

# CITY COUNCIL WEST HAVEN, CONNECTICUT



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## RULES OF PROCEDURE

2023-2025

## **RULE 1 – AUTHORITY**

### **1.1 CHARTER**

In accordance with Chapter IV, Section 3 of the Charter of the City of West Haven, the City Council shall determine its own rule of procedure not inconsistent with the provisions of the Charter. These rules shall be in effect upon adoption by the City Council, and until such time as such rules are either amended, suspended, or superseded.

### **1.2 PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

The last published edition of “Roberts Rules of Order” shall be the parliamentary authority of the City Council except as otherwise provided in these rules, and except that should any rule be inconsistent with the provisions of the Charter of the City of West Haven, then the Charter shall prevail.

## **RULE 2 – COUNCIL BUSINESS**

### **2.1 MATTERS REQUIRING ACTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL**

Unless otherwise approved by the Chairperson, no matter requiring action by the City Council shall be considered unless a paper initiating the matter is received by the Clerk of the Council or the Council Office on or before Noon of the Tuesday preceding the meeting at which the matter is to be introduced.

The Clerk of the Council shall notify all members of the city Council of matters received for said meeting. The all of the meeting, the agenda and a copy of the preceding meeting’s Journal shall be supplied to each member of the City Council by the Clerk of the Council.

At the discretion of the Chairperson, matters of a time-sensitive nature may be acted upon at any Regular Meeting under New Business.

## **RULE 3 – COMMITTEES**

### **3.1 STANDING COMMITTEES**

There shall be the following Standing Committees of the City Council:

- Charter Revision
- Education
- Environment, Sustainability and Energy
- Finance
- Health, Welfare & Safety
- Housing, Planning & Recreation
- Legislative Matters
- Personnel and Civil Service
- Public Lands
- Public Works
- Redevelopment & Blight
- Streets & Squares
- Tax Deferral

Standing Committees of the City Council shall consist of not less than three (3) and no more than five (5) members appointed by the Chairperson of the City Council. Minority representation shall be provided on each Standing Committee. The Chairperson of the City Council shall be an *ex officio* member of all Standing Committees, without the right to vote in Committee.

### **3.2 AD HOC AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

The City Council, from time to time, may authorize the Chairperson to appoint an Ad Hoc or Special Committee, which must include minority representation, for the purpose of conducting any business the body deems necessary. Ad Hoc, Special and Standing Committees may conduct public hearings on any matter as it may designate.

### **3.3 COMMITTEE REPORTS**

It shall be the duty of every Committee Chairperson to whom a matter is referred to report thereon within one (1) month such referral is made or at any such time as requested of the Chair of the City Council. The Committee Chairperson may request of the Chairperson of the City Council for further time to study the matter so referred.

All reports of the Committees shall be in writing and accompanied by a form of such order or resolution as they may recommend for the action of the city Council.

No Committee shall act by separate consultation and no reports, other than a minority report, shall be received unless agreed upon in the Committee actually assembled.

## **RULE 4 – MEETINGS**

### **4.1 CHAIRPERSON**

The Chairperson, or in the Chairperson's absence, the Majority Leader, shall preside over all Regular and Special meetings of the City Council. For all Special Meetings of a specific Committee, the Chairperson of that Committee shall preside over said meeting.

The Chairperson shall always preserve order and decorum at all times. The Chairperson shall be permitted the right to speak and vote on any question before the body, and shall decide all questions, subject to appeal, before the body.

### **4.2 CLERK OF THE COUNCIL**

The Clerk of the Council shall maintain an adequate Journal of all City Council meetings. The Clerk shall not, however, be required to include speeches as part of this Journal. Any formal statements made for the Journal by a member of the City Council shall, if verbatim quotation is desired, be presented in writing to the Clerk.

The Clerk or the Secretary to the City Council shall notify all members of the City Council of any public hearings, regular or special meetings or committee meetings to be conducted.

The Clerk of the Council shall issue all public notices and advertisements of the City Council at the direction of the Chairperson.

In the absence of the Clerk of the Council, the Chairperson of the City Council shall designate a Clerk Pro Tempore.

### **4.3 QUORUM**

Seven (7) members present at any meeting, with the exception of a Committee Meeting wherein three (3) members are present, shall constitute a Quorum.

#### **4.4 TIME AND PLACE OF REGULAR MEETINGS**

Regular Meetings of the City Council shall be conducted on the Second and Fourth Mondays of each month, commencing at 7:00 p.m., except for the months of July and August, when the Regular Meeting shall be conducted on the Fourth Monday only. Should any Regular Meeting fall on a National Holiday, said Regular Meeting shall be conducted on the next business day thereafter. Regular Meetings shall be held in the City Council Chambers located on the Third Floor of City Hall, unless otherwise determined by the Chairperson.

#### **4.5 TIME AND PLACE OF SPECIAL MEETINGS**

Special Meetings of the City Council may be called by the Mayor, the Council Chairperson or any seven (7) members of the City Council, by advising the Clerk of the date, time and purpose of said Special Meeting. No business shall be discussed or entertained at the Special Meeting except that for which the Special Meeting has been called.

#### **4.6 EMERGENCY MEETINGS**

When a matter requiring action by the City Council requires immediate action, an Emergency Meeting may be called by the Mayor and/or the Chairperson of the City Council. There is no twenty-four (24) hour requirement for the call of an Emergency Meeting.

A copy of the actions of such Emergency Meeting shall be filed with the City Clerk's office and on the City's website not later than forty-eight (48) hours following such emergency Meeting.

A copy of the Journal of such Emergency Meeting shall be filed with the City Clerk's office and on the City's web site not later than seventy-two (72) hours following such Emergency Meeting.

The purpose of the emergency meeting must be stated in the Journal.

#### **4.7 VIRTUAL MEETINGS**

Should an Emergency Declaration be issued by the State of Connecticut or the City of West haven, and such Emergency Declaration prohibits and/or prevents the City Council to meet in person to conduct business for a Regular, Special, Committee or Emergency meeting, the City Council may meet via electronic means or methods to conduct the meeting.

The Clerk of the City Council shall be responsible for cataloging actions taken and minutes of the Emergency Meeting.

## **4.8 COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Committee Meetings of the City Council may be conducted on any Wednesday of each month. The Committee Chairperson, in conjunction with the Clerk of the Council, shall send notification thereof to the respective members of each Committee so scheduled. Such notifications are to include referral from the City Council, its Chairperson and whatever the Committee Chairperson deems appropriate. A Public Comment session may precede each Committee Meeting, the scope, length and duration of which shall follow Rule 2.7 or otherwise at the discretion of the Committee Chairperson. All Committee meetings of the City Council shall be open meetings with special exception as stated in Conn. Gen. Stat. § 1-200.

## **4.9 DECORUM**

All members of the City Council, citizens, visitors and invited guests attending City Council meetings shall observe the proper rules of propriety, decorum and good conduct.

In speaking, City Council members shall confine themselves to the question, shall be courteous and not use unbecoming, abusive or unparliamentary language (including body language), and shall avoid personalities.

## **4.10 PUBLIC COMMENT**

Members of the public wishing to address the City Council shall wait to be recognized by the Chairperson, and then may approach the speaker's area. The speaker shall state their name and address for the record. At any Regular Meeting, any member of the public may comment on any matter, regardless of whether the matter appears on the agenda for the Regular Meeting, so long as the subject matter relates to the City of West Haven. At any Special Meeting, any member of the public may comment only on such matters appearing on that Special Meeting agenda.

Each individual may address the City Council one (1) time per meeting for up to five (5) minutes, which such time may be extended at the sole discretion of the Chairperson.

Any speakers may pose, through the Chairperson, any question pertinent to the matter under discussion. The question so posed may be answered by the person designated by the Chairperson.

No member of the City Council shall be permitted to engage in debate at any public hearing, but may answer questions posed and referred to by the Chairperson during the course of the public hearing. Questions in turn may be posed to the public by a member of the City Council after recognition by the Chairperson.

On the completion of three (3) calls for the public to address the City Council initially or further, without response, the Chairperson shall close the hearing on the subject at hand. Public comment shall continue until the Chairperson is satisfied that ample opportunity for all wishing to address the City Council has been provided, or, in the Chairperson's discretion, until continuance of the public session would compromise the responsible conduct of the meeting.

City Council members wishing to address the body will do so under New Business and not during the Public Comment portion of the meeting.

#### **4.11 ORDER OF BUSINESS**

At each Regular Meeting of the City Council, the order of business shall be as follows:

|          |                                                     |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| FIRST:   | Approval of the Journal of the preceding meeting(s) |
| SECOND:  | Petition and Communications                         |
| THIRD:   | Recess – Committee Meetings                         |
| FOURTH:  | Unfinished Business                                 |
| FIFTH:   | Report of Committee(s)                              |
| SIXTH:   | Council Liaison Reports                             |
| SEVENTH: | New Business                                        |
| EIGHTH:  | Adjournment                                         |

#### **4.12 MOTIONS**

Motions made and duly seconded shall be reduced to writing by the Clerk of the Council and shall be restated to the body by the Chairperson prior to movement. When a question is under debate, no motion shall be in order except to adjourn, table, postpone to a date certain, postpone indefinitely, commit, amend (in which several alternative motions shall have precedence), and previous question. A Motion for Adjournment is always in order. Conduct of all motions shall be as prescribed by the last published edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

A member of the City Council wishing to speak shall first respectfully address the Chairperson, and upon being recognized, shall proceed.

No speaker shall be interrupted by another except to call to order, privilege information or objection to consideration. The chairperson shall decide all of the aforementioned, and shall be sustained except through Appeal of the Chair.

No speaker shall address the body more than once on a question to the prevention of another who has not spoken. The Chairperson shall determine rotation of all speakers.

The maker of a motion, or its seconder, may withdraw at any time prior to decision or amendment of the original motion.

#### **4.13 VOTING**

No Ordinance, Resolution or Vote, except to adjourn, fix the time and place of subsequent meetings or questions or order, shall be decided or adopted by less than seven (7) affirmative votes, or three (3) affirmative votes in the case of Committees. No proxy or absentee votes shall be permitted on any question or at any meeting.

Unless otherwise requested, all voting shall be viva-voce. The Chairperson shall announce the outcome of all voting.

Any member may request a roll-call vote on questions before the body. Roll-call votes shall require the Clerk to poll and record the vote, starting with the Council Members-at-Large, alphabetically, and the remaining Council Members by District enumeration, commencing with the First District. The Chairperson will vote last, and, in the event of a tie, the Chairperson must cast a vote. The Chairperson shall announce the outcome of the vote.

#### **4.14 RECORDING & STREAMING OF MEETINGS**

Mechanical recording devices may be used at a Public Hearing or Meeting of the City Council for further deliberation. All public meetings may be recorded (audio and/or visual) and may be streamed over the Internet for public viewing.

### **RULE 5 – CITY OWNED PROPERTY**

#### **5.1 SALE OR TRANSFER OF CITY OWNED PROPERTY**

The City Council shall follow the procedure as set forth below with regard to any request involving the sale or transfer of any City owned property:

- A. Any proposal to purchase or otherwise receive property owned by the City of West Haven, either on a party's own initiative or in response to a Request for Proposals offered by the City, shall be submitted by way of a written communication to the City Council by the office of Corporation Counsel. The communication shall describe the property, state the

intended use of the property, and describe the proposed terms and conditions of the proposed sale or transfer. The Communication shall also include an opinion by Corporation Counsel if the proposed terms reflect the highest and best offer (if only one offer is received), or if more than one offer is received, an opinion on which offer should be approved. Corporation Counsel shall include with the communication any and all offers received for the sale or transfer of the City owned property.

- B. The communication shall be placed on the agenda and be referred to the appropriate Committee by the Chairperson of the City Council. The Committee shall research the matter and determine whether the interests of the City of West Haven would be best served by the sale or transfer of the subject property as described in the communication.
- C. The Clerk of the City Council, upon request of the Committee to which the matter was assigned, shall cause to be published a Legal Notice describing the property and proposed terms for sale or transfer, and setting the date, time and location for a public hearing on the matter.
- D. After the public hearing, the City Council, upon a favorable report from the Committee previously assigned the matter, shall have sole authority to accept or reject any and all bids received.

## **RULE 6 – CHANGES TO RULES OF PROCEDURE**

### **6.1 SUSPENSION OF RULES**

Rules contained herein may be suspended by a majority vote of not less than seven (7) members of the City Council.

### **6.2 AMENDMENTS TO THE RULES**

Amendments to any Rule contained herein shall be submitted to the Clerk in writing at any meeting of the City Council and shall be adopted by not less than seven (7) votes of any subsequent meeting of the City Council but not later than the passage of three (3) Regular Meetings.

**APPROVED AND ADOPTED ON THIS 12<sup>th</sup> DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2024**

**STACY RICCIO  
CLERK OF THE CITY COUNCIL**