



# **GOVERNING BODY PROCEDURAL RULES**

ADOPTED JANUARY 12, 2022

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# I. Purpose

These procedural rules (“Rules”) are intended for use by the Governing Body of the City of Santa Fe (“Governing Body”) to guide the actions of the Governing Body in the general conduct of business; and serve as a reference in settling some parliamentary disputes. These rules are intended to support the intent of the Governing Body. These rules are not intended to limit public participation or council debate, but to enable the effective functioning of the Governing Body.

# II. Definitions

**Bill** means a proposed law presented to the Governing Body for approval and adoption.

**City** means the City of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

**City Council** means the Councilors as a group, exclusive of the mayor.

**City Council Standing Committee** means a standing committee comprised entirely of Governing Body members.

**Governing Body** means the Councilors and the Mayor, or the Councilors and a Mayor Pro-Tempore, meeting in a session that has been duly called in accordance with the state’s Open Meetings Act.

**Legislation** means a bill or resolution.

**Mayor Pro-Tempore** means the Councilor selected to act as Mayor in the absence of the Mayor.

**Minutes** means a document that records, at a minimum, the time the meeting is called to order and adjourned, those members in attendance, and the motions and votes taken by the members.

**Open Meetings Act (“OMA”)** means the New Mexico Open Meetings Act, NMSA 1978, Sections 10-15-1 to -4.

**Ordinance** means a law that has been approved and adopted by the Governing Body.

**Packet Material** means the minimum documents necessary for Governing Body to take action on the relevant item.

**Parliamentarian** means the Councilor selected by the Mayor to serve as the expert in the rules and procedures of the Governing Body.

**Presiding Officer** means the Mayor or, in the absence of the Mayor, the Mayor Pro-Tempore, or the person designated pursuant to these rules.

**Resolution** means a formal expression of the Governing Body’s opinion, will, or intent.

**Standing Committee** means an advisory committee, appointed by the mayor with the approval of the city council, the work of which is generally continuous and relevant to the fundamental concerns of the Governing Body.

# III. The Governing Body

The members of the Governing Body, exclusive of the Mayor, shall be known and designated as City Councilors and comprise the City Council. The Mayor and the City Council together are the Governing Body of the City. (SFCC 1987, § 2-1.1)

## **A. The Mayor and Presiding Officer**

1. The Mayor, or in the Mayor's absence, the Mayor Pro-tempore, is the Presiding Officer at all meetings of the Governing Body. In the absence of both the Mayor and Mayor Pro-tempore, the Mayor shall designate a Presiding Officer from City Councilors present at the meeting.

2. The Presiding Officer is responsible for conducting meetings in an orderly, democratic fashion. The Presiding Officer must ensure that the majority prevails, that minority rights are protected, and that courtesy, fairness, justice, and impartiality are guaranteed to all present.

3. The Mayor has a vote on all matters that come before the Governing Body. (Santa Fe Municipal Charter, § 5.01(B))

## **B. The City Council**

1. Members of the City Council shall observe order, civility, and decorum at all times and neither delay nor interrupt the proceedings of a meeting or the Presiding Officer.

2. Members of the Council shall address all questions to and through the Presiding Officer and only after recognition by the Presiding Officer.

## **C. The Mayor Pro-Tempore**

At the first meeting of the Governing Body in even-numbered years, the mayor shall appoint, subject to the approval of the City Council, a Councilor to serve as mayor pro-tempore until the next regular city election. The mayor pro-tempore shall perform the duties of the mayor in the absence or temporary incapacity of the mayor. (Santa Fe Municipal Charter, § 5.04)

## **D. The Parliamentarian**

1. The Mayor shall select one councilor who shall be the parliamentarian for the Governing Body.

2. Upon appointment, the parliamentarian shall receive appropriate training in parliamentary procedure. The parliamentarian and the city attorney shall provide an overview of parliamentary procedure to the Governing Body on an annual basis. (SFCC 1987, § 2-1.11)

## IV. The Legislative Process

Legislation proposed for consideration of the Governing Body shall follow the Legislative Process outlined in this section, in the order presented, unless the matter constitutes a matter of necessity or an emergency as described in these Rules.

### A. Introduction

1. Members of the Governing Body shall introduce legislation at regular meetings of the Governing Body during “Introduction of Legislation”. If the legislation is one of uncommon circumstances or an emergency pursuant to Section V(C)(1)(d)(i) or (ii), the sponsor may introduce the legislation at a regular meeting of a City Council Standing Committee.

2. The primary sponsor may take up to 3 minutes to introduce or offer explanation of the legislation the primary sponsor is introducing. Any co-sponsors may take up to 1 minute to explain their support of the legislation. Any additional Governing Body members wishing to cosponsor the legislation may do so at this time. No questions, discussion, or debate of the legislation shall occur during the introduction of the legislation.

3. In order to be introduced, legislation must be fully drafted and included in the packet posted with the Governing Body’s agenda, unless the matter constitutes a matter of necessity or emergency in accordance with these rules. Fully drafted legislation includes all of the following elements:

- a. The legislation’s title/caption;
- b. A complete draft of the proposed wording or language; and
- c. The City Attorney’s signature as to form.

4. At the time of introduction, the sponsor(s), in coordination with legislative staff, shall refer legislation to the appropriate Standing Committees and/or City Council Standing Committees based on subject matter of the legislation. A member of the Governing Body may challenge the schedule proposed at introduction. Such challenge of the proposed schedule, and proposed alternative referrals, are subject to a vote by the entire Governing Body at the time of introduction.

5. Governing Body members may add themselves as co-sponsors of legislation up until 72 hours prior to the meeting when the relevant legislation is scheduled for adoption. Governing Body members may remove themselves as a co-sponsor at any time before a final vote to adopt legislation.

## **B. First Public Comment on Bills**

1. During the Governing Body meeting following a bill's introduction, and prior to any City Council Committee or advisory committee review, the Governing Body shall schedule the bill for "first public comment."

2. Staff shall provide a presentation not to exceed five (5) minutes in length prior to the public comment.

3. During first public comment, the Governing Body shall not discuss or comment about the bill. Discussion among the Governing Body members regarding bills shall occur during the committee meetings during which the item is scheduled and during the bill's public hearing.

## **C. City Council Standing Committee Review**

1. All legislation shall be considered by a City Council Standing Committee prior to a public hearing.

2. Legislation must be scheduled for, and approved by, at least one City Council Standing Committee prior to inclusion on the Governing Body agenda for discussion or a public hearing, as applicable.

3. Unless the legislation requires action by the Governing Body by a date that necessitates a different committee schedule, items shall be heard before committees in the following order:

a. Any relevant Standing or Special Committees.

b. The Quality of Life Committee and/or the Public Works and Utilities Committee.

c. The Finance Committee. The Finance Committee must review all legislation with a fiscal impact.

4. Legislation considered by City Council Standing Committees must take one of the following paths:

a. *Approve.* With a majority vote to approve, the legislation moves to the subsequently scheduled committee or Governing Body;

b. *Approve as Amended.* With a majority vote to approve, the legislation moves to the subsequently scheduled committee or Governing Body, to be considered with any amendments adopted by the prior City Council Standing Committee;

c. *Deny.* With a majority, but non-unanimous, vote of denial, the legislation moves to the subsequently scheduled committee or Governing Body.

If a motion to deny is unanimously adopted by all members of a committee, the legislation shall not move forward for further committee or Governing Body consideration.

d. *No recommendation.* The legislation moves to the subsequently scheduled committee or Governing Body without adopting a motion of approval or denial. Any legislation that is moved without recommendation shall be placed on the discussion agenda for the next scheduled committee.

e. *Refer to another committee.*

i. The legislation is referred to another committee that was not initially scheduled; and/or

ii. The legislation is referred to a committee that has already reviewed the legislation, subject to approval of the Chair of the referred committee.

f. *Postpone to a date certain.*

i. Council committees can vote to postpone a vote on an item with a majority vote of the committee. Postponing is permitted for a maximum of one (1) subsequent meeting of that committee, at which time a final vote of approval, denial, move forward without recommendation, or refer to another committee, is required.

ii. If a committee postpones an item until its next meeting, other committees and the Governing Body shall not consider the item until after the subsequently scheduled committee meeting.

5. *Lay on the Table.* A tabling motion is used to delay the discussion of an item until later in the same meeting.

## **D. Notice of Public Hearings on Bills**

The Clerk shall publish notice of the public hearing at Governing Body after a bill receives approval by at least one committee.

## **E. Amendments**

1. Amendments must be written and included in the Governing Body packet.

2. Councilors should endeavor to propose amendments as early as possible in the legislative process, for discussion during Council Committees.

3. Any new amendments proposed during the Governing Body meeting shall be presented in writing before discussion of said amendment.

## **V. Governing Body Meetings**

### **A. Decorum**

1. The members of the Governing Body shall set an example for the conduct of the public's business, showing respect for the Governing Body as an institution, and showing respect to its members, City staff, and to all members of the public. While the Governing Body is in session, the members shall observe civility and public decorum at all times. During committee and Governing Body Meetings, each member of the Governing Body has the following duties:

a. Provide fair and equal treatment for all persons and matters.

b. Learn and study the background and purposes of important items of business before voting.

c. Maintain the confidentiality of confidential information concerning the business of the City and/or information received during any closed session of the Governing Body.

d. Refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges, accusations, or verbal attacks upon the character, motives, ethics, or morals of other members of the Governing Body, staff or public, or other personal comments.

e. Listen courteously and attentively and avoid interrupting other speakers, including other Governing Body members, except as may be permitted by established Procedural Rules.

f. Faithfully attend all sessions of the Governing Body and City Council Committees to which the member is appointed unless unable to do so because of a compelling reason or circumstance.

g. Maintain the highest standard of public conduct by refusing to condone breaches of public trust or improper attempts to influence legislation and by being willing to call a point of order when any member who negligently, willfully, or intentionally violates the procedural rules of decorum contained in these Rules.



2. The Presiding Officer has a duty to maintain civility and decorum. The Presiding Officer may call any person to order if they are making personal, intemperate, or slanderous remarks, or by otherwise violating these rules of decorum, by reminding them that such comments are out of order. The Presiding Officer may prohibit any person who is acting improperly from continuing to speak.

3. The Chief of Police, or the Chief's designee, may serve as Sergeant-at-Arms at in-person meetings, as needed.

## **B. Meeting Types**

### 1. Regular Meetings

a. Regular meetings are held at City Hall in the Council Chambers, except as provided for in Section 20-1.4 SFCC 1987, on the second and last Wednesday of each month or as otherwise determined by vote of the Governing Body.

b. Agenda items not considered prior to 11:30 p.m. shall be postponed to a subsequent meeting, provided that the date, time, and place of such meeting is specified at the time of postponement. A majority of the whole may choose to suspend this rule pursuant to Section VII., below.

c. Notice of regular meetings shall be electronically posted publicly no later than seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting.

d. A quorum of Governing Body members must be present to proceed with a regular meeting of the Governing Body.

### 2. Special Meetings

a. Special meetings of the Governing Body may be called pursuant to SFCC 1987, Section 2-1.12.

b. Notice of special meetings shall be electronically served by a written notice to each member of the Governing Body and electronically posted publicly no later than seventy-two (72) hours in advance of the meeting.

c. A quorum of Governing Body members must be present to proceed with a special meeting of the Governing Body.

### 3. Emergency Meetings:

a. Emergency meetings of the Governing Body may be called and noticed pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 10-15-1(F).

b. A quorum of Governing Body members must be present to proceed with an emergency meeting of the Governing Body.

4. Study Session

a. Governing Body study sessions may be scheduled by the City Manager as needed for discussing issues of public concern. Where possible, a study session is scheduled at least two (2) weeks in advance.

b. Study sessions are held in a workshop format, without public comment or action by the Governing Body.

c. A quorum of the Governing Body is not necessary to proceed with a study session.

## C. Meeting Agenda

1. Agenda Preparation

a. The City Manager or the City Manager's designee, through the City Clerk, shall prepare an agenda for all meetings of the Governing Body. The City Manager may consider reasonable requests from members of the Governing Body for agenda items.

b. The agenda shall include items that require Governing Body action, presentations, and informational items. On action items, the City Manager shall provide all facts necessary for proper study and decision-making by the Governing Body.

c. No action item shall be placed on the agenda unless it has been approved by at least one City Council Standing Committee unless otherwise approved by a majority vote of the entire Governing Body or in accordance with Section 5(C)(1)(d)(i) or (ii) of these Rules.

d. An action item may bypass the committee review process and be placed directly on the Governing Body meeting agenda:

i. When uncommon circumstances make it necessary for the Governing Body to consider and/or act on the item within a period of time that is insufficient to permit it to go through the committee review process, but sufficient to meet the notice requirements of the Open Meetings Act; or

ii. In case of emergency, when unforeseen circumstances that, if not addressed immediately by the Governing Body, notwithstanding the

inability to give sufficient notice pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, will likely result in injury or damage to persons or property or substantial financial loss to the city. (Open Meetings Act, NMSA 1978 §10-15-1.F.)

## **D. Consent Agenda**

1. All items on the consent agenda may be adopted with one motion. In the minutes, each item passed by adoption of the consent calendar shall be entered as a separate action of the Governing Body.

2. Any member of the Governing Body may request that any item be removed from the consent agenda for discussion or debate and any such request shall be granted automatically. Governing Body members should not remove items from the consent agenda to make inquiries that do not directly relate to the particular matter.

3. The following items, if they have met the substantive or procedural requirements otherwise required by these rules, shall be included in the Consent Agenda:

a. Minutes from previous Governing Body meetings.

b. Unless otherwise excluded in Paragraph 4 below, items approved by all City Council Committees to which they are referred.

c. Routine and/or procedural matters with no fiscal impact such as liquor hearings, findings of fact and conclusions of law, and annual Open Meetings Act resolution.

4. Items that are not appropriate for the consent agenda include:

a. Any matter requiring a public hearing, including bills.

b. Annual budget approval.

c. Quasi-judicial hearings.

d. Personnel issues not related to specific employees, such as the creation of new employment positions or personnel rules.

e. Procedural rules of the Governing Body.

f. Board, committee, and agency appointments.

g. Items that have not received committee approval by one or more City Council Standing Committees to which it has been referred.

5. Each Governing Body member shall diligently review the consent calendar items and the associated packet materials prior to the Governing Body meeting.

6. Members of the Governing Body are encouraged to seek technical or clarifying information directly from City staff during City Council Standing Committee meetings or through direct communication with staff outside of a Committee meeting. This provides for the best use of, and respect for, the time of the public, staff, and the Governing Body while it is in session.

7. Governing Body members are encouraged to communicate their intent to remove an item from the consent agenda to the City Clerk no later than four (4) hours prior to the commencement of a regular Governing Body meeting. If a Governing Body member does not notify the Clerk of their intent to remove an item from the consent agenda at least four (4) hours prior to the Governing Body meeting, the member may still remove the item from the consent agenda for debate or discussion with the Governing Body, but the staff representative may not be available.

## **E. Posting of Agenda and Supporting Materials**

1. Copies of the complete agenda and packet material shall be available to the Governing Body and the public for study and review the Friday immediately prior to the Governing Body meeting. The City Clerk's Office shall ensure that the Governing Body is notified when additional packet material is added.

2. A majority of the whole number of the Governing Body may vote to consider emergency matters not on the agenda consistent with Section C (1)(D)(2)(ii) of this Article IV and in compliance with New Mexico Open Meetings Act requirements.

## **F. Order of Business**

1. **Call to Order.** The Presiding Officer shall call the meeting to order promptly at the appointed hour.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance.** The City Clerk shall assign members of the City Council to lead this agenda item on a rotating basis.

3. **Salute to the New Mexico Flag.** The City Clerk shall assign members of the City Council to lead this agenda item on a rotating basis.

4. **Invocation and Remembrances.** The City Clerk shall assign members of the City Council to lead the invocation on a rotating basis. After the invocation, the Presiding Officer may make, and shall call upon City Councilors to provide, remembrances.

5. **Roll Call.** The City Clerk shall call the roll of the Governing Body and record the names of those present and absent for inclusion in the minutes of the meeting. A quorum must be present in order to conduct business.

6. **Approval of Agenda.** The City Manager, the Mayor, or a Council member may request amendments to the agenda including deletions, alterations in the order of items, and requests for postponement of items on the agenda. Emergency additions may be made pursuant to Section 5(C)(1)(d)(i).

7. **Approval of Consent Agenda.** Before moving approval of the Consent Agenda, Council members shall alert the Presiding Officer of any items they wish to remove from the consent agenda for discussion. The Governing Body may adopt the items remaining on the consent agenda by adopting a single motion to do so, without discussion.

8. **Presentations.** As scheduled by the City Manager, by staff or outside guests on selected topics. No action may be taken by the Governing Body. The City Clerk, in consultation with the City Manager, shall consider if a presentation is better suited for a City Council Standing Committee.

9. **Action Items: Consent Agenda.** The Governing Body shall consider each item removed from the consent agenda during “Approval of Consent Agenda.” A motion and second regarding the disposition of each item is required before deliberations on the item begin.

10. **Action Items: Discussion Agenda.** The Governing Body shall discuss and vote on any item(s) that were not included on the consent agenda pursuant to Section 5(D)(4) above, other than matters that require a public hearing. A motion and second regarding the disposition of each item is required before deliberations on the item begin.

11. **Matters from the City Manager.** Any business or comments from the City Manager.

12. **Matters from the City Attorney.** Any business or comments from the City Attorney, including moving into Executive Session.

13. **Matters from the City Clerk.** Any business or comments from the City Manager including any upcoming public hearings.

14. **Communications from the Governing Body.** Any business or comments from Governing Body members. Governing Body members shall not engage in debate with other members or ask questions of staff. Members may request information from the City Manager, City Attorney, and/or the City Clerk, but discussion of the request during a meeting is not permitted without appropriately noticing it.

15. **Introduction of Legislation.** Governing Body members shall introduce legislation during this section. Additional Governing Body members may add themselves as cosponsors to legislation.

16. **Petitions from the Floor.** Petitions from the Floor shall generally be heard at 7:00p.m., or as soon thereafter as can be reasonably achieved.

17. **Public Comment on Bills.** After the main sponsor of the bill provides a one (1) minute overview of the bill, the public provides comment. There is no debate, discussion, or action taken by the Governing Body.

18. **Final Action on Legislation.** The Governing Body holds a public hearing, debates, and votes on legislation requiring a public hearing, except for land use cases that include legislation which shall be heard under “Public Hearings.”

19. **Public Hearings.** Items such as land use cases, appeals, and anything else that is required to have a public hearing by City Code, state statute, or federal law.

20. **Appointments.** The Governing Body votes on Mayoral appointments.

21. **Adjourn.**

## **G. Further Rules for Certain Orders of Business**

### **1. Petitions from the Floor**

a. Each speaker may speak for up to two (2) minutes unless the Presiding Officer determines that other limitations are reasonably necessary to conclude Petitions from the Floor within a reasonable timeframe, in the context of the remaining business before the Governing Body.

b. Members of the public cannot cede their allocated time to another member of the public, but they may make arrangements with the City Clerk to speak in a specific order in order.

c. The Presiding Officer shall disallow comments or questions from the public that are not directed to the Governing Body. Governing Body members shall not respond to comments or questions from the public during Petitions from the Floor.

### **2. Executive Session**

a. Pursuant to NMSA 1978, § 10-15-1, part (H), an executive session may be called for any matters permitted under law. Any member of the Governing Body may move at any time to discuss the item on the table in immediate executive session if it is their opinion that the matter is appropriate for executive session.

b. The motion to go into an executive session shall be voted on by roll call.

c. The executive session may be held at the discretion of the Governing Body, at any time during the Council meeting before adjournment of the evening session. No votes shall be taken in executive session.

d. Upon completion of discussions in an executive session, the Governing Body shall move, second and approve the reconvening of the public meeting and, if accurate, the motion shall state for the record that the discussions in executive session were limited to the matters listed upon the agenda.

e. No disclosure of Executive Session matters may be made unless and until the Governing Body has approved by vote the disclosure of the information. The confidentiality of matters discussed during an executive session is held by the Governing Body, not individual members of the Governing Body. Any member of the Governing Body who violates this provision shall be subject to censure and other penalties in accordance with law. If a member of the Governing Body wishes to disclose information shared during an executive session, that member shall immediately move that the contents of the discussion in executive session be disclosed. Disclosure requires a vote of a majority of the whole.

f. The clerk shall make available to the public, upon request, a list of executive session attendees.

g. If any final action is to be taken regarding matters discussed in executive session, direction to take such action shall be made in the form of a motion instructing the City Manager or City Attorney to take action consistent with the discussion held during the executive session. The motion shall be approved by a majority of the whole number of members of the Governing Body and shall be recorded by a roll call vote. For the purposes of this rule in the context of matter subject to the attorney-client privilege, “final action” means only an action that will directly conclude pending litigation, by settlement or otherwise. Within an executive session, the City Attorney may seek consensus or direction from the Governing Body on any matter permitted under the Open Meetings Act, and such consensus or direction shall not constitute final action.

h. Any vote taken on an item discussed in executive session shall be reasonably specific as to the particulars of what is being voted upon.

i. Any action constituting final action shall be executed by the appropriate signatories after the Governing Body votes upon the motion and the document or documents reflecting the final action taken shall become public record immediately thereafter, unless revealing the final action would violate a court order from a court of competent jurisdiction or the law.

### 3. **Public Hearings**

a. The following provisions are the Rules and Procedure for Public Hearings on Legislation and Certain Appeals<sup>1</sup> (Section 18 and 19 of the Order of Business).

i. The City Clerk shall read the title of the item set for public hearing.

ii. An appropriate staff member may be called upon to present background information.

iii. The Presiding Officer shall ask if there is anyone in the audience who wishes to speak for or against the issue. The City Clerk may organize public speakers pursuant to reasonable and inclusive policies.

iv. The Presiding Officer may set time limits and conditions for speakers before the public hearing begins and shall not change those conditions during the public hearing.

v. Members of the Governing Body may address questions to public speakers.

vi. Members of the public may pose hypothetical questions or use questions to make a point, but the Presiding Officer shall not request or entertain answers from staff or from members of the Governing Body.

vii. If a motion is made to reschedule an item that has been advertised as a public hearing before all members of the public who are present at that meeting have been allowed to speak, the continuation of that item shall continue as a public hearing. If a motion is made to reschedule an item that has been advertised as a public hearing after the public hearing is closed, the motion shall indicate whether further public comment will be accepted at the continuation of that item. If no further public comment will be accepted, that decision shall be noted on any future agenda.

b. **Special Rules for Quasi-Judicial Proceedings:** Any member of the Governing Body who has received communications outside a quasi-judicial proceeding concerning the merits or substance of the matter being heard in that proceeding shall disclose the substance of the communications on the record at the commencement of the proceeding, and the member shall recuse themselves if they cannot be fair and impartial in hearing the matter.

c. All comments by Governing Body members shall be made through the Presiding Officer.

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<sup>1</sup> Land use appeals are governed by Resolution No. 2011-24 or its substitute



#### **4. Public Participation in Public Hearings**

a. Instructions for participating in public hearings shall be posted on each Governing Body agenda.

b. Oral comment: Each person wishing to address the Governing Body shall be recognized by the Presiding Officer and must state their name and council district and/or street of residence for the record before speaking to the issue. Members of the public cannot cede their allocated time to another member of the public, but arrangements can be made with the City Clerk to speak in a specific order in order to coordinate a message to the Governing Body.

c. All remarks shall be addressed through the Presiding Officer to the Governing Body as a whole and not to any individual members.

d. In proceedings requiring sworn or affirmed testimony, such as appeals, the City Clerk shall swear in or affirm all witnesses, including members of the public.

e. Any violation of these rules could result in removal from the public hearing, at the discretion of the Presiding Officer

## **VI. Rules of Debate**

### **A. Governing Body Rules for Speaking**

1. Members of the Governing Body shall attempt to balance the right of the public to know positions of the elected officials and their rationale for decisions with the need for balanced discussion and timely adjournment of the Governing Body meeting. In order to realize this balance, members shall endeavor to engage in the following behaviors:

a. Articulate questions, opinions, comments, and reasons for votes succinctly;

b. Exercise self-discipline by avoiding repeating the statements of others, being verbose in expressing opinions, or straying off the topic;

c. Allow the Presiding Officer to manage the meeting and to recognize them before speaking;

d. Support the Presiding Officer in enforcing these rules;

- e. Permit other members an opportunity to speak once on an issue before speaking a second time on the same issue;
- f. Avoid personal attacks;
- g. Use “I” statements and avoid stating, or attempting to state, the sentiments or motives of others, including, but not limited to, any staff member, any other Governing Body member, or the Governing Body as a whole; and
- h. Consider Council goals, staff time, and resource availability when making requests for a delay or additional information.

2. Assigning the Floor by the Presiding Officer: A Council member who wishes to speak or debate shall address the Presiding Officer. After being recognized by name and assigned the floor by the Presiding Officer, the Council member may present their issue and confine their comments to that issue.

3. Order of speakers: The Presiding Officer generally recognizes council members in the order in which they request the floor, except that the member who made the motion is entitled to be recognized first. Only one person may have the floor at a time.

4. Interruption of a speaker: While a person is speaking, no one shall interrupt the speaker except:

- i. For a *Point of Order* whereby another Governing Body member thinks these Rules are being violated.

- ii. For a *Request* or *Inquiry* to obtain information that requires an immediate response.

- iii. To *Raise a Question of Privilege* that permits a request or main motion relating to the rights and privileges of the Governing Body or any of its members to be brought up for possible immediate consideration because of its urgency. After an interruption, the previously recognized speaker may continue. For a detailed explanation of this section, see *Robert's Rules of Order*, §42 (Rules Governing Assignment of the Floor).

5. A member may speak more than once to the same motion only when all councilors desiring to speak have been heard, except to answer questions.

6. The Presiding Officer may, in their sole discretion, temporarily suspend the rules of speaking in order to permit a direct dialogue between council members with respect to an issue or motion.

## **B. Recusal From the Meeting**

A Governing Body member shall recuse themselves from any matter when there is an actual conflict and may recuse if there is the risk of a perceived inability to be objective before the matter is heard. Any Governing Body member with a conflict shall disclose the existence of a conflict prior to the Governing Body's consideration of the item. Any member who has recused themselves shall leave the room where the meeting is being held until the vote is taken and recorded by the City Clerk.

## **C. The Main Motion and Debate**

1. The City Clerk shall read the title of the item set for discussion.

a. *Main motion on Agenda Items.* A main motion must be on the floor before debate can take place and only one main motion may be on the floor at a time. If a motion is long or complicated, a Governing Body member may request that it be in writing. A Council member may give brief explanatory comments before stating the motion, but must argue and debate the motion only after it has been seconded.

- i. Approve. The motion approves legislation as it has most recently been amended in committee.
- ii. Deny.

b. *Subsidiary Motions on Agenda Items.* The following are common subsidiary motions that may be made after a main motion is on the table:

- i. Amend
- ii. Postpone to a date certain
- iii. Postpone indefinitely
- iv. Refer to a City Council Committee
- v. Lay on the Table

c. *Second for a motion:* All motions require a second to indicate that more than one Council member is interested in discussing the issue, except that the motion to Lay on the Table is non-debatable. The seconder does not, however, have to favor the motion and may speak and vote against it. If there is no second, the motion dies.

d. *Debate:* The Presiding Officer shall restate the motion on the floor and call for general discussion.

- i. When debate is closed by common consent or by a vote, the Presiding Officer shall restate the question and request a roll call or voice vote. A Council member may move to close debate only when all members

of the Governing Body have had an opportunity to speak to the pending motion.

ii. After confirmation of the vote by the City Clerk, the City Clerk shall declare the result of the vote.

e. Governing Body members should keep the following in mind when debating items:

i. *Advance Notice.* Governing Body members should give advance notice to the Presiding Officer and the City Clerk whenever substantial discussion is anticipated to an agenda item, so that an appropriate staff response can be prepared.

ii. *Presiding Officer May Intervene.* The Presiding Officer may intervene in council debate in order to solicit a motion when debate seems to be proceeding longer than warranted or when more information or staff work appears warranted to facilitate a council decision.

iii. *No Intentional Surprises.* Governing Body members will make every effort not to surprise each other and staff by bringing up new information at a meeting; they shall give notice to the Presiding Officer and City Clerk of their intention to bring up new information as soon as practical before the meeting.

## D. Voting

1. A member of the Governing Body must vote "yes," "no," or "abstain," except in the case of a conflict of interest as defined in SFCC 1987, Section 1-7, in which case the member shall recuse themselves.

2. The roll is called in alphabetical order with the following special provision. On the first roll call vote of the session, the City Clerk shall begin with the first name on the list; on the second vote, the Clerk shall begin with the second name and end with the first; and so on, continuing to rotate in that order, provided that the Presiding Officer shall in all instances vote last.

3. *Explanation of Vote:* Any member of the Governing Body may make a brief statement after the conclusion of the vote to explain their vote, not to exceed one minute. The member must state they wish to explain their vote at the time of their vote.

4. *Delayed Vote:* A Council Member may pass their turn to vote, in which case the Council Member's name will be called again in rotation and then they must vote "yes," "no," or "abstain."

5. *Quorum Required:* Unless a higher number is required by state or city law, an action of the Governing Body requires a simple majority vote.

6. *Tie Vote:* In cases of a tie vote, the motion fails.

7. *Proxy Vote:* There shall be no proxy or absentee voting. Further, it is improper for any Governing Body member to state, or attempt to state, the sentiments of any absent Governing Body member.

8. *Abstention:*

a. If one or more Governing Body members abstain, then the abstentions shall be counted as "no" votes if the action being voted on is passage of an ordinance or resolution. If counting the abstention as a "no" vote results in a tie, then the motion fails.

b. If one or more Governing Body members abstain, and the action being voted on is other than the passage of an ordinance or resolution, then abstentions shall be counted as acquiescence with the majority. If there is no majority because the vote is tied before the abstentions are taken into account, then the abstentions shall not be counted at all and the motion fails.

c. A recusal or disqualification for conflict of interest purposes shall not be counted as a "yes" or "no" vote.

## **VII. Suspension and Amendment of These Rules**

These rules may be temporarily suspended for a single meeting or matter at any time by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the whole number of members of the Governing Body. Amendments to these rules shall be made by resolution.

## **VIII. Robert's Rules of Order**

Except as otherwise provided herein, all matters of procedure are governed by the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*.

## **IX. History**

Adopted by Resolution No. 2004-55 on July 28, 2004; and  
Amended by Resolution No. 2006-43 on April 12, 2006; and  
Amended by Resolution No. 2006-95 on August 9, 2006.

Re-adopted by Resolution No. 2008-103  
Amended by Resolution No. 2009-21 (Salute to New Mexico Flag)  
Amended by Resolution No. 2012-27 (Agenda Items)  
Re-adopted by Resolution No. 2016-64 on August 10, 2016  
New Version Adopted by Resolution No. 2022-4 on January 12, 2022