



City of Seattle
Legislative Department

General Rules and Procedures of the Seattle City Council

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(As adopted by Resolution _____)

**GENERAL RULES AND PROCEDURES
OF THE SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL**

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GENERAL RULES AND PROCEDURES OF THE SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

I. COUNCIL COMPOSITION, POWERS, AND DUTIES

A. Council.

1. The Council shall establish rules for its proceedings.*
2. As the Legislative branch of City government, the City Council shall establish policy for the City.
3. The Council has the authority to create and use committees of its members to facilitate its legislative functions; provided that no committee of the Council and no individual member of the Council shall have or exercise executive or administrative power, except as provided in the Charter.†
4. The City Council has authority to punish its members and others for disorderly or otherwise contemptuous behavior in its presence, and to expel for such behavior in its presence any members by the affirmative vote of not less than two-thirds of its members, specifying in the order of expulsion the cause thereof.‡
5. The Council will produce an Annual Legislative Report, as designated by the President. The report will identify accomplishments of the Council in the preceding year and objectives of the Council for the coming calendar year, in a report format determined by the President.
6. In March of each year, the Full Council shall consider for retirement any Clerk File, Resolution or Bill that has been in a standing committee or before the Council for at least one year prior to that date.

B. Members.

1. Members of the City Council, or Councilmembers, are abbreviated as CMs throughout these Rules.

* Charter, Art. IV, § 4.

† Charter, Art. IV, § 4.

‡ Charter, Art. IV, § 4.

2. CMs shall:

- a. Uphold the public trust and demonstrate integrity, honesty, and fairness;
- b. Exercise budget and fiduciary responsibility;
- c. Be responsive to citizens; and
- d. Disqualify themselves from acting on City business when disqualification is required by the City's Code of Ethics^{*}, by common law, or by the Appearance of Fairness Doctrine.
(See "Council Rules for Quasi-Judicial Proceedings Before the City Council" as adopted by Resolution 31602.)
(See also Rule V.A.1 Voting Required.)

3. Any CM may protest against the action of the Council upon any question and have the oral objection entered upon the Journal. If the protesting CM wishes the Journal to contain a written objection, the objection shall be filed with the City Clerk within 48 hours following the action being objected.

C. President.

- 1. Biennially, and also whenever the position becomes vacant, the Council shall elect from its members a President, who shall perform the usual functions of a presiding officer.[†]
- 2. The President may be removed by the affirmative vote of not less than two-thirds of all CMs.[‡]
- 3. The President shall:
 - a. Call the Council to order at the hour appointed for meeting, or at the hour to which the Council shall have adjourned at the preceding session, and, if a quorum is in attendance, proceed with the order of business and adjourn the Council when business is deemed finished.
 - b. Sign all Bills in authentication of their passage in open session[§] and sign all Resolutions in authentication of their adoption.

^{*} SMC 4.16.

[†] Charter, Art. IV, § 4.

[‡] Charter, Art. IV, § 4.

[§] Charter, Art. IV, § 11.

c. Promote efficient operation of the Council, including setting the Full Council agenda and expediting parliamentary debate, or if there is no objection from any other member, expediting the passage of routine motions.

d. Preserve order and decorum within the Council Chamber when acting as a presiding officer.

e. Assign legislation to committees.

f. Monitor standing committee agendas to ensure issues are appropriate to respective committees, and within the scope or work program of said committee, or as otherwise assigned.

g. Act as Mayor in the Mayor's absence from the City or incapacitation.* The President may simultaneously serve as President and act as Mayor; however, when the President, acting as Mayor, is confronted on a particular matter with a conflict of duties and responsibilities so fundamental that the public interest requires it, the President shall act as Mayor only.

h. Head the Legislative Department†, including providing for the orientation of new CMs.

4. The President may speak to points of order, inquiry, or information in preference to other CM and shall decide all questions of order subject to an appeal to the Council by any CM.

(See also Rule IV.G Point of Order.)

5. While speaking upon any question before the Council, the President shall have the right to turn the chair over to the President Pro Tem.

6. The President may create select or non-standing committees and shall appoint the membership of a select or non-standing committee as required, or as deemed necessary to efficiently conduct the business of the Council, and designate the number of committee members necessary for a quorum.

D. President Pro Tem.

1. Biennially, the Council will designate by Resolution a list of Presidents Pro Tem. The list will start with the most senior CM other than the President and continue in descending order of seniority, with alphabetical order of last name used to break ties, and the position will rotate monthly. In the case of a Council vacancy and subsequent

* Charter, Art. V, § 9.

† Charter, Art. III, § 3.

appointment, the appointee will fill the position of the departed CM in the rotation.

2. In the absence of the President Pro Tem, the CM designated for the next month shall act as President Pro Tem.

3. The President Pro Tem shall:

a. Act as President in the case of incapacitation or absence of the President.*

b. Act as President when the President, acting as Mayor, is confronted with a conflict of duties and responsibilities so fundamental that the public interest requires it.†
(See Rule I.C.3.g President.)

* Charter, Art. V, § 9.

† Charter, Art. IV, § 6.

II. FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS

A. Regular Meetings.*

1. The Full Council meets each Monday except as listed below. Regular meetings shall convene at 2 p.m., and the time of adjournment shall be entered in the Journal of the Proceedings.

a. If Monday is a legal holiday, then the regular Full Council meeting shall be held on the next day that is not a legal holiday.

b. Regular meetings are not held on the last two Mondays in August nor on the last two Mondays in December.

c. Any regular meeting of the Full Council may be canceled by the President or a majority vote of CMs.

2. Full Council regular meetings are held in the Council Chamber, in Seattle City Hall. The City Council may meet at another location in the event of an emergency or disaster.†

3. A quorum consists of a majority of all nine CMs except as listed below.‡

a. Except when Rule II.A.3.b applies, in order to select a person to fill a vacancy on the City Council, a quorum shall consist of a majority of those CMs holding office at the time the Council makes the selection, and for such purpose a majority of such members holding office at the time the Council makes the selection shall constitute a majority of the Council.

b. During a declared emergency under Article V, Section 2 of the Charter, a quorum shall for all purposes consist of a majority of all those CMs who are available to participate in Council meetings and are capable of performing the duties of office, and a majority of such members available to participate in Council meetings and capable of performing the duties of office shall constitute a majority of the Council.

4. Less than a quorum of CMs may adjourn from day to day, or until the next regular meeting, and may compel the attendance of absent members in such a manner and under such penalties as the Council prescribes.§

(See also Rule II.D.2 Attendance.)

5. Preliminary agendas of upcoming regular Full Council meetings will list items on which action is expected to be taken and will be made available to the public. All

* Charter, Art. IV, § 6.

† Charter, Art. IV, § 6.

‡ Charter, Art. IV, § 3.

§ Charter, Art. IV, § 3.

reasonable effort will be made to provide the preliminary agenda online and in hard copy at least two business days prior to the meeting.

B. Special Meetings.

A special meeting is a meeting held at a time, date, or location that differs from a regular meeting.

1. The Mayor, the President of the City Council, or any three CMs may call a special meeting of the Council consistent with Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 42.30.080.*
2. Notices of special meetings shall be in accordance with RCW 42.30.080.
 - a. The only items of business for which final action may be taken at a special meeting are those items listed on the written notice.
 - b. Special meetings are held in the Council Chamber in Seattle City Hall, unless a specific alternate location is established by the party calling the meeting, be that the Mayor, the President, or three CMs, and notice as required under RCW 42.30.080 is given.

C. Emergency Meetings.

1. Emergency meetings of the Council may be called by the Mayor, President, or any two CMs, consistent with the provisions of RCW 42.30 and 42.14.075.†
2. Meeting time, location, and notice requirements do not apply to emergency meetings called for emergency matters as permitted by RCW 42.30.070, RCW 42.30.080, and RCW 42.14.075.
3. Emergency meetings are open to the public unless exempt under RCW 42.30.
4. If a natural disaster, fire, flood, earthquake, enemy attack, imminent enemy attack, or other catastrophic emergency that renders a CM's physical attendance at a meeting impracticable, the CM may attend and vote by any electronic means (e.g. multi-party telephone or video conferencing) utilized by the Council for such purpose.

D. Attendance.

1. CMs must attend all regular Full Council meetings, unless excused by the Full Council.*

* Charter, Art. IV, § 6.

† Charter, Art. IV, § 6.

2. Three CMs, including the President or President Pro Tem acting in the capacity of the President, or four CMs otherwise, are authorized to compel the attendance of absent unexcused CMs at the Full Council meeting, but may adjourn from day to day if necessary until a quorum can be convened.[†]
3. A CM may obtain a leave of absence or be excused from a particular meeting by vote of the Full Council before or during the meeting to which the leave of absence or excuse would apply.
4. No more than four CMs may be excused from any one Full Council meeting, except during the month of November, when no more than two CMs may be excused from any one Full Council meeting.
5. If the maximum number of CMs has been excused for any one particular meeting, the last CM having requested an excused absence for that meeting will be considered "on call". An "on call" CM may arrange with any other excused CM to trade places in the order of excused absences for a particular meeting.
6. The City Clerk shall record the attendance and requests for excused absence(s) from Full Council meetings in the Journal of Proceedings.

* Charter, Art. IV, § 3.

† Charter, Art. IV, § 3.

III. FULL COUNCIL BUSINESS

A. Legislation.

1. Introduction of Legislation.

- a. All submitted legislation is reviewed by the Clerk and sent to the Council President.
- b. The Council President assigns the appropriate committee or Full Council to receive the legislation and determines when to send the legislation to the committee chair.
- c. The committee chair determines whether and when to place the legislation onto the Council's Introduction and Referral Calendar. Prior to introduction and before final passage by the Council, additional sponsors of the legislation may be added with consent of the primary sponsor.
- d. When adoption of the Introduction and Referral Calendar is being considered during each regular Full Council meeting, it can be modified by a majority vote of CMs present. Modifications include amendment to titles, committee referral, sponsorship, and adding new pieces of legislation.
- e. After the Introduction and Referral Calendar is adopted, legislation is in the control of the committee to which it has been referred.

2. Relieving a Committee of Legislation.

The Council may relieve a committee of legislation that is referred to a specific committee.

- a. With consent from the current committee chair, the proposed committee chair, and the Council President, legislation may be re-referred to the proposed committee on the Introduction and Referral Calendar.
- b. If there is not consent on the proposal as described in Rule III.2.a, a motion to consider the re-referral may be considered at the Full Council meeting during consideration of the adoption of the Introduction and Referral Calendar and requires a majority vote of the Full Council.

3. A Resolution cannot be adopted at the same meeting at which it is introduced except by passage of at least two-thirds vote of the CMs present. Resolutions may not be presented for final passage at a Full Council meeting unless circulated via email to all CMs and the City Clerk at least two hours before the meeting.
4. A Bill cannot be introduced and passed at the same meeting, except for the weekly Bill for payment of bills, salaries, and claims.*
5. No Bill shall become an Ordinance unless on its final passage at least a majority of all nine CMs vote in its favor.† In some cases, passage requires more than a majority vote.
6. Amendments to Bills and Resolutions may not be presented at a Full Council meeting unless previously reviewed by the Law Department and circulated via email to all CMs and the City Clerk at least two hours before the meeting. In cases, including but not limited to, amendments to development regulations subject to the Growth Management Act, a statute may require additional public notice and opportunity for public comment before and amended Bill may be passed.

B. Order of Business.

1. The President shall announce the business of the Council at regular Full Council meetings, which shall ordinarily be disposed of in the following order:
 - a. Call to Order
 - b. Roll Call
 - c. Approval of the Introduction and Referral Calendar
 - d. Approval of the Agenda
 - e. Presentations
 - f. Approval of the Journal
 - g. Public Comment
 - h. Payment of Bills, Claims, and Salaries
 - i. Committee Reports (discussion and vote on Bills, Resolutions, and Clerk Files)
 - j. Adoption of Other Resolutions
 - k. Other Business
 - l. Adjournment
2. Upon the passage of each Bill, the President shall announce that the President is signing the Bill, and if so requested by any CM, that Bill shall be read at length so as to ensure its correctness before it shall become enrolled.‡

* Charter, Art. IV, § 8.

† Charter, Art. IV, § 8.

‡ Charter, Art. IV, § 11.

C. Vetoed Bills.*

1. The Council shall reconsider and vote again on the passage of any Bill that is vetoed by the Mayor, in accordance with the Charter.
2. Reconsideration shall occur not less than five days after the Mayor's written objection of the Bill is published, and not more than 30 days after the return of the Bill by the Mayor.
3. Passage of a Bill during reconsideration shall be by two-thirds vote of all the CMs.
4. Any Bill presented to Council for reconsideration that does not pass during the first vote of reconsideration shall be deemed finally lost.

D. Journal of the Proceedings of the Seattle City Council.

1. The City Clerk shall record into the Journal of the Proceedings of the Seattle City Council the proceedings of the Full Council at its regular and special meetings, and reports to the Full Council by committees.
2. The Journal of the Proceedings shall be presented to the Council for approval at a regular Full Council meeting.
3. The Journal of the Proceedings is a public document.

* Charter, Art. IV, § 12.

IV. PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES

If the General Rules and Procedures of the City Council are silent on a matter of parliamentary procedure, the 11th Edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised will govern the Council in all cases to which they are applicable.

A. Rules of Debate.

When any CM wishes to speak, the CM shall address the Chair.

1. When recognized, the CM shall, in a courteous manner, confine comments to the question under debate.
2. The CM who sponsors a Bill, Resolution, Clerk File, or motion has the privilege of speaking first and last upon it.
3. No CM shall impugn the motives of any other CM, or speak more than twice except for explanation during the consideration of any one question.

B. Consideration of Motions.

1. No motion shall be entertained or debated until duly seconded and announced by the Chair.
2. The motion shall be recorded and, if requested by any CM, it shall be read by the City Clerk before it is debated.
3. Until the Chair states the question, the maker of the motion has the right to modify or withdraw it. If the motion is modified by the maker before the Chair states the question, the CM who seconded the motion may withdraw the second.
4. Motions shall be entertained in the order of precedence outlined in the 11th Edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.

IV. Parliamentary Procedures.

MOTION TO:	Debatable	Amendable?	Vote?	May be reconsidered?
Adjourn	No	No	Maj	No
Recess	No	Yes	Maj	No
Reconsideration (Rule V.G)	Yes	No	Maj	No
Lay on the Table (Rule IV.J)	No	No	Maj	Yes
Take from the Table (Rule IV.K)	No	No	Maj	No
Call the Question (Rule IV.H)	No	No	2/3	Yes
Hold to a Certain Time (Rule IV.I)	Yes	Yes	Maj	Yes
Commit to a Committee	Yes	Yes	Maj	Yes
Amend or Substitute	Yes	Yes	Maj	Yes
Hold Indefinitely (Rule IV.L)	Yes	No	Maj	Affirmative vote may be reconsidered
All motions must be seconded to be entertained or debated. See Rule IV.B.1.				

C. Amendment Form.

1. CMs may offer for consideration amendments to proposed legislation to the body considering that legislation, whether the Full Council or a select or standing committee. An amendment is a pending motion until it is voted on. Amendments to legislation must be seconded, are debatable, and are adopted by a majority vote. Proposed amendments should take the form of either:

- a. To insert, or to add language;
- b. To delete language;
- c. A combination of *a* and *b* having the following forms:
 - i. To delete and insert (which applies to words);
 - ii. To substitute; that is, to delete a paragraph or the parts or the entire text of a legislation or main motion, and insert another in its place.

2. Added language shall be underlined and deleted language shall be shown with strikethrough format.

3. To promote efficiency, the Chair may accept consideration of an oral amendment that can be clearly stated in a suitable form. The Chair may also request the oral amendment be reread or presented in writing before the question is stated.

D. Parliamentary Inquiry.

A CM may direct a Parliamentary Inquiry to the presiding officer to obtain information on a matter of parliamentary law or the rules of the organization bearing on the business at hand. Inquiries may assist a CM to, e.g., make an appropriate motion, raise a proper point of order, or understand the parliamentary situation or the effect of a motion.

E. Recognition by the Chair.

If two or more CMs rise at the same time, the Chair shall designate the one who shall speak first.

F. Division of a Question.

Any CM may call for a division of a question, which shall be divided if it embraces subjects so distinct that, if one is taken away, a substantive proposition shall remain for the decision of the Council.

G. Point of Order.

1. The Chair shall decide all points of order.
2. If dissatisfied with the decision of the Chair, any CM may appeal the decision.
3. In all cases of appeal, the question shall be: "Shall the decision of the Chair be sustained?"
4. No CM may speak more than once on an appeal without the consent of a majority of the CMs in attendance.
5. The decision in response to the appeal shall be by majority vote of the CMs in attendance. In case of a tie vote, the decision of the Chair shall stand.

H. Call the Question.

A CM may make a motion to Call the Question (also known as Previous Question) to end debate on an immediate pending motion. This motion requires a two-thirds vote in favor.

I. Hold to a Certain Time.

To postpone a question to a certain time, and within limits, the motion shall state a definite date, meeting, or hour, or until after a certain event.

J. Lay on the Table.

A majority of CMs present may decide to temporarily halt consideration of a question immediately and without debate during a meeting. The maker of a motion to Lay on the Table must state the reason for the motion. A motion that has been laid on the table may be brought back by a motion to Take from the Table until the end of the next meeting.

K. Take from the Table.

Once a question has been laid on the table, it can be taken from the table by a majority vote of CMs present, as soon as the interrupting business has been disposed of or whenever no other question is pending.

L. Hold Indefinitely.

A majority of CMs present may decide not to take a direct vote or position on a main question by disposing of it with a motion to Hold Indefinitely. The question may not be brought back again for at least 60 days.

V. FULL COUNCIL VOTING

A. Voting Required.

1. Every CM in attendance shall vote on all actions before the Full Council, except that CMs must disqualify themselves from voting if disqualification is required by either the City's Code of Ethics^{*} or the Washington State Appearance of Fairness Doctrine, and CMs may disqualify themselves from voting to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest, unless a majority of those present vote that there is no conflict.

(See also Rule V.D.2 Announcing and Recording Votes.)

2. Abstentions are not allowed. CMs not having disqualified themselves pursuant to Rule V.A.1 shall vote "Aye" or "No."

3. All votes shall be recorded by the City Clerk in the Journal of Proceedings.[†]

B. Roll Call Voting.

A roll call vote will be taken when voting on final passage of Bills and on other business when requested by a CM. A roll call vote is called in alphabetical order of last name, except for the President, whose name is always called last. At each regular Council meeting, the first name on the roll, in a systematic rotation, is moved to the name immediately preceding the President's name.

C. Voice Vote.

A voice vote may be taken on any matter of business before the Council, unless a roll call vote has been requested as provided in Rule V.B.

D. Announcing and Recording Votes.

1. After a roll call vote, the City Clerk shall announce the "ayes" and "nos" and "disqualifications" for all votes and enter them into the Journal of the Proceedings. The announcement of the result of any vote shall not be postponed.

2. When a CM is in attendance and has been disqualified from voting under Rule I.B.2.d, the Clerk shall record and announce "in attendance, but disqualified from voting."

(See also Rule V.A.1 Voting Required.)

^{*} SMC 4.16.

[†] Charter, Art. IV, § 4.

E. Proxy Votes.

There are no proxy votes. A CM may cast a vote only if in attendance at the time the vote is taken, except as provided for in Rule II.C.4.

F. Tie Vote.

In the event of a tie vote, a motion does not pass.

G. Reconsideration.

1. After the final vote on any motion, Bill, Resolution, or Clerk File, and before the adjournment of that meeting, any CM who voted with the prevailing side may move for reconsideration of the original motion. Seconds to motions for reconsideration may be from either side.
 - a. If the result of the final vote is to pass any motion, Bill, Resolution, or Clerk File, any reconsideration vote must take place before adjournment of that meeting, or else there shall be no reconsideration vote.
 - b. If a Bill is moved for final passage and fails to pass, and a motion to reconsider is made, the motion shall not be voted on before the next meeting of the Full Council.*
2. A motion to reconsider takes precedence over every other motion, except a motion to adjourn.
3. Motions to reconsider a vote upon amendments to any pending question shall be made and decided immediately.
4. A motion that does not pass in a standing or select committee meeting cannot be reconsidered, but the motion may be offered to the Full Council.

* Charter, Art. IV, § 10.

VI. STANDING COMMITTEES*

A. Formation.

1. Standing committees are formed after the biennial election of a President.
2. Formation of standing committees, i.e. the identification of committees' scopes of work, regular meeting schedules, and Chair and membership assignments, shall be adopted by Resolution.

B. Membership.

1. Membership of a standing committee generally consists of a Chair, two other CMs, and an alternate.
2. If the vacancy of a Council position requires the appointment and/or election of a replacement CM, the committee duties and responsibilities of the replacement CM shall be proposed by the President, and shall be established by Council Resolution to be adopted within 45 days of the date the replacement CM takes office.
3. Any CM may attend a standing committee meeting.
4. There is no quorum requirement for standing committee meetings.

C. Meetings.

1. Meetings are held in the Council Chamber in Seattle City Hall unless a specific alternate location is established by the Chair with the concurrence of a majority of the regular members of the committee, and appropriate public notice and access are provided.
2. The Council sets regular meeting dates and times by Resolution. Regular meetings are generally held twice a month. The committee Chair may cancel a meeting at any time.
3. Meetings shall be noticed both as committee meetings and as Full Council meetings, with the agenda limited to committee business and only rules and procedures applicable to committees in effect.
4. Preliminary agendas for upcoming regular meetings will list items for which discussion and/or recommendation is expected and will be made available to the public. All reasonable effort will be made to provide the preliminary agenda online and in hard copy at least two business days prior to the meeting.

* Charter, Art. IV, § 4.

5. All reasonable effort will be made to make materials that are to be presented in a regular meeting available online at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting, and copies will be made available to those attending the meeting.

D. Special Meetings.

A special meeting is a meeting held at a time, date, or location that differs from a regular meeting.

1. Special meetings may be scheduled by the committee Chair.
2. Notices of special meetings shall be in accordance with RCW 42.30.080. All reasonable effort will be made to make the preliminary agenda available online and in hard copy at least two business days prior to the meeting.
3. The only items of business for which final action may be taken at a special meeting are those items listed on the written notice.

E. Attendance.

1. It is the duty of each member of a committee to attend its meetings.
2. If a CM is unable to attend a meeting, it is the responsibility of the CM's office to inform the Chair and committee alternate as soon as practical. When an alternate is notified of the absence, the alternate is expected to attend the meeting unless the alternate is also unavailable. If the alternate is unable to attend, it is the responsibility of the alternate's office to notify the Chair.
3. A committee member may be excused with the consent of the Chair.

F. Duties of the Chair.

It is the duty of the committee Chair to:

1. Provide at each meeting a public comment period pursuant to Rule XI.C.3.a.
2. Act as presiding officer and call the meetings to order at the appointed times.
3. State the amount of time allowed for speakers and announce instructions to the speakers at the start of each meeting. The Chair may allow additional time for the

submission of written comment from the public.

4. Announce CMs in attendance at the call to order and as they join the meeting.
5. Recognize CMs and, in accordance with these General Rules and Procedures, others who wish to speak.
6. Set the committee's agenda consistent with the committee's assigned scope of work.
7. Run meetings expeditiously.
8. Preserve order and decorum.

G. Duties and Responsibilities of Members.

Committee members shall acquaint themselves with the interests of the City specifically represented by that committee, and shall make recommendations to the Full Council on Council Bills, Resolutions, and Clerk Files, and such other reports as in their judgment(s) will advance the interests and promote the welfare of the people of the City.

H. Voting, Referral, and Reporting.

1. Any CM attending a standing committee meeting may vote, or abstain from voting, on issues before the committee.
2. Committee action on any Council Bill, Resolution, or Clerk File is limited to recommendations for the Full Council to consider when voting on final action for that item.
3. Committees shall not vote on a final recommendation on any Bill, Resolution, or Clerk File on the same day that a public hearing was held on that item, except upon passage of a motion by the Chair to suspend this Rule.
4. Starting at noon on the Thursday immediately preceding a regular Full Council meeting, committees shall not refer legislation to that meeting for final action except upon passage of a motion by the Chair to suspend this Rule and the concurrence of the President.

5. Committee Reports:

- a. Standing committees shall have a written record of final recommendations on any legislation reported out to the Full Council. The record shall include the names of members in attendance and their votes on each final recommendation voting in favor, opposed, and abstaining.
- b. If a committee recommendation is not unanimous, the Clerk of the committee shall provide a report on such legislation to all CMs immediately following the conclusion of the meeting.
- c. Unless otherwise authorized by the President and the committee Chair, a committee recommendation that is not unanimous shall be sent to the second regular Full Council meeting after the date of the recommendation.
- d. Reports of standing committees shall be entered in the Journal of the Proceedings of the City Council.

VII. SELECT COMMITTEES

A. Establishment of Select Committees.

The President may create, amend, or abolish select committees and shall appoint the Chair and membership to select or non-standing committees as required, or as deemed necessary to efficiently conduct the business of the Council. When creating the committee, the President shall specify the quorum for convening meetings, making recommendations, or taking committee action. Any committee created under this Rule may be of limited duration or focus.

B. Meetings.

1. Meetings are held in the Council Chamber in Seattle City Hall unless a specific alternate location is established by the Chair with the concurrence of a majority of the regular members of the committee, and appropriate public notice and access are provided.
2. Regular meeting dates, times, and locations may be determined in advance and filed in a Clerk File by the President upon creation of the select committee. The committee Chair may cancel a meeting at any time.
3. Meetings shall be noticed both as committee meetings and as Full Council meetings, with the agenda limited to committee business and only rules and procedures applicable to committees in effect.
4. Preliminary agendas for upcoming regular meetings will list items for which discussion and/or recommendation is expected and will be made available to the public, with the exception of the Budget Committee pursuant to Rule VII.H.3. All reasonable effort will be made to provide the preliminary agenda online and in hard copy at least two business days prior to the meeting.
5. All reasonable effort will be made to make materials that are to be presented in the meeting available online at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting, and copies will be made available to those attending the meeting.

C. Special Meetings.

A special meeting is a meeting held at a time, date, or location that differs from a regular meeting.

1. Special meetings may be scheduled by the committee Chair.

2. Notices of special meetings shall be in accordance with RCW 42.30.080. All reasonable effort will be made to make the preliminary agenda available online and in hard copy at least two business days prior to the meeting.

3. The only items of business for which final action may be taken at a special meeting are those items listed on the written notice.

D. Attendance.

1. It is the duty of each member of a committee to attend its meetings.

2. If a CM is unable to attend a meeting, it is the responsibility of the CM's office to inform the Chair and committee alternate as soon as practical. When an alternate is notified of the absence, the alternate is expected to attend the meeting unless the alternate is also unavailable. If the alternate is unable to attend, it is the responsibility of the alternate's office to notify the Chair.

3. A committee member may be excused with the consent of the Chair.

E. Duties of the Chair.

It is the duty of the committee Chair to:

1. Provide at each meeting a public comment period pursuant to Rule XI.C.3.a.

2. Act as presiding officer and call the meetings to order at the appointed times.

3. State the amount of time allowed for speakers and announce instructions to the speakers at the start of each meeting. The Chair may allow additional time for the submission of written comment from the public.

4. Announce CMs in attendance at the call to order and as they join the meeting.

5. Recognize CMs and, in accordance with these General Rules and Procedures, others who wish to speak.

6. Set the committee's agenda consistent with the committee's assigned scope of work.

7. Run meetings expeditiously.

8. Preserve order and decorum.

F. Duties and Responsibilities of Members.

Committee members shall acquaint themselves with the interests of the City specifically represented by that committee, and shall make recommendations to the Full Council on Council Bills, Resolutions, and Clerk Files, and such other reports as in their judgment(s) will advance the interests and promote the welfare of the people of the City.

G. Voting, Referral, and Reporting.

1. Any CM attending a select committee meeting may vote, or abstain from voting, on issues before the committee.
2. Committee action on any Council Bill, Resolution, or Clerk File is limited to recommendations for the Full Council to consider when voting on final action for that item.
3. Committees shall not vote on a final recommendation on any Bill, Resolution, or Clerk File on the same day that a public hearing was held on that item, except upon passage of a motion by the Chair to suspend this Rule.
4. Starting at noon on the Thursday immediately preceding a regular Full Council meeting, committees shall not refer legislation to that meeting for final action except upon passage of a motion by the Chair to suspend this Rule and the concurrence of the President.
5. Committee Reports:
 - a. Select committees shall have a written record of final recommendations on any legislation reported out to the Full Council. The record shall include the names of members in attendance and their votes on each final recommendation voting in favor, opposed, and abstaining.
 - b. If a committee recommendation is not unanimous, the Clerk of the committee shall provide a report on such legislation to all CMs immediately following the conclusion of the meeting.
 - c. Unless authorized by the President and the committee Chair, a committee recommendation that is not unanimous shall be sent to the second regular Full Council meeting after the date of the recommendation.
 - d. Reports of select committees shall be entered in the Journal of the Proceedings of the City Council.

H. Budget Committee.

1. The Budget Committee is a select committee comprised of all CMs and chaired by the Chair of the Finance Committee.
2. The primary purpose of the Budget Committee is to review the Mayor's proposed budget and proposed capital improvement program (CIP), make changes as appropriate, and adopt a budget and CIP. The Budget Committee shall review and take action on other budget issues during the year as may be assigned.
3. From the time the Budget Committee receives the Mayor's proposed budget (typically the end of September) to the time the Council adopts a budget (typically the third week of November), regular standing and select committee meetings shall be suspended. Special standing and select committee meetings may be suspended. Special standing and select committee meetings may be called:
 - a. If review of a legislative action is required within a set time (e.g. quasi-judicial actions with 90-day deadlines for Council review); or
 - b. Upon the approval of the President and the Chair of the Budget Committee .
4. Preliminary agendas of Budget Committee meetings are required to list only general topics for discussion and/or recommendation. All reasonable effort will be made to provide preliminary agendas online and in hard copy at least two business days before the meeting. Final agendas of Budget Committee meetings shall be issued no later than the morning of the scheduled meeting and will include all items to be discussed.
5. The quorum for convening a Budget Committee meeting is one CM; the quorum for Committee action and recommendations on agenda adoption, legislation, or budget changes is five CMs.
6. Adoption of a Balanced Budget Package:
 - a. The Chair shall prepare a group of budget actions (Chair's Proposed Balancing Package) that if adopted would amend the Mayor's proposed budget and pass a budget in which expenditures do not exceed revenues.
 - b. The Chair will endeavor to meet individually with each CM to discuss the Budget Chair's Proposed Balancing Package at least four calendar days before the Budget Committee is scheduled to vote on the Chair's Proposed Balancing Package. It is the role of the Chair to follow up and inform CMs of any changes made to the Chair's Proposed Balancing Package prior to the scheduled meeting of the Budget Committee. If the Proposed Balancing Package contains budget actions substantively different from any actions discussed in previous Budget

Committee meetings, it is the role of the Chair to give explicit notice of these proposed actions to CMs prior to the scheduled meeting of the Budget Committee.

c. If a CM wants to propose one or more amendments or substitute actions to the Chair's Proposed Balancing Package, the CM must make an appropriate motion at the Budget Committee, requiring a second and a majority of CMs present.

7. Other rules and procedures for the Budget Committee, and the meeting dates and times for regular meetings, shall be established by the President in consultation with the Budget Committee Chair.

VIII. EXTERNAL COMMITTEES

A. Attendance.

CMs serving on an external committee (a governing or advisory body to which CMs are appointed by Council Resolution) are expected to attend its meetings unless the CM is unavailable.

B. Notification If Unable to Attend.

If a CM is unable to attend an external committee meeting, it is the responsibility of the CM's office to inform the committee alternate(s) as soon as practical. When an alternate is notified of the absence, the alternate is expected to attend the meeting unless the alternate is also unavailable. If the alternate is unable to attend, it is the responsibility of the alternate's office to notify other members or alternates (if there are any).

IX. COUNCIL BRIEFING MEETINGS

A. Purpose, Procedure, and Scope.

The Council will hold Council Briefing meetings, chaired by the President, to discuss and receive briefings on issues of general interest. The President shall be Chair of the meetings. No quorum is required at any Council Briefing meeting. The Council shall take no vote or other final action at any Council Briefing meeting.

B. Location and Frequency.

1. Council Briefing meetings are held in the Council Chamber in Seattle City Hall, unless a specific alternate location is established by the President, and appropriate public notice and access are provided.
2. Regular Council Briefing meetings are held at 9:30 a.m. each Monday, or if Monday is a holiday, then on the next day that is not a legal holiday. Regular meetings are not held on the last two Mondays in August nor on the last two Mondays in December. Council Briefing meetings may be canceled by the President at any time.
3. A special meeting is a meeting held at a time, date, or location that differs from a regular meeting. Special meetings may be scheduled by the committee Chair. Notices of special meetings shall be in accordance with RCW 42.30.080.

C. Preliminary Agendas.

1. Preliminary agendas of upcoming regular Council Briefing meetings will list items for which discussion is expected and will be made available to the public. All reasonable effort will be made to provide the preliminary agenda online and in hard copy at least two business days prior to the meeting.
2. For special Council Briefing meetings, all reasonable effort will be made to make the preliminary agenda available online and in hard copy at least two business days prior to the meeting.

X. EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

A. When Sessions May Be Held.

Executive sessions may be held during Full Council meetings, Council Briefing meetings, standing or select committee meetings, whether regular or special meetings, and at other times as allowed by RCW 42.30.110 and 42.30.140, as it now exists or as amended, and SMC 5.24.020 and 5.24.030.

B. How Sessions May Be Convened.

The presiding officer or a majority of those CMs in attendance may decide to convene an executive session during a particular meeting. An executive session may be ended by the presiding officer or by a majority vote of those CMs in attendance.

C. Purpose of Session.

Before convening an executive session, the presiding officer shall announce the purpose of the executive session, and the time when the executive session is expected to conclude.

D. Attorney to be Present.

1. An attorney from the Law Department, or outside counsel if appropriate, will be present during all executive sessions to advise CMs on compliance with RCW 42.30.
2. The Council may choose to waive the attorney-client privilege regarding legal matters discussed with counsel at an executive session only if all nine CMs are in attendance and unanimously agree to waive the privilege. Only the Council may waive the privilege. Executive session is the only forum in which the Council may waive attorney-client privilege for any attorney-client privileged documents presented to the Council in or out of executive session.

E. Attendees.

Attendance at an executive session is limited to:

1. CMs;
2. Assistants to CMs representing their CM in absentia (and this attendance is limited to presence, not participation);
3. The Council's Central Staff Director and/or designee;

4. City staff members and others representing the City (e.g., consultants) who are directly involved in the issue and who have been invited by the presiding officer to attend;

5. Legal counsel assigned to the matter at issue; and

6. The City Clerk or designee for clerking purposes.

F. Confidentiality.

Executive session attendees shall not disclose the contents of discussions held within the session.

G. Issues.

Issues that may be considered in executive session include, but are not limited to:

1. Consideration of certain real estate transactions and/or prices;
2. Evaluation of complaints against a public officer or employee;
3. Evaluation of qualifications of candidate for appointment to elective office;
4. Evaluation of qualifications of an applicant for public employment or to review the performance of a public employee;
5. Discussion with legal counsel regarding litigation or potential litigation to which the City or a CM acting in an official capacity is, or is likely to become, a party; and
6. Planning or adopting the strategy or position to be taken during the course of collective bargaining or reviewing the proposals made in labor negotiations while in progress.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND ACCESS

A. Public Sessions.

1. All meetings of the Council, and all meetings of standing and select committees (except executive sessions or as otherwise permitted by law), are open to the public, and shall be conducted in a manner that provides the opportunity for attendees to hear and see the proceedings of those Members physically present and to hear any CMs attending by electronic means.

(See Rule XI.H Equal Access and Participation – Requests for Reasonable Accommodation.)

2. The Council shall not adjourn its regular Full Council meetings to any place other than its regular meeting place, which is the Council Chamber in Seattle City Hall, except as provided by law.*

(See Rule II.A.2 Full Council Meetings;
and Rule XI.D.2 Disruptions of Council Meetings and Committee Meetings.)

3. Meetings of standing committees shall not convene in or adjourn to any place other than that committee's regular meeting place, which is the Council Chamber in Seattle City Hall, unless a specific alternate location is established by the Chair with the concurrence of a majority of the committee's regular CMs and appropriate public notice and access are provided.

4. Meetings of select committees may be held in the Council Chamber in Seattle City Hall, or an alternate location as established by the committee Chair so long as appropriate public notice and access are provided.

B. Public Hearings.

Public Hearings are opportunities for members of the public to speak on a particular proposed Ordinance, Resolution, or other legislative action. If a Public Hearing is scheduled for a particular meeting, the agenda for the meeting will specify the proposed Ordinance, Resolution, Clerk File, other legislative action, or other subject to be discussed at the public hearing.

(See Rule VI.F. Duties of the Chair.)

1. Public hearings may be held as part of a scheduled Full Council, select, or standing committee meeting, but the public hearing shall be conducted as a separate agenda item.

2. The Chair of the body conducting the public hearing shall:

a. Announce at the beginning of the public hearing the rules, guidelines, and time limits for individual speakers;

* Charter, Art. IV, § 6.

b. Require all speakers to sign in on registers provided by Legislative Department staff.

3. Members of the public who wish to speak at public hearings shall comply with Rule XI.D.

C. Public Comment at Full Council Meetings and Committee Meetings.

Public comment periods are opportunities for members of the public to comment on items on the meeting's agenda or, in the case of a committee meeting, on matters within the purview of the committee. The agenda for a particular Council meeting may specify the total time allotted for the public comment period and for time limits for individual comments.

(See also Rule XI.B Public Hearings.)

1. The Council does not accept public comment at special Full Council meetings.

2. The Council does accept public comment at regular Full Council meetings:

a. Public comment at Full Council meetings is limited to matters on the Introduction and Referral Calendar and Committee Reports on that day's regular Full Council meeting agenda; and

b. The President shall ensure that all public comment is in accordance with Rule XI.C.2.a.

3. Council committees accept public comment at standing and select committee meetings.

a. Public comment at a committee meeting is limited to matters within the purview of the specific committee or an item listed on that day's agenda.

b. The presiding officer at a committee meeting shall ensure that all public comment is in accordance with Rule XI.C.3.a.

4. Total public comment periods shall not exceed 20 minutes unless extended at the discretion of the presiding officer.

5. Individual speakers will be provided up to two minutes total speaking time. Individuals who wish to speak shall sign up for public comment on registers provided by Legislative Department staff.

6. When recognized by the presiding officer, the individual shall approach the podium, state the individual's name for the record, and identify the item to which the individual will speak. At the presiding officer's discretion, this Rule may be waived in the interest of personal safety of the person speaking.

7. Council and committee proceedings are electronically recorded; therefore, speakers wishing to address the Council or committee during the established public comment period shall speak only from the microphones provided for public speakers.

8. If no speakers sign up to address the Council or the committee, or if the public comments conclude before the 20 minute time period has elapsed, the comment period will be closed, and the Council or committee shall resume its business, with no further opportunity for public comment at that meeting.

9. The Council is not required to allow public comment at Council Briefing meetings.

10. No public comments addressing the merits of a quasi-judicial action are permitted at any Council meeting.

D. Disruptions of Full Council Meetings and Committee Meetings.

1. Disruptions of Full Council and Committee meetings are prohibited. Disruptions include but are not limited to the following:

a. Failure of a speaker to comply with the allotted time established for the individual speaker's public comment;

b. Outbursts from members of the public who have not been recognized by the presiding officer for public comment;

c. Comments that are not in compliance with XI.C.2.a or XI.C.3.a, or that are unrelated to the particular proposed Ordinance, Resolution, or other legislative action on which a public hearing is being held;

d. Standing in the center aisle or front row of the audience unless speaking as recognized by the presiding officer, waiting to speak during the public comment period, or gathering meeting materials distributed by Legislative Department staff;

e. Holding or placement of a banner or sign in the Council Chamber in a way that endangers others or obstructs the free flow of pedestrians or the view of others attending a Council or Committee meeting; or

f. Behavior that intentionally disrupts, disturbs, or otherwise impedes attendance or participation at a Council or Committee meeting.

2. The presiding officer shall preserve the order and decorum of a Council or committee meeting at all times. If an individual fails to comply with Rule XI.D.1, the presiding officer shall issue an oral warning to the individual that the individual's behavior is out of order. If the individual continues to engage in activity that violates Rule XI.D.1, the

presiding officer may take the following actions:

- a. Terminate the individual's comment period and proceed to the next speaker, if any;
 - b. Direct security staff to assist an individual to the individual's seat; or
 - c. Direct security staff to remove the individual from the meeting room.
3. Any individual ordered to be removed from a meeting pursuant to Rule XI.D.2.c shall be excluded from returning to that same meeting from which the individual was removed, unless the decision of the presiding officer is overruled by a majority vote of those CMs in attendance.
4. If an individual fails to comply with the requirements of Rule XI.D.1 over the course of two or more Council and/or committee meetings occurring within a 15 day time period, or over the course of two or more consecutive meetings of the same committee, the presiding officer may exclude the individual from participation in future public comment periods before the Council and/or committee meetings, or exclude the individual from attendance at future Council and/or committee meetings, unless the decision of the presiding officer is overruled by a majority vote of the CMs in attendance.
 - a. The presiding officer shall inform the individual of the specific reason for, and the specific terms of, the exclusion.
 - b. An initial and any subsequent exclusion of an individual from future participation in public comment periods or future attendance at Council and/or committee meetings may be issued for up to 28 calendar days.
 - c. If an individual is subject to an exclusion from future attendance at Council and/or committee meetings for a 28 calendar day time period, and further engages in activity that violates Rule XI.D.1, other than subsection c, within 60 days after the termination of the exclusion period, an additional exclusion from future attendance at Council and/or committee meetings may be issued for up to 90 calendar days.
 - d. If an individual is subject to an exclusion from future attendance at Council and/or committee meetings for a 90 or more calendar day time period, and further engages in activity that violates Rule XI.D.1, other than subsection c, within 60 days after the termination of the exclusion period, an additional exclusion from

future attendance at Council and/or committee meetings may be issued for up to 180 calendar days.

e. The length of the period of any exclusion may depend upon the seriousness of the disruption, the number of disruptions, and the individual's prior record with conduct at Council or committee meetings.

f. When issuing an exclusion from future public comment periods, or from future attendance at Council or committee meetings, the presiding officer shall include specific notification that the individual may submit written comments to the City Clerk for distribution to the Council at future public comment periods.

5. Any individual excluded from participation in future public comment periods or from attendance at future Council or committee meetings for a period of more than two calendar days may appeal the exclusion by submitting a written appeal to the Full Council within five business days after receiving notice of the exclusion. Upon receipt of a written appeal, the Full Council shall consider the appeal at its next regularly scheduled open public meeting. The individual's exclusion from public comment periods or from attendance at Council or committee meetings shall remain in effect during the Council's consideration of the appeal.

6. The enforcement provisions of these rules are in addition to the authority of the Department of Finance and Administrative Services to enforce Rules of Conduct in City Hall pursuant to Rule 05-02, and Rules regarding City Buildings and Premises pursuant to Rule 06-03. Disruptions prior to or after a Council or committee meeting, including interference with City officials or City staff's preparation for a meeting, may be addressed under the rules cited in this section.

E. Interruption(s) to Full Council Meetings and Committee Meetings.

1. It is the responsibility of the presiding officer to maintain order and adjourn any meeting as the presiding officer deems necessary.

2. If a meeting is interrupted by any person or by a group or groups of persons so as to render the orderly conduct of the meeting not feasible, and order cannot be restored by the removal of individuals who are interrupting the meeting, the members of the Council or the committee conducting the meeting may order the meeting room cleared and continue in session, or may adjourn the meeting and re-convene at another location selected by majority vote of the CMs present. In such a session, final disposition may be taken only on matters appearing on the agenda. Representatives of the press or other news media, except those participating in the disturbance, shall be allowed to attend any session held pursuant to this Rule XI.E.

3. The Council or the committees may establish procedures for re-admitting an individual or individuals not responsible for disturbing the orderly conduct of the meeting.

4. If a meeting is adjourned due to an interruption, CMs and staff shall leave the meeting room until the meeting is reconvened.

F. Public Access.

1. No individual other than the Legislative Department staff may approach the CMs or the Clerks while the Council or a committee is in session, unless permitted to do so by the President or Chair.
2. During committee meetings and Council Briefing meetings, no persons other than Legislative Department staff shall join CMs at the committee table, unless specifically invited by the committee Chair to provide information necessary to committee business.
3. Physical access to CM office areas is limited and provided only in accordance with established policies and procedures of the Legislative Department.
4. Persons desiring to electronically tape (audio, video, etc.) or photograph a CM within the CM office area(s) may only do so with the permission of the respective CM(s) or their respective staff members, when so delegated.
5. Access by media shall be in accordance with Legislative Department policy.
6. The presiding officer or designee may temporarily suspend or modify this Rule XI.F to protect the safe and responsible functioning of the Council.

G. Recording of Meetings.

1. Public meetings of the City Council will be electronically recorded whenever feasible. The presiding officer or designee may temporarily suspend or modify this Rule XI.G.1 to protect the safe and responsible functioning of the Council.
2. Executive sessions and those meetings exempted from RCW 42.30 will not be recorded.
3. The City Clerk shall maintain custody of recordings made pursuant to Rule XI.G.1.

H. Equal Access and Participation - Requests for Reasonable Accommodation.

1. Assistive listening devices will be available in the Council Chamber during all meetings of the Council and its committees, and in other rooms or places where the Council meets and where Council proceedings are broadcast, to enable persons with disabilities to attend all public City Council meetings.
2. In addition, upon request, reasonable efforts to make additional accommodation not addressed by the available assistive listening devices will be made to enable persons with disabilities to attend all public City Council meetings.
3. Because a request for additional accommodation may require sufficient lead time to respond, the request should be made at the earliest possible opportunity.
4. Any individual wishing to request assistive listening devices, printed materials, or services or other reasonable accommodation should do so prior to the meeting in question by directing the request to the Office of the City Clerk.
5. Legislative Department staff will evaluate all requests and make accommodations that are reasonable under all the circumstances.

I. Use of the Council Chamber.

1. Council business has priority over other uses of the Council Chamber.
2. Other uses of the Council Chamber shall be in accordance with Legislative Department policy.

XII. ALTERATION OF GENERAL RULES AND PROCEDURES

A. Suspension.

1. A rule or procedure not listed in Rule XII.A.2 may be temporarily suspended:

- a. If a CM requests suspension and no objection is offered; or
- b. In open session upon a two-thirds vote.

Any rule or procedure so suspended shall be announced by the presiding officer, after which the Full Council or committee shall proceed accordingly.

2. The following rules or procedures established by this document may not be suspended:

- a. This Rule XII.A;
- b. Rule XII.B;
- c. Rule V.G.1.b;
- d. Rule X.F;
- e. Those required by Charter;
- f. Those required by the Seattle Municipal Code; and
- g. Those required by state law.

3. The City Clerk shall provide a guide for compliance with this Rule XI.A, which guide is attached as Appendix A to these Rules.

B. Biennial Review.

The President and the City Clerk shall conduct biennial reviews of the General Rules and Procedures of the Seattle City Council.

C. Amendment.

Amendments of these General Rules and Procedures shall be by majority vote of the CMs and, if applicable, pursuant to SMC 3.02.030.

Appendix A: List of Rules and Procedures that may not be Suspended.

November 2015

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