

CITY OF GEORGE WEST CITY COUNCIL POLICIES

1. RULES OF PROCEDURE AND CONDUCT

- A. The City Council shall meet in regular session at 7:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month. The time and date for a regular meeting may be changed as deemed advisable by majority vote of the City Council and pursuant to all pertinent rules and policies.
- B. Regular meetings, special meetings and workshop sessions shall be held at City Hall or any other building within the city as determined by the City Council.
- C. Special meetings and Workshop Sessions may be called by the Mayor or two Council Members pursuant to all pertinent rules and policies.
- D. A Workshop Session is a meeting for the sole purpose of gathering information and discussing public business without taking any formal action. A Town Hall meeting is a meeting for the sole purpose of gathering information and discussing public business with public input and recommendations. No formal action will be taken by the Council during Town Hall Meetings.
- E. The City Council shall conduct all meetings in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act as well as all other applicable State law.
- F. The City Council agenda will be prepared and assembled jointly by the City Manager and the City Secretary consistent with the Texas Open Meetings Act. Items may be placed on the agenda by the Mayor, the City Manager or at least two (2) Councilmembers who shall confirm their request with the office of the City Secretary. A Councilmember wishing to place an item on the agenda shall notify the City Secretary who shall inquire of the other Councilmembers whether they wish to join the request. If the City Secretary determines that at least two (2) Councilmembers are requesting that an item be placed on the agenda, the item shall be placed on the agenda. Any item on the agenda is subject to discussion and action by the City Council unless specifically limited in the agenda notice to discussion only.
- G. The order of business shall be set forth in the agenda. Said order shall be followed unless modified by the Mayor or a majority of the City Council present and voting. On any item for which the City Council permits public comment, time limitations may be set on an equitable basis.
- H. The Mayor, Mayor Pro-Tem or other presiding officer shall have the powers and duties incumbent on a presiding officer. All questions of order shall be decided by the presiding officer, subject to appeal to the City Council.
- I. Councilmembers will not interrupt one another and will speak only when recognized by the presiding officer. The presiding officer will recognize Councilmembers request to speak in the order of their request.
- J. The City Secretary shall act as clerk of the City Council, shall accurately keep minutes and all other records required by law to be kept of City Council proceedings, shall record all votes taken by the City Council and shall make all publications and notices required by law.

- K. The votes of the Mayor and all Councilmembers shall be taken and recorded upon the consideration of all matters acted upon and same shall be entered in the minutes of the meeting. The order of voting shall be determined by the presiding officer.
- L. A majority of Council Members holding office shall constitute a quorum.
- M. Except as otherwise required by law, final passage of an ordinance or resolution shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of all Council Members holding office. All other matters shall require a majority of Council Members present and voting.
- N. Any Councilmember who voted with the prevailing side on any question may move its reconsideration no later than the next regular meeting. Reconsideration shall require the affirmative vote of four (4) Councilmembers.
- O. A motion to **postpone** an agenda item postpones the agenda item to a specific later date as specified in the motion. If a later date is not specific in the motion, the agenda item must be considered at the next regular council meeting. If the agenda item is postponed indefinitely, the agenda item can no longer be considered by the Council unless it is subject to a successful motion for reconsideration. A motion to **table** an agenda item postpones consideration of the agenda item until a later time during the same council meeting. A tabled agenda item must be considered by the Council before adjournment of the council meeting at which the motion to table is made regardless of the time of duration of the meeting.
- P. The most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern Council proceedings unless in conflict with these rules or other law. City Council's failure to comply with Robert's Rules of Order shall not invalidate any action taken by the City Council.
- Q. Any of the rules and policies prescribed herein may be suspended by a majority of all Council Members holding office for good cause shown.
- R. If an agenda item has been recommended by a specific Council Member, it should be noted as such in the agenda by using "Sponsored by" and the Council Member's name after the said agenda item if the council member chooses to do so.

2. RULES OF DECORUM

In order to properly conduct the business of the City in an orderly way and to properly discharge its duties, the City Council must allow for a variety of differing and sometime contradicting viewpoints. To obtain all relevant information and provide an opportunity for a fair airing of differing viewpoints, these rules of decorum are necessary. The following rules are adopted to assist in the orderly deliberation of matters affecting the City and its citizens.

- A. The City Secretary shall arrange to have the flags of the United States and the State of Texas properly and prominently displayed within the Council Chamber.
- B. Immediately after the meeting has been called to order, the City Secretary shall call the roll of the City Council and required Charter officers and announce the results of such roll call. The City Secretary shall declare if a quorum is present and the necessary Charter officers present.

- C. Every meeting shall begin with an invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the flag of the State of Texas.
- D. Every meeting shall be electronically recorded to included audio and visual.
- E. While the City Council is in session there shall be:
- a. No smoking of any substance in Council Chambers;
 - b. No consumption of food or alcoholic beverages of any kind by the audience;
 - c. No propping of feet on tables or chairs;
 - d. No loud noises, talking, shouting, gesturing, derogatory comments, etc.;
 - e. No loud demonstration for or against any issue, speaker, etc.;
 - f. No applause, booing, hissing, singing or other disruptive behavior;
 - g. No wearing of hats, caps or headgear except for medical or religious purpose.
 - h. Silence all electronic devices
- F. No Councilmember, staff person or member of the audience shall berate, embarrass, accuse or show any personal disrespect to any other Councilmember, staff member or member of the audience at any Council meeting.
- G. Demonstrations shall not be permitted while the City Council is in session, including marches, chanting, picketing, any other coercive, argumentative political and/or disruptive behavior of any kind.
- H. Disruptive banners, placards, signs, posters, slogans and any type of political advertisement are prohibited from Council Chamber while the Council is in session.
- I. Maps, photographs, drawings, plats, artist renderings, charts, graphs and other similar material useful and necessary to a presentation before Council are allowed. The City Council, by majority vote, will make the final determination on whether any particular material is useful and necessary. This determination is final.
- J. In addressing the City Council, members of the audience shall rise, approach the podium, and remain standing while addressing the City Council. They shall begin by giving their full name and address. They shall remain at the podium and speak into the microphone for the recording of the proceedings. Citizens shall not approach the City Council table except with permission or request of the Mayor or a Councilmember.
- K. Council members, city staff and citizens shall be prompt in all sessions of the City Council and in the conduct of city business. Time limitations imposed during all meetings shall be strictly enforced.
- L. Council members, city staff and citizens shall be courteous, polite, concise, and respectful of one another. The letter and spirit of these policies should be respected by all so that the City Council may fairly and adequately hear all sides of an issue and by due deliberation render a decision in the best interest of the city.
- M. All remarks shall be addressed to the Mayor and City Council and not to Councilmembers individually nor to the audience in general. Council members shall be referred to by title and/or title with surname.

- N. Citizens have a right, and are encouraged to present their views to the City Council on items being considered. Such views should be presented in a factual, precise and courteous manner and at the time indicated by the presiding officer. Citizens should respect all time limits. Loud, boisterous, profane or obscene language will not be allowed or tolerated.
- O. A violation of these rules of decorum by a citizen will subject the citizen to being removed from the meeting. A violation of these rules of decorum by a Council member will subject the Councilmember to a fine not to exceed \$25.00 to be assessed by the Council. The City Manager shall cause the amount penalized to be deducted from the Councilmember's next paycheck.

The City Council, by majority vote, will make the final determination on what constitutes a violation of these rules. *The determination is final.*

3. SPECIAL MEETINGS – EMERGENCY MEETINGS

Recognizing that Section 3.12 of the George West City Charter allows for the calling of special meetings by either the Mayor or two (2) Council Members, and desiring to address and further clarify the authority to call special meetings; and furthermore to provide for the calling of emergency meetings and provide a clear definition of an "emergency", the following policies are hereby adopted:

- A. The Mayor is authorized to call a special meeting of the City Council at any time he deems it necessary and in the best interest of the city. In his absence, the Mayor Pro-Tem assumes this authority. Any two Councilmembers are authorized to call a special meeting of the City Council if the Mayor is absent from the city or otherwise unable to perform his duties and the Mayor Pro-Tem is likewise unable to assume this authority. The calling of special meetings should be done only when necessary and in the best interest of the city and with due consideration for the compensation limitation found in Section 3.03 of the George West City Charter.
- B. Emergency meetings may be called as set out in Section A of this policy. An "emergency" is defined as any condition involving an immediate need to preserve and protect public property or the public good, the need for the immediate and efficient utilization of physical resources in the city, the need for the immediate and equitable institution of zoning changes in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens.

4. GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC USE OF PROPERTY AND FACILITIES

City property and facilities should be made available when possible to community nonprofit organizations for meetings or nonprofit activities whenever it can be done with minimal distraction from daily city operations. Priority for use of city property and facilities should always be given to City Boards, Commissions, Committees and other city related activities, however nonprofit organizations should also be allowed to use city property and facilities pursuant to the following guidelines:

- A. Applications for use of property or facilities should be obtained from and submitted to the City Secretary's Office in advance.
- B. The grant or denial of said applications and requests will be decided by the City Manager, subject to any appeal to the City Council.
- C. Organizations using the property or facilities will be responsible for the security, set up, clean up and all other tasks involved in the use.
- D. In the event of any damage to city property or facilities, the nonprofit organization will agree to reimburse the City for the cost of repairs and/or clean up.
- E. The nonprofit activity will be open to the public and no unlawful discrimination against any member of the public will be allowed.
- F. Any application or requests that involve the use of City staff or that may result in a City expenditure shall be cleared by the City Manager before the approval of the application and may include a possible charge for the use of staff or to cover the expenditure.

The granting or denial of said applications and requests shall be on a first come first served basis. City events and activities will receive priority in the event of a conflict. No organization filing said application or request shall be in any way favored or discriminated against for any unlawful reason.

5. PUBLIC STATEMENTS and PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

- A. The City Manager, Mayor or the Mayor Pro-Temp in the absence of Mayor, shall be the only City officials authorized to make public statements of any kind regarding City business or policy and the Chief of Police shall be authorized to make public statements involving official police department business. The Mayor or Mayor Pro-Tem, in the absence of the Mayor, may authorize an employee to make a statement on a particular issue or occasion.
- B. The City Secretary shall be the public information officer for purposes of compliance with state disclosure laws, including the Texas Public Information Act.