

CITY OF SAUSALITO

CITY COUNCIL, CITY MANAGER, CITY ATTORNEY OPERATING PROTOCOLS

Updated May 2010
Amended June 8, 2010
Amended February 2, 2013
Amended January 24, 2017
Affirmed January 9, 2018
Amended February 13, 2018
Amended January 8, 2019

A. PLACING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

- Following each Council meeting, preferably within one week thereafter, the City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk will meet with the Mayor and the Vice Mayor to set the agenda for the next two upcoming regularly scheduled City Council meetings
- If a Council Member wants to put an item on the agenda, he/she goes to the Mayor or raises the item during the “Future Agenda Item” section of the regularly scheduled City Council meeting.
- By consensus, or a majority vote, if necessary, an item can be put on a future City Council agenda on a date to be determined by the City Manager working with the Mayor and Vice Mayor unless otherwise specifically directed by a majority of the Council.
- The agenda packet for each regularly scheduled Council meeting will include a projection of the future items scheduled for consideration by the Council for a rolling 3 month time period.
- If a member of the public asks for an item to be put on the agenda during Public Comment time, the Council can direct staff to put it on a future agenda when there is consensus by the Council, or defer discussion of that item to the “Future Agenda Item” section of the City Council meeting.

B. COUNCIL-GENERATED STAFF WORK

- All requests for staff work must go through the City Manager.
- The City Manager determines how much work a request will take.
- If significant, the Council by consensus or majority vote must support the request.

C. GIVING DIRECTION TO THE CITY MANAGER

- The Council collectively gives direction to the City Manager.

D. WORKING WITH THE CITY MANAGER IN COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE STAFF

- Routine requests for information can be asked directly of staff without going through the City Manager.
- If staff would be put in an awkward position or feel that they were being given direction, go through the City Manager for the information.
- If you have a question of staff about an item on the agenda, when possible ask the staff person ahead of time (before the meeting) so that he/she can be prepared with the answer.
- As much as possible, e-mail staff with requests for information and c.c. the City Manager. The City Manager shares the information equally with all Council members.

E. GIVING DIRECTION TO THE CITY ATTORNEY

- The Council collectively gives direction to the City Attorney.
- Council members individually may request information of the City Attorney.
- If significant, the Council by consensus or majority vote must support the request.
- Decisions regarding City Attorney attendance at other than City Council and Planning Commission meetings are determined by the City Manager with the City Attorney.

F. RESPONDING INDIVIDUALLY, AS A COUNCIL MEMBER, TO PUBLIC COMPLAINTS OR INQUIRIES

- Report serious public complaints or inquiries to the City Manager and ask the City Manager to follow up with the member of the public.
- Routine complaints (e.g., replacement of a street light) can go directly to the appropriate department.
- Let the City Manager know if you've spent time with a community member dealing with a complaint.
- Inform the complainant that the appropriate staff member will be notified of a complaint.
- When possible, email the City Manager with complaints or forward complainants' emails to the City Manager.
- If a public member's perception is that they have been treated poorly (e.g., rude) by a City staff member, the Council member needs to share the information with the City Manager.

G. COUNCIL MEMBER REPRESENTATION ON REGIONAL BOARDS

- The Mayor appoints, at a Council meeting, Council member representatives and alternates to regional boards.
- Council member representatives will be asked to provide brief updates to the City Council at the next available opportunity following a regional board meeting.

H. COUNCIL MEMBER REPRESENTATION ON COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEES

- The Mayor appoints, at a Council meeting, Council member representatives to Council subcommittees.
- When you represent the City (as on Boards, Commissions or JPAs), you represent the majority Council view, not your personal viewpoint. Councilmembers acting as representatives may need to ask the body they are representing to allow time to get clarity from their Council. If not possible, the Council representative must act as best as possible he/she can. If there is no formal Council vote on the position, the representative has the discretion to weigh in on the issue.
- Council member representatives will be asked to provide brief updates to the City Council at the next available opportunity following a subcommittee meeting.

I. RESPONDING TO THE PRESS

- When contacted by the press, clarify whether you're speaking on behalf of the Council or yourself.
- If you do not feel knowledgeable about an issue, refer matters to the Mayor, an appropriate Council member or the City Manager.
- All press calls need to be answered and as quickly as possible.
- Confidential issues (anything discussed in closed session) cannot be talked about with anyone.

J. CONSENSUS* DECISION MAKING

- Council members strive toward consensus, including healthy discussions allowing for divergent opinions and/or disagreement.
- If consensus cannot be reached, or if legally required, a vote is taken.

* Consensus = General agreement; a decision that all can live with

K. ACTION OF COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEES

- Council subcommittees cannot take action on behalf of the Council; they can only make a recommendation to the City Council for action.
- Standing Council subcommittees operate under the Brown Act. Ad hoc (short term, single purpose subcommittees) are not subject to the Brown Act.
- Minutes of Council subcommittee meetings and Boards/Commissions on which a Council member participates as a member of the Board/Commission will be placed on the Council's consent calendar at the regular meeting of the Council following preparation of the minutes

L. MEETING MANAGEMENT In order to facilitate efficient and effective meetings and to optimize the City's resources and the publics' time the Council will utilize the following tools during Council meetings:

- Council meetings will be run utilizing Rosenberg's Rules of Order, Simple Parliamentary Procedures for the 21st Century Revised 2011 (attached)
- Speaker cards will be utilized for agendized items to allow members of the public to identify the item(s) on the agenda on which they wish to participate.
- City Council agendas will include estimated allotments of time for each agendized item and will be available to the public.
- Following each presentation, the Chair of the meeting will give each Councilmember an opportunity to ask any questions. City Council members will then each be given an opportunity to discuss the item. After a motion has been made, each member will given an additional opportunity to discuss the pending motion or make an alternative motion The Chair of the meeting will poll each Councilmember on each series of discussions and will continue to do so until the question is called and there is a motion or a vote to close comments, or there is no more discussion. A request to re-open Public Comment or call staff back to the podium, will require the consensus of the Council or formal vote. The Chair will also have discretion to distinguish questions from statements of opinion. Rosenberg's Rules are revised to allow for discussion prior to making a motion.

M. CHOOSE CIVILITY

- Treat everyone courteously
- Listen to others respectfully
- Exercise self-control
- Give open-minded consideration to all view-points
- Focus on the issues and avoid personalizing debate
- Embrace respectful disagreement and dissent as democratic rights, inherent components of an inclusive public process, and tools for forging sound decisions

IN ADDITION TO THE PROTOCOLS, WHAT DO COUNCIL MEMBERS EXPECT AND NEED OF EACH OTHER TO WORK EFFECTIVELY AS A TEAM?

Consensus List:

- Answer and return emails and phone calls; flag emails that are important and include a time when you need a response
- The Mayor will establish weekly “office hours” for 1 -2 hours/per week for communications from fellow Council members
- Indicate your preference for getting messages quickly
- Don’t speak over each other
- Everyone should have the opportunity to be heard in closed session and respect each other’s opinion; formalize agendas with timeframes and clarify whether direction is needed or not; consider change to formal venue
- Be honest
- Be prompt
- Be present and be prepared
- Avoid repeating what someone else has said
- Listen to each other
- Be brief in your comments
- Get closed session packet as early as possible
- Be advocates, not activists (willing to accept others’ views)

Attached: Rosenberg’s Rules of Order, Simple Parliamentary Procedures for the 21st Century
Revised 2011

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