

**RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE CITY OF MIDDLETOWN COMMON COUNCIL
November 2023 to November 2027**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MIDDLETOWN: that, the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, as applicable and when not in conflict with any standing or special rule/procedure enacted by the Common Council, be adopted as the manual for the conduct of business and affairs of the Common Council; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the following special rules and procedures be adopted, effective upon adoption:

I. Agenda and General Meeting Procedures:

1. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance Roll Call: All meetings shall begin with (a) a call to order, (b) the Pledge of Allegiance; and (c) the Clerk of the Common Council's reading of the *Call of the Meeting*.
2. Proposed Resolutions and Ordinance: All proposed resolutions and ordinances must be in proper form and must be filed electronically with the Council Clerk and submitted to the appropriate electronic folder *no later than the ~~24st~~ 23rd day of each month preceding the Common Council meeting in order to be included on the agenda for the upcoming Common Council meeting.*

All proposed resolutions and ordinances must be complete and in proper form to be considered for placement on the agenda.

To be complete and in proper form, a proposed resolution or ordinance shall include all of the following elements:

- A. Council Sponsor: The proposed resolutions or ordinance must be sponsored by at least one current Councilmember. The name/names of sponsoring Councilmember(s) shall be noted on the proposed resolution document.
- B. Commission/Committee Review: The proposed resolution or ordinance **shall** be reviewed by the appropriate board, commissions, and/or committees. A notation shall be placed on the proposed resolution, indicating the name of all reviewing board(s), commission(s), and/or committee(s), the date of that review, and board, commission, and/or committee disposition.
- C. Fiscal Impact Statement: The proposed resolution or ordinance **shall** include a statement as to the financial impact of the action on the City's general fund and future indebtedness.
- D. Limited Exceptions:
 - a. Notwithstanding the foregoing, an individual Councilmember **may** place a proposed resolution on the agenda whether or not it has been through committee. In addition to the name(s) of sponsoring Councilmember(s), any resolution being offered under this exception provision **shall** contain:
 - (i) the name(s) of the member(s) proposing the resolution; and

- (ii) a financial impact statement of the action on the City's general fund and any future indebtedness.
- b. If an individual Councilmember is willing to sponsor a proposed resolution on behalf of the Mayor, such proposed resolution **may** be included on the agenda whether or not it has been through committee. That proposed resolution shall include the sponsoring Councilmember's name followed by the Mayor's name. The proposed resolution **shall** include:
 - (i) a financial impact statement of the action on the City's general fund and any future indebtedness; and
 - (ii) be submitted no later than the 21st day of each month preceding the Common Council meeting in order to be included on the agenda for the upcoming Common Council meeting.

E. Additions to the Agenda:

Only resolutions and ordinances received by the members of the Common Council at least four (4) calendar days prior to a regular monthly meeting of the Common Council and having the appropriate financial impact statement **shall be considered** as additions on the Agenda of that Regular Monthly Meeting. Such proposed addition shall be made by supermajority vote of the Common Council (9 of 12 votes).

3. Appropriations: Any appropriation request to be considered by the Common Council shall be published in a *Legal Notice* a newspaper with general circulation in the city of Middletown prior to the meeting.

Similarly, the disposition of any appropriation request by the Common Council shall be published in a *Legal Notice* a newspaper with general circulation in the city of Middletown prior to the meeting

4. Special Meeting: Questions to Directors Workshop: There shall be a one (1) hour meeting of the Common Council immediately prior to each regularly scheduled Common Council meeting. This special meeting shall be called "*Questions to Directors Workshop*."

This special meeting shall serve as an opportunity for Councilmembers to question department directors and/or other department staff on pending agenda items to obtain necessary information prior to the Common Council's Regular Meeting,

- A. The *Questions to Directors Workshop* shall be HYBRID meeting (unless prevented by weather or other extraordinary conditions). This meeting shall be recorded and broadcast, including via the City website, cable TV, social media as may be available.
- B. A ~~verbatim, or close to verbatim,~~ **written** record **and video recording** of the *Questions to Directors Workshop* proceedings, which includes documents submitted either in advance of the meeting or on the floor, shall be maintained by the Common Council Clerk ~~as the public record minutes~~ **in accordance with the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act.**
- C. The *Questions to Directors Workshop* will be made available to any Common Councilmember seeking information on agenda items only prior to the start of the regular business meeting.

- D. The *Question to Directors' Workshop* does not require a quorum. *Robert's Rules of Order* will apply except for the quorum.
- E. The *Questions to Directors Workshop* shall be chaired by the Mayor. In the absence of the Mayor, the meeting shall be chaired by the Common Council President.
- F. Upon conclusion of the *Questions to Directors Workshop*, a Director may leave the meeting if they do not have any business item on the Common Council regular meeting agenda.

If a Director has an item on the regular meeting agenda, that Director **shall** stay for the Common Council regular meeting until their item has been disposed of by the Common Council. This will afford Councilmembers the opportunity to ask the Director additional questions that may arise during deliberations.

- 5. Special Common Council meetings, with agenda items, shall have an item entitled "*Questions to Directors.*"

6. Regular Meetings:

The order of business for Common Council shall be as follows:

- A. Call to Order
 - B. Pledge of Allegiance
 - C. The Chair call and meeting legal
 - D. Acceptance of the agenda
 - E. Approval of minutes
 - F. Public Hearing on Agenda Items
 - G. Appropriation Request Notice and Certificate of Director of Finance read by Clerk of the Common Council
 - H. Votes on appropriation request
 - I. Old business (items postponed)
 - J. Department, Committee, and Commission Reports and Grant Confirmation and Approvals
 - K. Payment of City Bills
 - L. New Business -- resolutions, ordinances, etc.
 - M. Mayor's Appointments
 - N. Adjournment
- 8. Contingency Fund Transfers, including any supporting documentation, shall appear under the item Department Committee, Commission Reports and Grant Confirmation and Approvals.
 - 9. Ordinance: Only ordinances that have been reviewed as to form by the General Counsel Commission shall be considered for adoption by the Common Council.
 - 10. Agenda: The agenda for any meeting of the Common Council shall be made available to members of the public at the same time as it is made available to members of the Common Council.
 - 11. Public comment on agenda items, for both regular meetings and special meetings, shall occur before the conduct of business.

The purpose of the public comment session is for the public to speak on any and all items on the agenda that they wish to address provided that the speaker abides by the *Rules of Public Conduct and Decorum*.

A. Members of the public shall be ruled “out of order” if they:

- (i) stray from the agenda item; and/or
- (ii) no longer conduct themselves in an appropriate manner or no longer conduct themselves in an appropriate manner as set forth in Section V of these *Rules of Procedure*

B. Each member of the public will be afforded five (5) minutes to address the Common Council during the public hearing portion of the agenda.

The public hearing shall last no more than thirty (30) minutes; however, the public hearing may be extended by thirty (30) minute increments subject to a supermajority (9) vote of the Council.

C. When the Council holds a workshop, it is informational and open to the public. No public hearing will be held at these meetings.

D. A ~~verbatim, or close to verbatim,~~ **written** record **and video recording** of the *Regular Meeting* proceedings, which includes documents submitted either in advance of the meeting or on the floor, shall be maintained by the Common Council Clerk ~~as the public record minutes~~ **In accordance with the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act.**

II. Common Council’s *Community Public Meeting*

1. The Council shall hold community-wide public meetings for any and all items previously deemed to be “non-agenda” items. The Community Meetings shall be held quarterly in the Common Council Chamber on the 2nd Thursday of the months of January, April, July, and October. A calendar shall be posted in advance no later than January 31st each calendar year, announcing this meeting schedule.
2. The Community Meeting is an opportunity for members of the public to raise issues of concern before the Common Council.
 - A. The public will be able to raise or express any issue(s) of concern within the bounds of proper public discourse and decorum.
 - B. The Mayor will chair the Community Meeting. In the absence of the Mayor, per the Charter of the City Of Middletown, the Community Meeting shall be chaired by the Common Council President.
 - C. *Robert’s Rules of Order* and the *Common Council Rules of Decorum* will apply for the conduct of the public meeting.
3. A ~~verbatim, or close to verbatim,~~ **written** record **and video recording** of the *Community Meeting* proceedings shall be maintained by the Clerk of the Common Council ~~as the public record minutes. In addition, a video recording of the public meeting shall maintained by the Clerk of the Common Council~~ **In accordance with the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act.**

4. If the Common Council determines that an item may be handled through the appropriate committee, commission, or department, then that item shall be forwarded to the appropriate committee, commission, or department for an appropriate and timely response and/or action.
5. Members of the public, wishing to speak at the Community Meeting, shall be afforded ten (10) minutes per speaker to raise any issue before the body.

III. DECORUM OF THE PRESIDING OFFICER AND THE COMMON COUNCIL:

1. Common Council Members shall not engage in debate with other Common Council Members during any Common Council meeting.
2. Common Council Members shall not engage in debate with members of the public during any public hearing.
3. All remarks from Common Council Members shall be limited to the merits of the pending question. All statements made by members of the Council must be related to the pending matter and whether or not the pending matter should be approved.
4. Common Council Members shall refrain from attacking any other Common Council Member's motives. During the debate on any pending matter, a Common Council Member is permitted to condemn the nature or likely consequences of the proposal, but must avoid personalities and under no circumstances can ~~he/she~~ they attack or question the motives of another Common Council Member. The question is before the assembly, not the member.
5. No Common Council Member having the floor shall be interrupted by another member unless a point of order is sought.
6. All remarks must be made through the Chair. Members of the Common Council shall not address one another, except with permission of the Chair.

The Chair shall immediately call out of order any speaker whose speech has a direct tendency to inflict injury or to cause acts of violence or a breach of the peace, as that term is defined in the Connecticut General Statutes, by the person or persons to whom said speech is directed. The Chair shall further direct said speaker to conclude his or her remarks immediately, and yield the floor to any remaining speakers.

7. Per *Charter of the City of Middletown*, the Mayor shall be the presiding officer of the Common Council and, as such, shall have no voting privileges including the power to resolve a tie vote.

When presiding as Chair, the Mayor is not a member of the Council and, as Chair, will remain impartial and can take no position or debate any item on the Common Council agenda during the Common Council meeting.

The Chair is afforded the right to speak or debate only when a motion to appeal the Chair's Ruling is on the floor.

8. In the absence of the Mayor, the Common Council President shall be the presiding officer of the legislative body. As a member of the Common Council body, and per the *Charter of the City Of Middletown*, the Common Council President retains the right to vote on matters.

When presiding as the Chair of the meeting, the Common Council President will remain impartial and, if they wish to take part in the debate of the matter, will relinquish the Chair until the matter is voted on.

9. In the absence of the Mayor and Common Council President, the Common Council President Pro Tem shall preside over the meeting. In the absence of all of these individuals, the Common Council shall follow *Robert's Rules of Order* and elect a presiding officer for that meeting.

IV. OTHER MATTERS:

1. The Chief of Police, or designee(s), shall be the Sergeant-of-Arms and shall be present at all Common Council meetings, including meeting for *Questions to Directors Workshop* meetings and the *Community Meetings*. The officer serving as Sergeant-at Arms shall be in uniform and shall be sure to pay attention to the speakers -- reading the room -- and working wherever they think is the most appropriate area for them to work.
2. The General Counsel shall be present at all meetings. In the absence of the General Counsel, the Deputy General Counsel shall attend.
3. Pursuant to the *Charter of the City of Middletown*, by a vote of nine (9) members, and in consultation with the Office of the General Counsel, the Common Council may retain outside counsel for advice on individual matters. In furtherance of this authority, the Council may also provide an appropriation for hiring its own counsel in the annual budget or a transfer, if required.
4. Pursuant to the *Charter of the City of Middletown*, the Common Council President may appoint a parliamentarian.
5. Any Director, or ~~his/her~~ designee, whose department has an item of business (e.g. resolution, ordinance, appropriation, grant, report, etc) pending before the Common Council and has been asked to remain after the Questions to Directors discussion at 6 p.m., shall attend the Common Council meeting to answer questions regarding the pending matter and remain until action on all pending agenda items concerning his/her their department has taken place.
6. Any Common Council member wishing to address questions to a director on non-agenda items should notify the Mayor's Office with the Director's name and general purpose of questions. The Mayor's Office will notify the Director of the request.
7. The Common Council may establish whatever subcommittee(s) it deems appropriate. Such subcommittee(s) shall expire with the term of office of the Council under which they were established.
8. Seating of Common Council Members at the dais in the Council Chamber shall begin to the right of the Mayor with the member who has received the highest number of votes and continue in the same manner alternating from right to left.
9. All matters not addressed by these rules and procedures shall be governed by *Robert's Rules of Order*.

V. DECORUM OF PUBLIC FOR COMMON COUNCIL MEETINGS

Members of the public shall be provided a reasonable opportunity to address the Common Council on any agenda item or any public matter in which the City has jurisdiction or authority.

Members of the public shall be permitted to address the Common Council in the proper order of business. This privilege shall occur during the part of the agenda entitled *Public Comment/Hearing on Agenda items* or at the *Community Meeting*.

Members of the public and Common Council Members shall be allowed to state their positions in an atmosphere free of slander, threats of violence, or the use of Common Council as a forum for politics or personal matters for which the Common Council or City have no jurisdiction.

Sufficient warnings may be given by the Chair at any time during the remarks and, in the event that any individual shall violate these rules of decorum, the Chair may then cut off comment. If an individual continues to violate these rules of decorum, then the Chair shall instruct the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the individual from the meeting.

- A. Public comment is intended to afford citizens with an opportunity to express opinions and to bring important matters to the attention of the Common Council. Nothing shall require the Mayor or Common Council Members to answer questions or engage in debate with the public at any Common Council Meeting.
- B. All remarks shall be addressed to the Common Council as a body and not to any member. Speakers shall observe the commonly accepted rules of courtesy, decorum, dignity, and good taste.
- C. When a group of persons wishes to address the Council on the same subject matter, it shall be proper for the presiding officer to request that a spokesperson be chosen by the group to address the Common Council and to limit the number of persons addressing the Common Council on the same matter so as to avoid unnecessary repetition.
- D. Persons in the audience shall refrain from behavior which will disrupt the public meeting, including, but not limited to, making loud noises, clapping, shouting, booing, hissing, or engaging in any other activity in a manner that disturbs, disrupts, or impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting. Persons in the audience will refrain from creating, provoking, or participating in any type of disturbance involving unwelcome physical contact.
- E. Persons in the audience shall refrain from using cellular phones and/or pagers while the meeting is in session.
- F. Appropriate attire, including shoes and shirts, are required during meetings.
- G. Objects and symbolic materials such as signs or banners will be allowed in the Council Chambers with the following restrictions:
 - (i) No objects will be larger than 18 inches by 18 inches.
 - (ii) No sticks, posts, poles or other such items will be attached to the signs or other symbolic materials.

- (iii) The items cannot create a building maintenance problem or a fire or safety hazard
 - (iv) Materials to be utilized by presenters for a scheduled agenda item may exceed size restrictions.
 - (v) Persons with objects and symbolic materials, such as signs, shall remain seated when displaying them and shall not raise these items above shoulder level, obstruct the view or passage of other attendees, or otherwise disturb the business of the Common Council meeting.
- H. Objects that are deemed a threat to persons at the meeting or the facility infrastructure are not allowed. City staff is authorized to remove items and/or individuals from the Common Council Chamber and Committee Meeting Rooms if a threat exists or is perceived to exist. Prohibited items include, but are not limited, to:
- firearms (including replicas and antiques), toy guns, explosive material, and ammunition; knives and other edged weapons; illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia; laser pointers, scissors, razors, scalpels, box cutting knives, and other cutting tools; letter openers, corkscrews, can openers with points, knitting needles; hairspray, pepper spray, and aerosol containers; tools; glass containers; and large backpacks, suitcases, or other bags, which may contain items unrelated to the meeting.
- J. Speakers shall be asked to give their name for the record before addressing the Common Council.
- K. Any person making offensive, insulting, threatening, insolent, slanderous or obscene remarks, using obscene or vulgar language, swearing, who becomes boisterous, or who makes threats against any person, including, but not limited to Council Members and City staff, or against public order and security while in the Common Council Chamber shall be removed immediately and without delay at the direction of the Chair. Said person shall be denied further audience at the Common Council meeting unless permission to return and continue as a member of the audience is granted by the majority vote of the Common Council Members present.
- L. Speakers shall not bring to the podium any items other than a prepared written statement, writing materials, or objects relevant to the presentation.
- M. If an individual wishes to submit written information, ~~he/she~~ the individual may give that material to the Clerk of the Common Council. If the Clerk of the Common Council is not present, then the information shall be given to the Common Council President.
- N. The Chair shall call to order any speaker, who violates any provision of the *Rules*. Failure to comply with this *Code of Conduct* and which will disturb, disrupt, or impede the orderly conduct of the meeting may result in removal from the meeting and/or possible arrest.
- O. Enforcement of decorum: The Police Chief, or designee, shall be the Sergeant-at-Arms of the Common Council meeting and shall carry out all orders and instructions given by the presiding officer to ensure that order and decorum are maintained in the Common Council Chamber. It shall be the duty of any police officer present to eject any such person from the room upon instructions of the presiding officer.
- P. All committees, commissions, boards and agencies shall schedule a start time for said regular meetings at 7:00 p.m. on the day of the month they designate; if a committee, commission, board

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or agency considers an earlier start time, the vote for such change in time has to be a unanimous vote of the committee.

- Q. A ~~verbatim, or close to verbatim,~~ **written** record **and video recording** of the Councilmanic committee meeting proceedings, which includes documents submitted either in advance of the meeting or on the floor, shall be filed with the City/Town Clerk ~~for the public record in accordance with the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act.~~

The Councilmanic Committees are:

- Finance & Government Operations Commission
- Public Works & Facilities Commission
- Economic & Community Development Commission
- General Counsel Commission
- Public Safety Commission
- Insurance & Claims Committee

Fiscal Impact: There is no budgetary impact, but these Rules of Procedure will allow for efficiency and timeliness in the day-to-day business conducted by the Common Council.

Submitted by: Councilwoman Jeanette Blackwell
Councilwoman Linda Salafia

Status: APPROVED, AS AMENDED
by Common Council, City of Middletown
at its meeting held on: FEBRUARY 12, 2026

K: REVIEW/ resolution/ CC – AMENDMENTS rules of procedure 2023-2027 – RES 24-26 – 12 FEB 2026