOLATION OF RULES

If the Mayor or a Council member indulges in any language or conduct unbecoming to his/her office, he/she shall be called to order by the presiding officer and in such case the offending member shall lose the floor and shall not proceed without the approval of the majority of the members present. The Council may, by vote of not less than four members, expel the Mayor or a member from a meeting for disorderly conduct or the violation of Council rules.

9. DEMONSTRATION OR DISORDER AMONG BYSTANDERS

If any confusion, demonstration or disorder arises in the Council Chamber, the presiding officer may upon his/her own initiative or upon the request of any member enforce order. If the

offending person or persons be a spectator, he/she or they may be ejected from the Chamber. If any member of Council shall object to the ruling of the presiding officer, he/shall have the right to appeal to the Council as provided in Rule 6.

COUNCIL PROCEDURE

10. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The business of all regular meetings of the Council shall be transacted in the following order; provided, however, that the President or the President pro tem when acting for the President, may take any item of business out of order unless objected to by a majority of the members of the Council.

1. Call to order.
2. Blessing.
3. Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Roll Call.
5. Report of the Mayor and City Council.
6. General Public Hearing.
7. Agenda Items.

11. AGENDA

The Clerk of the City Council shall prepare the Agenda for each regular meeting, special meetings, and work sessions. At least seven (7) days prior to each regular and special meeting and work session, the President, or in his/her absence the President pro tem, shall approve and provide each member of the Council and the Mayor with a copy of the Agenda for the forthcoming meeting. The President or in his/her absence the President pro tem may add or delete items from the agenda prior to the preparation of the agenda by the Clerk to the City Council at the discretion of the President.

12. INTRODUCTION AND PASSAGE OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

Ordinances and Resolutions shall be introduced in the Council only in written or printed form. All ordinances except ordinances making appropriations and ordinances codifying or rearranging existing ordinances or enacting a code or ordinances, shall be confined to one subject, and the subject or subjects or all ordinances shall be clearly expressed in the title. Ordinances making appropriations shall be confined to the subject of appropriations. No Ordinances and Resolutions may be introduced for first reading by any member of Council until reviewed by the City Attorney and placed on the agenda by the Council President or in his/her absence the president pro tem. No ordinance or resolution shall be passed until it has been read on two separate days. Any reading of an ordinances or resolution shall be by title only unless a full reading is required by a majority of the members of the City Council. The “Yes” and “No”

shall be taken upon the passage of all ordinances and resolutions and entered in the minutes of the proceedings.

13. EMERGENCY ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

When a motion to suspend the rules to dispense with the requirements for reading of ordinances and resolutions on two separate days fails to receive an affirmative vote of four members, the ordinance or resolution shall go over to the next regular meeting of the Council. (See Rule No. 33 regarding Suspension of Rules.)

14. PRECEDENCE OF MOTIONS

When a question is before the Council, no motion shall be entertained except; (a) to fix the hour of adjournment, (b) to adjourn, (c) to lay on the table, (d) for the previous questions, (e) to postpone to a certain time, (f) to refer, (g) to amend, (h) to postpone indefinitely. These motions shall have precedence in the order indicated. Any such motion, except a motion to amend, to postpone to a certain time, to refer, and to postpone indefinitely, shall be put to a vote without debate.

15. AGENDA OUT OF REGULAR ORDER

The presiding officer may at any time permit a member to introduce an agenda item out of the regular order.

16. MOTION TO ADJOURN – WHEN NOT IN ORDER – NOT DEBATABLE

A motion to adjourn shall be in order at any time, except as follows: (a) when repeated without intervening business or discussions; (b) when made as an interruption of a member while speaking; (c) when the previous question has been ordered; and (d) while a vote is being taken. A motion to adjourn is not debatable.

17. MOTION TO LAY ON THE TABLE

A motion to lay on the table shall preclude all amendments or debate on the subject under consideration. If the motion shall prevail, the consideration of the subject may be resumed at any time by a majority vote under new business, at a subsequent meeting unless the motion was date specific.

18. THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

When the previous question is moved and seconded by one other member, it shall be put as follows: “Shall the main question not be put?” There shall be no further amendment or debate, but pending amendment shall be put in their order before the main question. If the question, “Shall the main question now be put?” be approved by a majority of the members present, the main question shall then be voted upon. If the question be decided in the negative, then the main question remains before the Council.

19. DIVISION OF QUESTION

If a question contains two or more divisible propositions, the presiding officer, upon request of a member, may divide the same.

20. AMEND AND AMENDMENT

A motion to amend an amendment shall be in order, but one to amend an amendment to an amendment shall not be introduced. An amendment modifying the intention of a motion shall be in order, but an amendment relating to a different matter shall not be in order.

21. MOTION TO POSTPONE

All motions to postpone to a certain time, excepting a motion to postpone indefinitely, may be amended as to time. If a motion to postpone indefinitely is carried, the principal question shall be declared lost.

22. RECONSIDERATION

After the decision on any question, any member who voted with the majority may be to reconsider any action at the same or the net succeeding meeting. A motion to reconsider shall require the approval of at least three (3) members of the Council. After a motion for reconsideration has once been acted upon, no other motion for reconsideration thereof shall be made without unanimous consent of all members of the Council.

23. PROCEDURE IN ABSENCE OF RULE

In the absence of a rule to govern a point of procedure, the practice approved of in the most recent edition of Roberts Rule of Order shall prevail.

24. TIE VOTES

In case of a tie in the vote on any proposal, the proposal shall be considered lost.

25. COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES

The function, authority, and responsibility of any commission/committee of the City Council, the number of persons to be on the commission/committee, method of selection or appointment of members of the commission/committee, reports to be required of the commission/committee, and other pertinent information necessary for the proper functions of the commission/committee shall be set forth by the City Council. Commission/committee appointments shall be announced as an agenda item.

26. Commission/Committee POWERS

No commission/committee of any kind shall have the power to employ any person for, or on behalf of the City or to incur any expense. The commission/committee may request the City Administrator and all Department Heads to furnish information and assistance which may be granted provided it is pertinent to the matter before the commission/committee and is not in violation of provisions of the Charter or policies established by the Council.

27. REPORTS OF Commission/COMMITTEES

Commission/committees shall submit reports from time to time as requested by the City Council. All reports shall be in writing and provided to the Clerk to the City Council and enough copies for each member of the Council, Mayor and City Administrator.

28. OPEN MEETINGS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES

All committee meetings appointed by the City Council shall be open to the public except when the committee, by a vote of the majority of its members, goes into a closed session. Notice of committee meetings shall be conspicuously posted in City Hall at least 24 hours prior to such meeting when at all possible.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

29. INTRODUCTION

All ordinances and resolutions shall be introduced in the Council in written form with the name of the Council member introducing same endorsed thereon. Ordinances and resolutions do not require a second for introduction for first reading but must be reviewed by the City Attorney and placed on the agenda by the President of the City Council.

30. FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The City Council may from time to time require proposed legislation to contain a brief statement setting forth its fiscal impact.

COUNCIL EXPENSE ALLOWANCE

Majority of the Council must agree to the expenditure of funds from this account.

31. DISTRIBUTION OF COPIES

Copies of all ordinances and resolutions shall be prepared for distribution to all members of the Council, the Mayor, the City Administrator, and the City Clerk at the meetings at which the ordinance or resolution is introduced. Whenever any member of the Council is absent from such meeting, the City Clerk shall ensure the member is provided the meeting information.

32. REFERENCE

If the Council so desires, any pending ordinance or resolution may be referred to the Mayor, any member, to any standing or special commission/committee for study or recommendations, to the City Solicitor, or to the City Administrator for study, recommendations, redrafting, etc.

MISCELLANEOUS

33. SUSPENSION OF RULES

Any provision of these rules not governed by the Charter, State Law, or ordinance may be temporarily suspended at any meeting of the Council by a vote of not less than four members of the Council. If vacancies on the Council occur that result in only three members sitting as the Council, then three votes shall be required to suspend the rules.

34. REPORT OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

The report is to be used to present any item or fact of interest by the City Council, report current or future events, and to permit the Mayor and staff to report on conditions in and on the City or departments; answers may be given to constituent questions from previous meetings, accept and read commission/committee reports, make presentations and give awards. Neither commission/committee appointment announcements nor decision on any issue is to be made during the report. Each member is limited to 5 minutes unless the City Council President allows the member more time.

35. RECORDING, PHOTOGRAPHING AND VIDEOTAPING -

The authority for these procedures/rules is stated in Md. Ann. Code, State Govt. Article § 10-507(b). The standard to be applied is one of reasonableness so as not to disrupt the Meeting. The citizen or member of the press must request permission before the Meeting of the Council President to proceed in this manner.

Amended November 26, 2012 – Resolution No. 13-12

Amended April 27, 2015 – Resolution No. 7-15

COUNCIL EXPENSE ALLOWANCE

Majority of the Council must agree to the expenditure of funds from this account.