

North Adams City Council Rules of Order 2019

Rule 1 – Meetings

Regular meeting of the City Council shall be held in the City Council Chamber, City Hall, at 7:30pm on the SECOND and FOURTH Tuesday of each month, except when one of said Tuesdays falls on a legal holiday or on Election Day; the City Council shall meet on the follow day in such an event. Calls for special meetings may be made at any time by His Honor the Mayor, the Council President, or a majority of the members of the City Council. Councilors are to be present at the time of roll call. Standing Committee meetings of the City Council to which matters have been referred by the full Council, shall meet at City Hall. Standing Committees may also meet at any other time subject to compliancy with the provisions of the open meeting law. The committee chairperson shall notify the clerk of all meeting dates. A formal written report from any committee meeting held for an item referred by the full council must be provided for date absolute indicated at time of referring to committee.

Rule 2 – Organization

The City Council shall hold its organizational meeting in City Council Chambers at the first regular meeting in January in years other than after a municipal election. The City Clerk shall preside until a President is elected. The President-elect shall present the Council Rules of Order. A majority vote of the Council is required to adopt the Rules of Order. The Council Rules of Order of the previous year shall be automatically in effect unless amended as per Rule 21.

Rule 3 – Council President / Vice President

The City Council President shall be elected at the annual organizational meeting for a term of one year. The president shall preside at all meetings of the City Council and perform such duties as are necessary. No member of the City Council may serve as President for more than two terms consecutively. The City Council shall elect a Vice President following the election of its President. In the absence of both the President and Vice President, the Clerk will call the meeting to order and conduct an election for President Pro-Tern, who will be elected by a majority vote of the City Council members present and shall conduct the meeting of the City Council.

The Presiding Officer may, at any time, during a debate or otherwise, declare a recess for not more than ten minutes. Such actions shall not be subject to appeal nor shall any motions apply thereto.

The Presiding Officer shall preserve decorum and order; may speak to points of order in preference to other members; shall decide all questions of order, subject to any appeal to the City Council, regularly seconded; and no other business shall be in order until the question on the appeal shall have been decided. The vote upon the appeal from the ruling of the Presiding Officer shall be by roll call and shall stand unless a majority of the

Rule 8 – Filing of Papers

All petitions, resolutions, orders, ordinances, memorials and remonstrance shall first be filed with the Clerk by a member of the Council or by His Honor the Mayor not later than 12:00PM current time of the Wednesday preceding a regular meeting; except when such day or the day following is a holiday, when they shall be filed not later than Noon on the Tuesday prior to such meeting. Papers received after the required time shall not be considered until the next meeting, unless the admission is approved by a vote of the City Council to suspend the rules.

Rule 9 – Motions

Every motion, except a motion to adjourn, to lay on the table, to place on file, to reconsider, or to take action, shall be in writing. After a motion is stated by the President, it shall be disposed of by a vote of the City Council unless withdrawn by the mover before an amendment or decision. When a question is under debate, the President shall receive no motion but to:

- Adjourn
- Lay on the table
- Recess
- Move the previous question
- Reference: File
- Divide the question
- Amend
- Postpone to a day certain
- Postpone indefinitely

Which several motions shall have precedence in the order in which they stand arranged and the first three shall be decided without debate.

A motion to move the previous question shall only be admitted when seconded and voted by two-thirds of the City Council members, and until it is decided, shall preclude all amendments and debate of the main question, and after adoption of the previous question, the sense of the Council shall forthwith be taken upon amendments, report by Committee, upon all pending amendments in their order and then upon the main question.

Rule 10 – Hearing of Visitors on the Agenda

Near the beginning of every meeting a Hearing of Visitors on Agenda will be conducted. During the Hearing of Visitors, any member of the public may address the City Council regarding items only on the current agenda. Those wishing to do so, shall wait to be acknowledged by the President, shall identify themselves by name and address, shall confine their remarks to a total of two (2) minutes and shall avoid personalities, libelous remarks and innuendo, and shall limit their remarks to matters of municipal interest.

- a) Standing Committees of the City Council shall be appointed annually by the President as follows
- Community Development (Three members)
 - Public Safety (Three members)
 - Public Service (Three members)
 - General Government (Three members)
 - Finance Committee (Three members)

Each committee shall have three members. One member shall be appointed chair, and shall serve at the discretion of the President.

- b) The Standing Committees shall act upon all matters relating to the following areas, which may be referred or assigned to them by the President.

Community Development

- Human Services
- Planning Board
- Regional Planning Commission
- Redevelopment Authority
- Housing Authority
- Community & Economic Development Advisory Board
- Council on Aging
- North Adams School Department
- McCann Regional Technical High School
- Office of Tourism and Cultural Development
- Ashuwillticook Rail Trail Extension Development
- All other matters involving economic and community development including but not limited to the review and evaluation of administrative procedures and policies as carried out by departure
- Policies and programs

Public Safety

- Inspection Division
- Health Department
- Public Buildings and Building Inspector
- Police Division
- Fire Division
- Wire and Alarm Division
- Civil Defense
- Taxi Licenses
- Traffic Commission
- Emergency Preparedness

- c) Special Committees will be appointed by the President from time to time as the need arises
- d) The President shall be an ex-officio, member of all Committees
- e) Liaison assignments shall be made annually by the President as follows
 - o North Adams School Committee
 - o McCann Regional Technical High School Committee
 - o BART Charter School
 - o Hoosac Water Quality District
 - o North Adams Housing Authority
 - o North Adams Planning Board
 - o North Adams Contributory Retirement Board
 - o Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (Mass MoCA)
 - o Airport Commission
 - o Traffic Commission Member

The Clerk shall notify in writing each of the above boards, agencies or organizations of the appointment of their City Council Liaison. The President shall assign, as needed, a member to represent the City Council on the Community and Economic Development Advisory Board, the North Adams Redevelopment Authority, and the Mobile Home Rent Control Board. The President shall also assign, at their discretion, Temporary Liaison positions.

- f) Council members assigned as liaisons shall provide an informational report to the full City Council, verbally, or in writing, as municipally pertinent information arises in their particular board, agency or organization.

Liaison reports should include, but are not limited to, the following information

- a) Name of the agency to which the Council Member is liaison
- b) Summary of the discussion held in relation to the pertinent issue
- c) Departments, programs or groups affected
- d) Any financial or economic impact to the City

Council liaisons may make an informational report to the appropriate Standing Committee should the individual have knowledge relative to a topic under discussion by a Standing Committee.

Rule 16 – Voting

Every member present at City Council and Committee meetings shall vote yea or nay when a motion is put unless excused on the grounds of clear and real conflict of interest by the President or the Chairman, as the case may be, without objection from any other member. Application to be so excused on any question must be made before the vote is taken. If a councilor requests abstention without previously gaining approval for said

to be heard in regard to any matter being considered during the public hearing by the City Council at such meeting. Citizens shall observe the same rules of conduct required of City Councilors in Rule 11 and 12, i.e. they shall address the President, confine themselves to the question under debate, and avoid personalities, libelous statements and innuendo.

Rule 20 – Parliamentary Procedure

The City Council shall be governed by Robert’s Rules of Order in all questions of Parliamentary practice not provided by these special rules of order.

Rule 21 – Suspension, Amendment and Repeal

No petitions, resolutions, orders, ordinances, memorials and remonstrance’s filed with the Clerk after the deadline as specified in Rules 8 and 17 may be acted upon under suspension of the rules unless an extreme emergency arises. In that situation it would need to be submitted to the Clerk as soon as possible to amend the agenda. These rules of order shall not be amended or repealed except by vote of the majority of all members of the City Council, and the motion for that purpose shall not be made and acted upon at the same meeting.

Rule 22 – Reconsideration

Any matter or question voted on by the City Council shall not be again considered or again voted upon by said City Council within one (1) year from the date of final disposition unless a majority of all members of said City Council vote to reconsider the same. The motion to reconsider being made by a City Council member who voted on the prevailing side.

Rule 23 – Video Cameras

Video cameras will be restricted to the last row of the gallery and shall be operated in a manner that does not disrupt the proceedings and does not disturb members of the gallery. Cameras shall be mounted on a tripod, or similar standard, which shall not be moved during the proceedings. Lighting shall be in a fixed position directed in such a manner that they do not cause discomfort to anyone in the City Council Chambers. The safety and comfort of all individuals within the City Council Chamber will at all times be maintained with regard to wiring, lighting, microphones, other equipment and the operators of such. Exceptions to this rule must be made by the President without Council objection.

Rule 24 – Filling Vacancies

The procedure for filling vacancies of the North Adams City Council, McCann Regional School Committee, North Adams School Committee and such other vacancies over which the North Adams City Council has sole or shared jurisdiction shall follow the requirements of the City Charter and such State and Municipal laws as are pertinent, and, in addition, shall be as follows:

Committee shall ask the Mayor to schedule an "on-site" inspection of the considered property for the Council with a representative of the building department prior to the public hearing. As schedule, the Council shall conduct a public hearing on the order considering evidence and testimony generally limited to the "public nuisance" or "dangerous" conditions of the property and to "recommended action to abate."

Following the close of public hearing, the Council shall determine whether the property to be a "nuisance" and or "dangerous" and shall recommend appropriate action to occur with a subsequent 30-day period of time.