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Attachments:
   Organizational Chart
   Resolution Establishing Council Rules of Procedure
   Definitions and Explanations of Order of Business
   Administrative Order: Out of State Travel for Elected Officials
   Communication Tips for City Council TV
   League of Minnesota Cities Informational Articles:
   a. Strategies for Success
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I. INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been developed to provide you with information on the City's form of government, structure, mission and goals. In order to provide you with an interesting, yet informative summary, this manual has been designed as a guide to provide background on the history, structure and operations of the City government as it relates to providing quality public services to our citizens. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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A. Local Government in Minnesota

In Minnesota, the Legislature can, within the limits of the State Constitution, provide for the "creation, organization, administration, consolidation, division, and dissolution of local government units and their functions, for the change of boundaries thereof, and for their officers..." (Minnesota Constitution, Art. XII, Sec. 3). Municipalities are subject to the "absolute sovereignty" of the Minnesota State Legislature, with the limited exception that under the constitution's "home rule" provisions, a city may enact a charter outlining its form of organization and governmental powers. Local charter provisions must conform to the state constitution and to those state statutes which apply to "home rule" cities. As is the case with the City of Coon Rapids, a Charter establishes the guidelines under which the City must operate. In a "home rule" charter form of government, charters may be more restrictive than a "statutory city", but cannot establish criteria that subordinates state statutes.

Minnesota law divides cities into four classes based on population for the purpose of enacting legislation which affects them. First class cities are those with populations in excess of 100,000; second class 20,000 to 100,000; third class 10,000 to 20,000; and fourth class under 10,000. Subject to Minnesota classifications, Coon Rapids is classified as a city of the second class.

B. Home Rule Charter Cities

Any city in Minnesota may adopt a home rule charter, which a charter commission prepares for meeting the city's individual needs and desires. Such a charter is, in a sense, a local constitution. Local voters approve the charter and can change it. In certain cases, the Council can change the charter by ordinance, but must meet special provisions or requirements set forth in state law. The charter may provide for any form of city government as long as it is consistent with state laws applicable to home rule charter cities. City charters differ widely in the powers and duties they give to councils and other officials.

All cities receive additional powers under a charter, and must follow the regulations of other state statutes. For example, statutes other than the city charter give cities the authority to conduct planning, set up civil service commissions, and do many other things. In the City of Coon Rapids,
the City Code is arranged so the Charter is outlined in chapter one, with the remaining chapters containing codified City ordinances. The City Code has been organized to deal with a variety of local issues, and provides City staff with procedural direction on resolving a myriad of City concerns in a fair, legally defensible and uniform system of self-governance.

C. Council-Manager Form of Government

The Council-Manager form of government is in use in most home rule cities, and in some statutory cities under "Optional Plan B" organization. Under this plan, the Council retains policy-making and legislative authority, and delegate’s administration of local government to an appointed Manager, who is responsible directly to the Council for the proper administration of all affairs relating to the City. The Manager appoints administrative department heads, usually without the necessity of Council approval. The home rule Charter may set up variations of this usual form. In Minnesota, the predominant system of local government is statutory.

The City of Coon Rapids, under its home rule Charter, has established a Council-Manager Plan. This provides for the aforementioned responsibilities, plus any additional responsibilities called for under the City Charter and applicable City Code (ordinances). The City Charter provides for the City Manager to serve as the Chief Administrative Officer with direct administrative control of all City organizational affairs, including the proper execution and enforcement of the City Charter, and any other pertinent county, state, and federal laws. In addition, the City Manager develops, implements and enforces City ordinances and resolutions adopted by Council. It also provides for the City Manager to hire, direct and manage staff, as well as terminate employees if need be, to efficiently conduct City operations.

The City Manager also acts as a liaison to Council by conducting research on policy issues, providing timely information, and developing recommendations on a wide range of public policy issues. Specific duties and responsibilities of the City Manager are set out in City Code Chapter 1-600, sections 1-601 and 1-602.
D. Management Team

Top level management of the City is facilitated by, and through, a team participation process. This process is designed to foster a high level of trust, openness, and cohesiveness between members of the team. Members are the City Manager, Assistant City Manager/HR Manager, Finance Director, City Attorney, Community Development Director, Police Chief, Fire Chief, Public Works Director, City Clerk and Director of Golf Operations.

The management team attends City Council meetings, participates in Council deliberations as required, and meets after each Council meeting to discuss issues, review alternatives, gather and share information and ideas, and conduct group problem-solving. Each member receives input from the group, while also having the opportunity to express views on various issues of concern.

In addition to the regularly scheduled meetings, the management team meets as necessary to consider a broad variety of City issues. These include administrative and operational concerns, as well as issues of regional and state-wide interest.

E. Responses to Citizen Concerns

Citizen concerns are typically brought to the staff’s attention by directly contacting the staff, by appearing at "Open Mic", or by communicating with one or more Councilmembers.

Citizen concerns expressed during "Open Mic" are documented, names and addresses are recorded, and a staff report is generated to address the problem. By the next regular meeting, a copy of the staff report is communicated to the citizen and Council outlining the City's response. Facilitation of this process usually begins the day following the Council meeting when the management team meets to discuss each item in which Council directed a staff report or some other type of action be taken in response to the citizen’s concern.
II. **ADMINISTRATION OF COUNCIL AFFAIRS**

A. **Council Meetings**

City Councils can exercise their powers, both governmental and proprietary, *only* in meetings that comply with the following requirements.

a) The State's Open Meeting Law, with a few minor exceptions, specifies all meetings must be open to the public and all votes taken must be recorded in a journal which is available to the public.

b) A quorum (or a certain minimum number of members) must be present. A quorum for the Coon Rapids Council is four members.

c) Meetings must be publicized and held at the regularly designated time or, in the case of special meetings, appropriately publicized, with notice given to the local media and pre-designated individuals. In addition, there is a provision for special or emergency meetings where the Council may usually transact any form of City business. That provision sets specific procedures the Council must follow in calling the meeting.

d) Executive Sessions are non-public meetings called by the Council to discuss publicly-sensitive issues related to 1) employee labor negotiations, 2) ongoing or imminent litigation involving the City as a legal party, 3) employee performance reviews on positions appointed directly by Council, or 4) to review confidential appraisal reports or to develop or consider offers for the acquisition or sale of real property. In Coon Rapids, the City Manager is the only position appointed directly by Council. State law requires the media and other interested parties be notified of Executive Session dates and times, and a brief synopsis be given concerning the issues discussed.

e) City Code Chapter 1-300 establishes the Procedure of Council. Council meetings are, with few exceptions, held two times a month on the first and third Tuesdays of each calendar month at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Meetings are televised live, and then rebroadcast on Local Government Access Cable channel 16. Specific questions may be directed to the City Clerk’s Office on additional meeting requirements. Additional Council Work Session meetings are generally held on the second Tuesday of the month and occasionally on the fourth Tuesday. These meetings are for the purpose of providing an opportunity for Council discussions but no formal action may be taken.

B. **Order of Business**

The Coon Rapids City Council has, over the years, adopted a formal procedure for conducting City business. This procedure is defined as the Council's "Order of Business". Under this procedure, items placed before the Council for discussion or action are listed on an agenda. The agenda provides for issues of concern to be dealt with in an orderly fashion. The meeting is called to order on the air, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance; Roll Call; Adoption of the Agenda (allows the Council to add, modify or delete items on the agenda); Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings; Consent Agenda; Public Hearings; Bid Openings and Awards; Old Business; New Business; Open Mic and Other
Council Business (provides an opportunity for Councilmembers to raise an issue they may wish to discuss or have staff research).

The City Council has also adopted *Rules of Decorum for Our Community* and defined the procedure for Open Mic. The following information is attached to the agendas available to the public at the Council meeting.

**Rules of Decorum for Our Community**

Following are some rules of decorum the City of Coon Rapids expects of everyone appearing at Council meetings, including elected officials, city staff, and citizens. It is hoped by following these simple rules, everyone’s opinions can be heard and understood in a reasonable manner.

1. All persons who are recognized to speak by the Mayor should approach the podium and state their name and address before addressing the Council.
2. All remarks will be addressed to the Council as a whole.
3. Show respect for each other’s opinions.
4. Actively listen to one another.
5. Keep emotions in check.
6. Use respectful language.
7. Personal attacks are prohibited. A speaker engaging in personal attacks will be requested to leave the podium.

**Open Mic**

Open Mic is the portion of the meeting where persons have an opportunity to address the City Council on subjects that are not part of the regular meeting agenda. The public is invited to express any concerns they may have which are relevant to the affairs, policies or practices of the City of Coon Rapids. Remarks will be limited to three minutes.

Open Mic is not a time for problem solving or reacting to the comments made, but for hearing the citizen for informational purposes only. Questions from Council will be for clarification only. A staff report will be prepared for the next regular Council meeting, with a copy forwarded to the citizen.

**C. Agendas**

Agendas for regular Council meetings and work sessions are prepared in the City Manager’s Office. Typically, agenda items are submitted to the City Manager by the departments by Wednesday preceding the Council meeting. These items are reviewed for accuracy and completeness in the City Manager’s Office and prepared for distribution on Friday. The agenda meeting packet is posted on the City’s website by the end of the day Friday.
The procedures for a Councilmember to add or remove an item on the agenda are spelled out in the Definitions and Explanations of City Council Order of Business (Addendum to the annual Resolution).

To add an item, a Councilmember may (1) call the City Manager prior to Thursday of the week preceding a Council meeting, and request an item be added to the agenda or (2) during the adoption of the agenda at the Council meeting, make a motion (with an appropriate "second" of a supporting Councilmember) to add an item to the agenda. This must then be supported by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the Councilmembers present at the meeting for the item to be added. While items may be added prior to adoption of the agenda or initiated under Other Business, many times it is most effective to contact staff prior to the meeting so that information and data can be gathered and reviewed before so a better response can be provided.

Any Councilmember who has placed an item on an agenda is given the courtesy to remove that item any time prior to formal adoption of the agenda. Thereafter an item may be removed with a two-thirds affirmative vote of all members present.

D. Work Sessions

At Council’s discretion, work sessions may be scheduled to allow additional presentation, extensive review and in-depth discussion of an issue. No formal action or final vote is taken at a work session. If the item requires formal Council action, the issue will be scheduled at a subsequent regular Council meeting. Work sessions are posted and open to the public, unless the topic is litigation, labor negotiations, City Manager review, or confidential appraisal reports or acquisition or sale of real property.

E. Delegation of Authority

The Council may not delegate its administrative or legislative authority to others where exercise of discretion is involved. This means the Council cannot give committees and/or individuals power to make decisions on the Council’s behalf. In Coon Rapids, the Council has sole authority for setting policy and enacting legislation. Typically, policy matters are researched by City staff with formal, non-binding recommendations provided to Council.

Under the City Charter, Chapter 1-200, section 1-209 establishes organizational limitations on the type and amount of participation the Council may have in the administrative affairs of the City. If Councilmembers have questions or concerns regarding any administrative matter, the Charter prescribes Councilmembers “shall deal with and control the administrative service solely through the office of City Manager, and neither the Council nor any member thereof shall give orders to any of the subordinates of the City Manager, either publicly or privately”.

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F. City Commissions

The Council appoints members to all committees, boards and commissions which serve in an advisory role to the Council, with the exception of the Board of Adjustment and Appeals, and the Planning Commission whose decisions are final unless appealed directly to the Council. (Refer to the Planning and Zoning section for further explanation.) These commissions/committees/boards are: Arts Commission, Economic Development Commission, Board of Appeals and Equalization, Historical Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Safety Commission, and Sustainability Commission. The Charter Commission and Police and Fire Civil Service Commission are statutory commissions.

The terms of Commission members typically overlap with some terms ending on December 31st of each year. Except for the Board of Adjustment and Appeals and Planning Commission, advisory commissions will make a recommendation for appointment to the City Council. Appointments are made as terms expire or as vacancies occur.

G. Duties at First Meeting of Council

Council performs several specific duties at the first meeting of the new year.

a) Any Councilmember elected to office in the preceding general election is given the Oath of Office by the City Clerk or a presiding judge of the District Court.
b) The Mayor is the presiding officer of the Council with the right of one vote. The Mayor performs all duties conferred and imposed by the City Code or Charter, by ordinance, and by state laws. The Mayor is usually referred to as Your Honor in Council meetings by those present. City Code 2-403 designates the Councilmember at Large representative shall serve as Mayor Pro-Tem during the Mayor’s absence.
c) The Council must designate the official newspaper of the municipality where the City will publish required public notices.
d) The Council must designate an official depository for the cash funds of the City.
e) In the absence of a provision for it elsewhere, the Council should decide upon a time and place for its regular meetings.
f) Unless previous bylaws are in effect, the Council should establish an outline of the order of business at Council meetings, rules governing the deliberations of the Council, and provisions for the use of Council committees, special meetings, methods of Council voting, and so forth.
H. Conferences and Associations

Councilmembers are encouraged to attend state and national conferences and seminars that provide information on a wide range of local government issues. The City is an active member of a number of local, state and national groups such as the National League of Cities, North Metro Mayors Association, League of Minnesota Cities, and Metro Cities, along with a variety of other intergovernmental advisory groups. Memberships in these groups serve to keep the Councilmembers apprised of new legislative mandates, programs and initiatives; provide educational and training opportunities; and allow local representatives the opportunity to meet with other city officials to share common experiences and solutions.

Travel arrangements may be handled directly by the attending Councilmember or by contacting the City Manager’s Office for travel assistance.

Councilmembers authorized to travel for work-related purposes may be reimbursed for the actual cost of travel, meals (per diem), and other related, reasonable, and necessary expenses. All travel authorizations and approvals shall be consistent with budget authorization. Any travel that exceeds budgetary authorization shall require the approval of the City Manager.

Reimbursement for mileage, meals, lodging, and other incidental travel expenses must be itemized on the City’s “Travel Expense Voucher” claim form, accompanied by receipts, as required, and signed by the Councilmember, and submitted to the Finance Department for approval within 60 days of its occurrence.

Officials who travel during the day for work-related purposes may be reimbursed for meals, mileage, and other reasonable and necessary expenses. When meals are not included in the registration fees for an official meeting or training function, Councilmembers will be reimbursed upon completion of an expense form subject to the per diem rates established by the City. Meal expenses may also be reimbursable where travel is required before and after an event. Meals not associated with an officially scheduled City business function will not be reimbursed and shall be the sole responsibility of the Councilmember.

Councilmembers traveling overnight or outside the state for work-related purposes must obtain prior supervisory approval. Reimbursement of expenses requires written authorization by the appropriate supervisor. Reimbursement may be for the cost of the travel, meals, lodging, and other incidental expenses with the following limitations:

- **Lodging.** The City will only reimburse for a single hotel accommodation rate at or close to the conference or meeting location. Councilmember shall pay any additional costs for spouse and children.
- **Air Travel.** For airline travel, Councilmembers will only be reimbursed for an economy class ticket. Transportation to and from the airport or hotel is reimbursable.
- **Automobile.** Automobile travel may be authorized in lieu of commercial transportation, but the total amount allowed, including meals and lodging while traveling, shall not exceed the cost of a single round-trip economy class airline ticket to the same location.
- **Meals.** Councilmembers will be compensated pursuant to a daily per diem rate for meals during overnight/out of state travel. The U.S. General Services Administration domestic per
diem rates will be the basis for determining meal limits. Submission of receipts will not be required. Meals included in the registration fee for any event are not reimbursable and shall be excluded from any per diem request. The per diem may include appropriate meals the day prior and the day following any travel/conference when determined to be justified, reasonable, and appropriate by the City Manager.

- **Incidental Expenses.** Hotel charges, such as personal phone calls, pay-per-view movies, room service, liquor, and recreational activities offered during an event at an additional cost, such as golf or tennis, are not reimbursable.

- **Rental Cars.** The cost of a rental car may be reimbursable with prior approval by the City Manager if transportation is necessary to and from the conference or if there is a cost savings to the City.

Reasonable expenses for taxi and transfer service, hotel gratuity, parking, and other related expenses in conjunction with travel will be reimbursed at actual cost as documented on a receipt for such services.

Travel advances may be requested for airline tickets, hotel reservations, and meal allowances by completing a travel advance request form. Excess travel advances must be returned to the City within 60 days after the expense is incurred.

Councilmembers are responsible to ensure that mileage and travel expense claims are accurate and properly documented.
III. LEGISLATIVE POWERS

A. Ordinances, Resolutions, and Motions

In statutory cities and most home rule cities a Council takes official action through either an ordinance or a resolution. An ordinance is a City law that regulates or governs people or property and provides a penalty for its violation, or sets a permanent rule for the organization and procedure of the local government. A resolution is any action of a temporary or administrative nature such as the ordering of assessments, letting of contracts, and other routine actions in the conduct of the City’s business.

The distinction between an ordinance and resolution is in subject matter, not terminology. A Council cannot change an ordinance into a resolution merely by changing its name, nor can a Council bypass the procedural requirements for the passage and publication of an ordinance by calling an enactment a resolution. However, a resolution a Council passes and publishes with all the formalities necessary for passing an ordinance is equivalent to an ordinance. Where there is any question about the classification of a particular piece of legislative business, the Council should consult with the City Attorney. As previously mentioned, the City of Coon Rapids has its ordinances codified within the City Code.

Another type of Council action is called a motion. This type of action is a parliamentary term except where a home rule charter prescribes otherwise. It refers to a formal proposal which brings a question before the Council for deliberation. Usually, motions only require a majority vote of a Council quorum to pass. City Code Chapters 1-304 through 1-311 identifies a variety of legislative procedures to be followed in ordinance, resolution and motion usage.

B. Relationship of Ordinances to State Law

Local ordinances must not contradict or be inconsistent with state laws covering the same subject. In general, a City may pass stricter regulations, but it may not be more lenient in its laws than the corresponding state statutes. This holds true in all legislative action taken by Council. In some cases, a state law may pre-empt the field meaning a City cannot legislate on the subject at all.

Cities sometimes pass ordinances which contain the same provisions as a corresponding state law. For example, in order to have all the effective provisions in one body of law, local ordinances might restate state liquor laws for their jurisdiction. Ordinances, in a specific sense, are the laws of the community. They do, in many cases, carry criminal penalties of a fine and/or imprisonment. In Coon Rapids, violators are subject to misdemeanor prosecution that carries penalties of imprisonment and monetary fines, or both should the offense warrant it.
C. Requirements for Adopting Ordinances

In home rule cities like Coon Rapids, the Charter usually sets out the requirements for the passage of ordinances. These requirements frequently include a time lapse between introduction and adoption; a minimum number of Councilmembers voting their approval of it; and publication in the official newspaper before taking effect. The Coon Rapids City Charter prescribes three legislative protocols in the adoption of City ordinances. The first category includes emergency ordinances which take effect immediately upon passage or at some later date as directed, and must have super majority passage of five affirmative votes (City Code 1-306). The second category is voter adopted ordinances which shall take effect after election results are certified, or at such later date as prescribed. The third, and most typical category, is by Council action which directs a minimum seven day interval between introduction and adoption, plus a 15 day period after publication before it becomes effective (City Code 1-305, 1-309).

D. Requirements for Adopting Resolutions

Generally, requirements as previously mentioned do not apply to passing resolutions. A formal resolution implies the proposition be in writing before the Council votes on it, but in the absence of statutory or Charter regulations, an informal motion the Council adopts and includes in the minutes is equivalent to a resolution. In Coon Rapids, the majority vote of all Councilmembers present is necessary to pass a resolution.
IV. SPECIFIC COUNCIL FUNCTIONS

This section lists some of the more important functions of the City Council. The list is by no means all inclusive. More extensive information on most of these functions is available in the City Code.

A. Auditing Disbursements

The City Manager and Treasurer are required to sign all checks that disburse City funds. In addition, the City Manager serves as 1) the Chief Accounting Officer responsible for the proper accounting of all City monies, as 2) the Chief Budget Officer responsible for the development and strict enforcement of the annual budget, and 3) as the Chief Purchasing Officer responsible for the letting and making of contracts and purchases subject to Charter restrictions, along with other related duties associated with meeting the cash flow requirements of the City. In most instances, the City Manager has delegated these responsibilities to the appropriate City staff. However, the ultimate responsibility for the supervision and proper execution of these functions belongs to the City Manager.

B. Board of Equalization

Except in cities whose charters provide for a Board of Equalization, and in cities where the Council has appointed a special Board of Review, the Council sits as the Board of Equalization, also known as the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization (LBAE). The Board meets between April 1 and June 30 annually to examine the City’s assessment rolls, to determine that all assessments of taxable property in the district have been legal and just, and to hear and determine complaints from taxpayers. The Council, pursuant to City Code 1-704, serves as the Board of Equalization to equalize assessments of property for taxation purposes each year. The date of the meeting is selected by the Council and submitted to the County.

C. Purchasing and Letting Contracts

Under the City’s Charter, the City Manager is the Chief Purchasing Officer of the City and is authorized to let bids for contracts and make purchases for up to $100,000. All contracts over $100,000, bonds, and instruments of any kind to which the City is a party shall be signed by the Mayor and City Manager on behalf of the City and shall be executed in the name of the City (City Code 1-605).
D. Elections

The City Clerk has administrative responsibility for elections within the City. City Councils appoint election judges for primary and general elections and certify election results.

E. Levying Taxes

Within the limits of City charters and various state laws, Councils have the power to levy taxes and otherwise raise revenues for their cities. Under the City’s Charter, the Council has the express powers to raise money by taxation pursuant to the laws of the State of Minnesota. Each year, the City is required to hold a public Truth-in-Taxation meeting for the purpose of explaining to their constituency the manner, levels and objectives of City spending. Budget documents developed by the City are an excellent tool for Councilmembers to explain to their constituents the nature of City expenditures. The City Manager or Finance Director is available to answer questions about property taxes and other sources of City revenue.

F. Public Improvements and Activities

Cities, through their Councils, are also responsible for installing and maintaining public infrastructure improvements such as City and public safety facilities, streets and storm water systems, street and traffic lights, public parks and recreation structures, and water and sewage mains and systems. If these improvements result in a special benefit to particular parcels of property, the City can use special assessments to help defray the cost. The City of Coon Rapids, in addition to those public service functions just listed, also has responsibility for a municipal golf course, ice arena, outdoor hockey rinks, and a multitude of special engineering and public benefit projects. These engineering and public benefit projects include, but are not limited to, planning and zoning, housing and redevelopment, recycling and solid waste activities, sidewalk replacement, senior citizen and nutrition center, and a variety of other projects as may be authorized by the Council.

G. Regulation and Licensing

The City of Coon Rapids has the authority and is required, under statute and Charter, to regulate and license certain businesses and occupations. In addition, under their general policy powers, the City may license a wide variety of occupations which affect public health, safety, morals or welfare. They may also regulate, through licensing, potential nuisances within their jurisdiction. Thus, cities have the authority to require licenses for liquor establishments, contractors, peddlers, dogs, rental property, etc. If the licensing ordinance includes definite standards, the Council can usually give administrative officials the authority to issue licenses. Licensing cannot be a means for raising revenue.
H. Planning and Zoning

The Planning Commission is appointed by the City Council to maintain the City’s Comprehensive Plan, the zoning map, and zoning code, and to act on, or make recommendations to the Council on, development proposals.

The Planning Commission also makes recommendations to the Council on proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Map, and Zoning Code. Comprehensive Plan, zoning map, and zoning code changes are sometimes made in response to needs perceived internally by City staff, and the Planning Commission, or from requests made by outside interests in land development and use projects. Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan require a two-thirds vote of all members of Council, or at least five votes given the present size of the Council, to pass (M.S. 462.355, Subd. 3). Amendments to the zoning code normally require only a simple majority; however, if the rezoning proposes a change from residential to commercial or industrial zoning, the above super-majority is required (M.S. 462.357 Subd. 2(b)).

Planning Commission decisions on site plan and conditional use permit proposals are final unless appealed to the City Council. If appealed, four Council votes are needed to change or reverse Planning Commission site plans, or conditional use permit approvals. The Planning Commission makes recommendations to the Council on proposed property divisions (lot splits, plats, and registered land surveys) and planned unit developments. A simple majority is required to approve proposed property divisions and planned unit developments (M.S. 462.358, Subd. 3b).

The Board of Adjustment and Appeals is appointed by the City Council to act on requests for variances from the requirements of the zoning code, or on appeals of decisions of the Chief Building Official or Zoning Administrator on zoning matters. Board of Adjustment and Appeals decisions are final unless appealed to the Council. If appealed, a two-third vote of all Councilmembers (at least five votes) is required to overturn Board of Adjustment and Appeals decisions (City Code 11-334(3)).

I. Housing and Redevelopment, and Economic Development Authorities

The Council functions as the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) and the Economic Development Authority (EDA) for the City. The City Manager serves as Executive Director for both of these Authorities.

The HRA may buy, own, and sell land for housing and economic development purposes and engage in other housing and redevelopment activities consistent with Minnesota law.

The EDA is responsible for the proper management of plans for Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts in the City and for recommending modifications to these plans to the City Council. These EDA activities are guided by Minnesota law regarding the conditions and qualifying uses for TIF and by Council policy direction on the specific eligible uses for TIF. Generally, Minnesota law requires the use of TIF should (1) provide an impetus for economic development, increase employment
opportunities, or promote other public benefit purposes as defined by the City; (2) conform with
general plans for the development or redevelopment of the City; (3) support development that would
not otherwise occur if solely dependent on private investment in the reasonably near future; and (4)
afford the maximum opportunity, consistent with the sound needs of the City as a whole, for
development or redevelopment by private enterprise. Current Council policies indicate TIF should
be used for economic development activities involving the substantial creation of new jobs or for
purposes, including infrastructure reconstruction, which help maintain or rehabilitate low and
moderate income neighborhoods.

J. Preparing the Budget

Preparing and approving the annual City budget is one of the most important functions of the
City Government. The process of allocating funds to the various needs of City government helps the
Council determine the priorities of City programs and services. Councilmembers must make
difficult choices between programs that compete for limited funds. Additionally, keeping track of
the budget from month to month is the best way to ensure funds will be available at the end of the
fiscal year for the purposes the Council deems important.

In the City of Coon Rapids, the major budget effort typically begins in May of the preceding
budget year, with the involvement of all City departments in preliminary development and analysis,
and culminates in formal Council adoption of a balanced budget. Each year the City must hold
Truth-in-Taxation hearings prior to formal budget adoption. These hearings provide citizens with an
opportunity to review the budget, ask questions, and express their views on City spending.

The City Manager has the overall responsibility for developing and presenting the budget, and
then implementing and enforcing the budget once adopted by the Council. As it stands, the budget is
a dynamic spending plan. It is a reflection of Council spending priorities, City needs and legislative
mandates, and attempts to address a variety of pressing demands for more and better services, while
simultaneously minimizing the budgetary impact on taxable private properties within the City.

K. The Budget Process

Due to the complexity and magnitude of the City’s budget, a management process has been
developed to ensure a comprehensive review of the entire budget takes place. The total City budget
includes many different funding components which add to the multifaceted nature of City
government. In addition to City considerations, a host of statutory requirements must also be
complied with during each step of the budgetary process. As a result, the budget process becomes
one of the more important activities of City administration.
1. **Management Team Review.** The first stage of the budget process for the next fiscal year (*same as a calendar year*) begins in January of the preceding year, with the City Manager and Finance Director drafting a budget calendar. In May, preliminary revenue forecasts are developed to identify next year’s funding sources. By late May or early June, City departments have identified total potential expenditures they would like included in the next fiscal year. However, it is with the realization that not all demands can or will be accommodated. Requests for funding include operating expenses, capital outlays, staffing, and programming. After initial review, expenditures and revenues are compared. At this point, a comprehensive review of every proposed item occurs, with division managers delivering presentations to the management team. This phase of the process is extremely important because it is used to explain each item, its operational necessity, benefit, and cost. Proposed expenditures, in this manner, are measured using a cost-benefit approach. Some items are then dropped, others are included. The entire management team process will usually be concluded by the end of July.

2. **City Council Work Sessions.** A proposed budget is presented to the City Council at a work session meeting in August of each year. At this point, the budget has already gone through intensive review. The City Council’s role includes an in-depth detailed analysis of the budget. Some budget issues include: 1) impact of budget on City operations, 2) the tax levy implications, 3) effect of budget on the property tax, 4) levels of City spending, 5) staffing, 6) effects of state legislation, 7) state aids, 8) federally funded programs, 9) proposed capital outlays, 10) dates for public hearings, and a range of other primary and secondary concerns tied to final adoption of the budget. After these discussions have taken place, and the necessary changes enacted, the final step in the process, public hearings, takes place.

3. **Truth in Taxation Hearings.** These public hearings are mandated by the State of Minnesota to allow for public input on City budgets. Formal adoption of the budget cannot take place until the public hearings have been held. Dates for the hearings must be certified to the County by September 15th of each year. Hearings must then be set between approximately November 15th and December 17th. County and School District hearings are also taking place during this time frame, and City hearings may not occur on the same day. Subject to state law, the County Treasurer will mail out “Parcel Specific Truth-in-Taxation Notices” prior to the meeting dates to all City taxpayers. These notices identify the tax impact that the taxing jurisdictions will have on taxable City properties in comparison to the prior year. Taxing jurisdictions include the County, School District, City, and various special taxing districts authorized by state law.

As you now probably realize, the budget process will then begin all over again in January. In reality, City budgeting, in many senses, is a continuous, year-round process that requires constant attention and receives continuous scrutiny.
V. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Some cities call their Councilmembers aldermen, councilmen, or councilors. In Coon Rapids, it has been the practice to use the title Councilmember. Any qualified voter living in the City who is 21 years of age or older may run for office of Councilmember. The Mayor, Ward Councilmembers, and Councilmember at Large are elected for four year terms, on a rotating schedule.

A. Legal Authority and Responsibility

The authority and responsibility of Councilmembers arise from their role as members of the City’s legislative body. Because each has the right to vote on every question before the Council at official meetings, each one must be fully informed about the contents, implications, and probable consequence of all proposals. Every Councilmember must also examine each Council action to be sure it is within the power of the Council to take such action, and the City legally fulfills the conditions necessary to execute the action. In Coon Rapids, the City employs a full-time City Attorney to ensure legal processes are complied with in all matters that affect the City. This individual also serves in an advisory capacity to the Council on legal questions that frequently arise during the course of City business. We live in a time where legal challenges to City actions are always a part of the public policy process. By being proactive in responding to those challenges, the City can minimize the financial and legal impact on City operations.

Councilmembers have full parliamentary privileges during Council meetings, including the right to speak, to make motions when the Mayor recognizes them, and to introduce new ordinances and amendments to existing ordinances. The Council’s bylaws or rules of procedure usually spell out these parliamentary privileges. The administrative authority of Councilmembers is dependent, in part, upon the form of Council organization. In Council-Manager governments, the Council controls the administrative departments only indirectly by formulating general policies which the City Manager executes through his/her office.

B. Personal Liability of Mayors and Councilmembers

The powers and functions of City Councilmembers and of the Councils themselves are under rigid control of state law and home rule charters. Councilmembers must strictly adhere to such legal requirements. All actions they take must be solely in the interests of the public welfare. A comprehensive discussion of personal liability of public officers is beyond the scope of this manual. Briefly, however, Mayors and Councilmembers are not personally liable for an illegal expenditure if they make the expenditure in good faith through a mistake or error in judgment. They are liable if they act in deliberate violation of clear prohibitions in the law even if they act in good faith.
In other areas, personal liability usually depends on whether the act is “discretionary” or “ministerial.” Personal liability does not generally exist where a public officer must exercise judgment or discretion as to the manner of performing the duty unless the officer is guilty of a willful wrongdoing. The public official is subject to liability, however, for wrongdoing when a duty is ministerial; that is, when it is in obedience to the mandate of the law, and the officer must do it in a set manner without any exercise of judgment.

Because the possibility of personal liability does exist, Councilmembers should take all possible precautions before proceeding with any official action. First, they should become familiar with their statutory and Charter authority. Second, although it is not necessarily a defense, they should always act in good faith and in a sincere attempt to promote the public welfare. Evidences of good faith include regularity of procedure in Council meetings, strict conformity with legal and Charter requirements, and openness and honesty in handling all public business. Third, they should seek the advice of the City Attorney whenever they are in doubt about the validity of an action or procedure. The next few sections speak to some of the concerns you may have as they relate to your new position.

C. Data Privacy

Under the Minnesota Data Practices Act, cities and other public bodies are required to declare what is private or public data. There are significant city and personal liability issues for city officials who fail to release public data or who release data that is classified as private.

The City Clerk has been designated as the “responsible authority” and “compliance official” for the City of Coon Rapids and is responsible for administering the Minnesota Data Practices Act. No employee or elected official of the City may release any private or confidential data to any person except for the City Clerk or a designee.

City Councilmembers will on occasion receive data that is classified as private or confidential. Staff will attempt to clearly identify data that is private and confidential but should Councilmembers have any questions as to public or privacy issues of any data they receive, it is recommended you contact the City Attorney, City Manager, or City Clerk to have it clarified. Generally speaking, it is best to err on the side of not releasing certain data until you have a clarification on its status from the responsible authority.

D. Electronic Communications

These guidelines apply to all members of the City Council and all members of Council and City committees, commissions, sub-committees, etc. in the City of Coon Rapids.

For purposes of these guidelines, reference to Councilmembers includes members of all other City committees and groups subject to the Open Meeting Law. Reference to the Council shall include all such groups and meetings.
For purposes of these guidelines, electronic means refers to email, instant messaging, text, chat rooms, social media, microblogs, and related electronic conversation.

For purposes of these guidelines, City Clerk means the City Clerk, Manager, Administrator or his/her designee.

These guidelines apply regardless of whether the Councilmember is using a City-provided email address and account, his/her personal email address or account, or one provided by his/her employer; and to all social media accounts to which a Councilmember posts.

Meeting Materials
Electronic communication of meeting materials should generally be conducted in a one-way communication from the City Clerk to the Council:

- Councilmembers may receive agenda materials, background information, and other meeting materials via posting on the City’s webpage, email attachment or other electronic means (such as file sharing) from the City Clerk.
- If a Councilmember has questions or comments about materials received, s/he should inquire via electronic means directly back to the City Clerk. A Councilmember should not copy other committee members on his/her inquiry.
- If the clarification is one of value to other Councilmembers, the City Clerk may send follow-up materials or information to the Council.

Materials relating to agenda items of a meeting must also be made available to the public at the meeting.

Communication During Council Meetings
- Councilmembers should not communicate with one another via electronic means during a public meeting.
- Councilmembers should not communicate with any member of City staff via electronic means during a public meeting.
- Councilmembers should not communicate with the public via electronic means during a public meeting.

Communication Outside of Council Meetings
- Councilmembers should generally act with caution when using electronic means to communicate with one another, being mindful of the Minnesota Open Meeting Law.
- If a Councilmember wishes to share information with other members, s/he should do so through the City Clerk. The Councilmember may request the City Clerk distribute materials to others. The communication should not invite response to or discussion between any Councilmembers, including replies to the person making the distribution request. This should be considered a method for providing one-way information to other members of the Council. Again remember that materials relating to agenda items for City business must be provided to the public at the meeting.
- If a Councilmember wishes to address only one other member through electronic means on any topic related to City business, s/he can do so directly, but should be mindful of the following:
  * One-to-one communication is ideal.
  * The recipient of an electronic message or inquiry should reply only to the sender, should not copy others on the reply, and should not forward the original communication to other Councilmembers.
  * The sender of an electronic message should not forward or copy the recipient’s reply to any other Councilmember.
  * Neither the recipient or sender should publish such correspondence on any blogs or other social media site unless it is part of an official communication of the whole of the Council, and part of the City-managed electronic communication strategy.
- If a Councilmember receives an electronic communication from any source related to City business and distributed to multiple Councilmembers (i.e., an email sent to the entire Council from a member of the public; or an email sent to three Councilmembers from a local business), s/he should reply only to the sender. The reply should not be copied to all on the original distribution or forwarded to any other Councilmember.
- If a Councilmember receives listserv distributions, electronic newsletters, or participates in electronic discussion forums, chatrooms, or on Facebook, Twitter or blogs where other Councilmembers are also likely to participate (such as chat rooms), the Councilmember should not reply to any distribution or comment so that the reply is copied to the entire distribution group, or any part of the group that might include other Councilmembers. The Councilmember should instead respond only to the sender of any message or inquiry.

**Classification and Retention of Electronic Communications**

- Regardless of whether electronic communication by a Councilmember is taking place on a City-provided computer, home computer or other computer system, classification of information as public, private or other is governed by the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (Minn. Stat. Chapter 13) and should be treated accordingly.
- Councilmembers should retain electronic communications in keeping with City policies and procedures, whether such communication takes place on a City-provided computer, home computer or other computer system.

**E. Official Interest in Contract**

With certain exceptions, Minnesota laws forbid any Councilmember to have a personal financial interest in (or to benefit from) the making of any sale, lease, or contract with the City. Exceptions are:
1. The designation of a bank in which the Mayor or Councilmember is interested as the official depository for City funds if the official discloses interest;
2. The designation of an official newspaper in which a City official is interested when it is the only newspaper complying with statutory or Charter requirements relating to official publications;
3. A contract with a cooperative association in which a City official is a shareholder, but not an officer or manager;
4. A contract for competitive bids that are not required by law;
5. A contract with a volunteer fire department for the payment of compensation or retirement benefits to its members;
6. A contract with a municipal bank for the payment of compensation to its members.

If, however, a Councilmember is simply an employee of a firm and receives no commission, bonuses, or other remuneration directly or indirectly from its contracts, and is not a stockholder, the Council may enter into a contract with the organization for which the Councilmember works without respect to the amount of the contract.

F. Statement of Economic Interest

State law requires each candidate or elected local official to complete a Statement of Economic Interest which is kept on file in the City Clerk’s Office. If elected, this information must be updated annually no later than January 31st, until filing requirements are met.

G. Legislative Immunity from Slander Suits

Councilmembers in Minnesota do not have an absolute privilege to make derogatory statements during Council meetings under the protection of legislative immunity. Legislative immunity protects Councilmembers from responsibility for words they use on a proper occasion and which are pertinent to any proper inquiry or investigation pending before the Council. However, this immunity does not allow them to wander from the subject and make unnecessary statements that would hurt the reputation or good name of other people.

Generally, there are five elements that must all be present to provide immunity:

1. The officer must make the statements in good faith;
2. The speaker must have an interest to uphold or a duty to perform in making the statements;
3. The officer must limit the remarks to matters which are pertinent;
4. The speaker must make the statement only to the people who are participating in the inquiry; and
5. The officer must make remarks only on the right occasion or during actual proceedings of the inquiry.

If any of these conditions are lacking, Councilmembers may be subject to liability even though they are conducting City legislative business.
H. Defense and Indemnification

If someone sues a Councilmember for an action taken in the course of his/her official duty, the City must pay for the cost of defending the official in court, and for any judgments against the official. The only exceptions are for actions outside the scope of official duties, or cases of malfeasance or willful or wanton neglect of duty.
VI. SUMMARY

Councilmembers frequently take actions on behalf of the City for which they must assume personal liability. Consequently, it is advisable they make every attempt to become familiar with their statutory and charter authority and to adhere strictly to the limits of such authority. They should also base every action on a sincere desire to promote the public interest. If they have any doubt about the legality of a proposed action, or about the proper procedures to follow in executing a program, they should seek the advice of the City Attorney, and discuss their concerns with the City Manager.

A. Other Duties of Mayors and Councilmembers

1. Contact with Citizens

Councilmembers form a vital link between citizens and government. Whether by mail, telephone, face to face, or by electronic means, they are the conduit in an important two-way exchange of information. The first exchange is from the citizen to the government. In most cities, the Councilmember is the first person to whom the average citizen comes with concerns, requests for assistance, recommendations for policy, etc. Councilmembers should handle these contacts with extreme tact, not only to maintain good relations, but to maintain citizen support for the government itself.

The second flow of information is just as vital, but not so frequent. Councilmembers should pass on information about City programs and policies to the citizens, and contact the City Manager with questions that need to be addressed. It is our duty to educate citizens, to explain the local governmental operation and the reasons for it, as well as the meaning of City policies. In this way, Councilmembers can obtain and maintain citizen support and create a more harmonious and cooperative atmosphere for the conduct of government business. Creating and maintaining good relationships between government and the citizen is a partnership which requires trust and honesty.

2. Relationship with Administrative Personnel

The relationship between Councilmembers and administrative personnel is dependent on the particular form of government. Councilmembers should be careful to restrict that relationship to the defined channels. Unofficial Council interference in administrative affairs can disrupt business, weaken employee morale, and create antagonistic relationships between managers and Councilmembers.

Councilmembers should not attempt to exert any influence over the hiring and firing of administrative personnel, except for those people whose appointment they are responsible, namely the City Manager. Federal, State and local laws have made human resources administration a very complex affair, with mishandling costing public employers hundreds of thousands of dollars in litigation, claims and damages. The City of Coon Rapids has a very strong commitment in providing its employees with a fair, accountable and uniform system of human resources administration including procedures to address employee grievances.
3. **Formulation of City Policy**

As members of the City’s legislative body, Councilmembers have the duty to formulate government policy. This complex task covers more than writing and passing resolutions and ordinances. Councilmembers must discover what the public wants through their contacts with the citizens and interest groups. From conferences with administrative officials and from their own observations and studies of City problems, they must determine the City’s needs. They must also find out what policies the City can successfully pursue. Councilmembers must then translate this information into policies that will attain the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Developing good public policy is just like putting a puzzle together by making certain all the pieces fit correctly.

One source of help is current research in the local government field. No City has a totally unique problem. Every City can facilitate progress by using information gained through research. Councilmembers can get such information from the office of the City Manager, or organizations such as the League of Minnesota Cities, and other professional groups for City officials. To keep abreast of new developments, Councilmembers will find it helpful to play an active role in such organizations and to read their publications.

In conclusion, it is our hope this manual has provided you with some insights into the workings of your local government. The City staff looks forward to working with you to make Coon Rapids a community its residents can be proud of now and in the future.

**SOURCE ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The City of Coon Rapids acknowledges the League of Minnesota Cities “Outline of City Government” and other related publications as a source of information used in the preparation of this document.

Community strength…for generations
In accordance with Chapter 3-303 of the City Code, the City’s organizational structure shall be divided into departments and divisions, as shown on the attached organizational charts.

Department Heads

City Manager
City Attorney
City Clerk
Community Development Director
Finance Director

Fire Chief
Police Chief
Public Works Director
Director of Golf Operations

Organization Structure
RESOLUTION NO. 22-2

RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING COUNCIL RULES OF PROCEDURE

BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of Coon Rapids, Minnesota that the business of the Council shall be conducted in the following order:

1. Call to order by the Mayor or, in his/her absence, the Mayor Pro Tem.
2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
3. Appointment of Acting Secretary if necessary
4. Roll Call
5. Adoption of Agenda
6. Proclamations/Recognitions
7. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings
8. Consent/Informational Business
9. Public Hearings
10. Bid Openings and Contract Awards
11. Old Business
12. New Business
13. Open Mic Segment
14. Reports on Previous Open Mic Requests
15. Other Council Business
16. Adjourn

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager or his designee, shall direct the preparation of the agenda for each meeting. An agenda item may be added, removed, or amended with the approval of a majority of the Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that meetings shall be adjourned not later than 11:00 p.m. unless waived by a majority vote of the Councilmembers present.

Adopted this 4th day of January, 2022, by the Coon Rapids City Council.

ATTEST:

Jerry Koch, Mayor

Joan Lenzmeier, City Clerk
DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS OF CITY COUNCIL ORDER OF BUSINESS
Addendum to Resolution 22-2

The items contained in the formally adopted order of business for the Coon Rapids City Council shall have the meanings commonly associated therewith unless otherwise defined or explained herein.

1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA: This order of business is the appropriate time for the Mayor and Councilmembers to add, delete, or change items on the agenda as proposed by the City Manager. A majority of those present must approve additions, deletions or changes to the proposed agenda. After an agenda has been formally adopted, any change thereto shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of all members present.

2. CONSENT/INFORMATIONAL ITEMS: Consent items are those business items which must be acted upon by the City Council, but which are routine and generally do not require any discussion or debate. Informational items do not require formal action and are provided as an update or comment to an item of interest to the Council. The City Manager is authorized to prepare a list of consent items, but any Councilmember or the Mayor may request that a particular consent item be removed from the consent list and placed on the regular agenda. This action should be taken at the time the agenda is formally adopted.

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS: The Mayor will make every effort to ensure that each speaker giving testimony at a public hearing provides new information and does not simply reiterate the testimony of a previous speaker. Persons will be allowed to associate themselves with previously expressed opinions by approaching the podium, stating their name and address, and indicating their concurrence with a particular prior speaker. The Mayor will also make every reasonable effort to control, and where possible prevent, demonstrations which might occur during public hearings whether the demonstrations are preplanned or spontaneous.

4. OPEN MIC: This order of business provides a time for members of the public to approach the Council and comment, ask questions, present a concern or make a statement specifically relating to City business that is not already on the agenda for that meeting. Each speaker will be limited to three minutes and will be informed by the Mayor when their time is concluded. The Mayor will advise the audience of the time limit when introducing the Open Mic portion of the meeting. The speaker will be asked to come to the podium set up for that purpose, state his or her name and address, and give his or her statement, question or concern. Councilmembers may speak briefly to an Open Mic item for the purposes of asking for clarification, providing additional, pertinent information, or responding to questions raised by the speaker or another Councilmember. The Mayor will explain to the speaker that the statement, question or concern will be referred to the City staff for review and then a report will be sent to the speaker prior to the next regularly scheduled Council meeting. It is recognized that not all issues may be resolved at or prior to the next Council meeting, but the speaker will be informed of the progress on the issue prior to the next meeting. Staff will draft a response to be submitted as part of the next City Council Agenda. The speaker will be provided a copy of the report and any subsequent reports until the matter is resolved. Speakers are prohibited from engaging in personal attacks on Councilmembers, staff, or member of the public. Should this occur, the presiding officer will inform the speaker his/her opportunity to address Council has been relinquished and the person must leave the podium.

5. OTHER COUNCIL BUSINESS: This order of business provides an opportunity
for Councilmembers and staff to bring up any issues which were not on the agenda. These issues may include, but are not limited to, such items as questions or concerns of Councilmembers, questions or concerns that have been expressed to Councilmembers by citizens and suggestions by Councilmembers for future workshops which will be scheduled upon consensus of the Council.

Items may be placed on or removed from an agenda by any Councilmember in accordance with the following procedures:

A. PLACEMENT OF ITEMS ON AN AGENDA. Any Councilmember may have an item placed on a meeting agenda up until the time the agenda is formally adopted at the Council meeting. Thereafter additions to the agenda will be permitted only upon a two-thirds affirmative vote of all members present in accordance with the adopted rules of procedure.

Items submitted by the Wednesday preceding a regular Council meeting will be included in the original printing of the agenda. Thereafter, items requested by Councilmembers will be included in the recommended additions, deletions and amendments distributed at the Council meeting.

B. REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM AN AGENDA. Any Councilmember who has placed an item on an agenda will be given the courtesy to remove that item from the agenda at any time prior to the formal adoption of the agenda. Thereafter an item may be removed from the agenda with a two-thirds affirmative vote of all members present in accordance with the adopted rules of procedure.

If an item which was placed on an agenda is deleted at the originator’s request prior to the meeting, the City Manager will advise the Council as part of the additional agenda materials provided prior to the meeting. Any such removed item may be placed on the next or any subsequent meeting agenda by the originator of the item or by any other Councilmember.

Any Councilmember who has placed an item on an agenda, who will be absent from a meeting, may have that item on that meeting’s proposed agenda removed or postponed by notifying the Mayor or the City Manager no later than 3:00 p.m. on the day of the scheduled meeting.

However, if the item has been placed on the agenda by another Councilmember, then it can be removed or postponed only with the concurrence of that Councilmember.

Adopted by the Coon Rapids City Council this 4th day of January, 2022.

ATTEST: [Signature]
Joan Lenzmeier, City Clerk

[Signature]
Jerry Koch, Mayor
TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Authorization

Employees who are authorized to travel for work-related purposes may be reimbursed for the actual cost of travel, meals, and other related, reasonable, and necessary expenses. All travel authorizations and approvals shall be consistent with budget authorization. Any travel that exceeds budgetary authorization shall require the approval of the City Manager.

Documentation

Reimbursement for mileage, meals, lodging, and other incidental travel expenses must be itemized on the City’s “Travel Expense Voucher” claim form, accompanied by receipts, as required, and signed by the employee, and submitted to the supervisor for approval within 60 days of its occurrence.

Mileage Reimbursement

Employees required to use their personal vehicles in the performance of their assigned duties, will be compensated for each mile driven at the IRS maximum rate for mileage. For authorized work-related mileage originating or terminating at the employee’s home, the mileage claimed should be the lesser of mileage for the same trip from the employee’s normal work location.

Day Travel

Employees and officials who travel during the day for work-related purposes may be reimbursed for meals, mileage, and other reasonable and necessary expenses. When meals are not included in the registration fees for an official meeting or training function, employees will be reimbursed when a receipt is provided. Reimbursements amounts are subject to the daily meal limits established by the U.S. General Services Administration domestic per diem rates. Meal expenses may also be reimbursable where travel is required before and after an event. Meals not associated with an officially scheduled City business function will not be reimbursed and shall be the sole responsibility of the employee.

Overnight/Out-of-State Travel

Employees traveling overnight or outside the state for work-related purposes must obtain prior supervisory approval. Reimbursement of expenses requires written authorization by the appropriate supervisor. Reimbursement may be for the cost of the travel, meals, lodging, and other incidental expenses with the following limitations:
• **Lodging:** The City will only reimburse for a single hotel accommodation rate at or close to the conference or meeting location. The employee is responsible for any additional costs for guests.

• **Air Travel:** For airline travel, employees will only be reimbursed for an economy class ticket. Transportation to and from the airport or hotel is reimbursable.

• **Automobile:** Automobile travel may be authorized in lieu of commercial transportation, but the total amount allowed, including meals and lodging while traveling, shall not exceed the cost of a single round-trip economy class airline ticket to the same location.

• **Meals:** Employees will be compensated pursuant to the daily Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) per diem rate during overnight/out of state travel. The U.S. General Services Administration domestic [per diem rates](#) will be the basis for determining meal and incidental expenses limits. Submission of receipts is not required. Meals included in the registration fee for any event are not reimbursable and shall be subtracted from the daily per diem rate request. The per diem may include appropriate meals the day prior and the day following any travel/conference when determined to be justified, reasonable, and appropriate by the City Manager.

• **Rental Cars:** The cost of a rental car may be reimbursable with prior approval by the City Manager if transportation is necessary to and from the conference, or if there is a cost savings to the City.

• **Additional Expenses:** Discretionary expenses such as hotel charges (personal phone calls, pay-per-view movies, and room service), alcoholic beverages, or recreational activities offered during an event at an additional cost (such as golf or tennis), are not reimbursable. Reasonable expenses for taxi and transfer service, hotel gratuity, parking, and other related expenses in conjunction with travel will be reimbursed at actual cost as documented on a receipt for such services.

### Travel Advances

Travel advances may be requested for airline tickets, hotel reservations, and meal allowances by completing a travel advance request form. Excess travel advances must be returned to the City within 60 days after the expense is incurred.

### Supervisory Responsibility

Department heads and supervisors are responsible for advising employees who travel of the provisions of this policy. Department heads and supervisors should carefully review mileage and travel expense documentation before authorizing payment.

### Employee Responsibility

Employees must obtain supervisory approval for work-related travel and minimize expenses whenever possible. Employees are responsible to ensure that mileage and travel expense claims are accurate and properly documented.
COMMUNICATION TIPS FOR CITY COUNCIL TV
This article excerpted and reprinted from the 3CMA newsletter by Cindie Ryan and Heather Morris

The purpose of cablecasting City Council meetings is to improve communication with the community. When residents are well informed, they can participate more effectively in their government and make better decisions on matters impacting their families.

The tips and suggestions for City Councilmembers below are designed to reduce obstacles to clear, accurate communication between Councilmembers and their citizen audience.

A. CAMERA PRESENCE

1. The camera sees all. Always assume that you are on camera, and behave accordingly. And in fact, you might be. You might appear in a “wide shot” or a “two shot” even when you are not speaking. The camera accentuates every mannerism - good or bad.

2. Sit up straight. Good posture not only projects confidence, but also puts you in proper position for speaking into the microphone. Some council chamber chairs have a tendency to make one naturally slouch or lean back, so you have to make a conscious effort to maintain good posture.

3. Wardrobe tips. In general, avoid checks, stripes or other busy patterns. These tend to vibrate on television. Stay away from horizontal stripes and dark muted colors. Clean, simple colors work well. Try to avoid wearing suits or dresses that match the color of the council chamber chairs because it creates a “floating head” look on camera. Don’t drape your blazer, jacket or anything else over the back of your chair. On camera it will look like the jacket is growing out of your head.

4. Makeup tips. For women, the natural look doesn’t work well on camera. Television lights have a tendency to wash out any complexion, creating a tired, apathetic appearance. Makeup that is slightly heavier than normal is best. Always check your makeup, particularly lipstick, before going on the air, otherwise your facial features will disappear. You should not be concerned with glamour, but you want the audience to focus on what you are saying, not on how you look.

5. Other tips for TV. Stay alert physically, even when you’re not talking. Don’t watch the monitor. Ignore cameras and people moving in the studio. Lean forward slightly in your chair. Don’t swivel about. Rest hands naturally in your lap or on the desk.

B. GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS TIPS

1. Limit the points you try to make. As a general rule, confine your comments to two major items. Keep your thoughts and presentations concise. Don’t ramble. Think before you speak.

2. Be aware of the way you sound. Often the way we say something comes off more strongly than the message. Avoid monotone. Learn how to analyze the way you sound to others. Listen to council replays without watching.
3. Use simple and easily understood language. Avoid jargon, clever twists and industry language. Be precise, concise and comprehensive. In conversation, ask questions, listen to answers and follow-up.

4. Always be yourself. This is the most important thing to achieve and, surprisingly, can be the most difficult. Get to know and like the person you see in the mirror. Be willing to be introspective and to change what can be changed. Accept the rest.

5. Be, or learn to be, an optimist. Look for the positive side of the person to whom you’re speaking. Be positive about matters and issues you are confronting. Share upbeat attitudes with others.

C. MICROPHONES

1. Assume your microphone is always on. The microphones on the Council dais are very sensitive. Every tsk, sigh, cough, sneeze and whispered comment will be heard. When applauding, move your hands to your side so you’re not clapping directly into the microphone. If you use your mute button, remember to turn it off when you begin to speak.

2. Always speak into the microphone. Position yourself about 8 to 12 inches from the dais microphone and speak directly into it. Speak in your normal manner at a moderate sound level. Remember, if you are not “mic’d”, the home audience cannot hear you, even if the chamber audience can hear you. Therefore, avoid speaking as you turn around to point to a display behind you; or as you turn to direct your comments to another councilmember. Grab a wireless mic if you want to leave the dais to comment on a map, slide, rendering, etc.

3. Help speakers be heard. Speakers at council meetings often forget to talk into the mic. Hearing speakers at the lectern is generally not much of a problem. But if you notice the mic is off to the side, or the speaker has turned away or wandered off, please redirect the person back to the mic. This may cause a momentary interruption, but it’s preferable to not being heard.

4. Presentations at the public podium mic are the most problematic. If the mic is too low, simply ask the speaker to raise it. Typically, a staff member will try to do this but sometimes he or she doesn’t get a good off-air opportunity to do so.

5. Citizen speakers tend to just start talking without paying attention to the mic. They turn around to direct comments to the Council. Sometimes they even walk to the dais to pass out t-shirts, ribbons or hats. If they are speaking during any of these times, the home audience cannot hear them. If this occurs help remind the speaker to return to the public podium.

6. Don’t ask questions once people have left the lectern and gone back to their seats. Ask speakers to return to the microphone ask your question. Remember: even though you and the rest of the chamber audience can hear, that doesn’t mean the sound is reaching the home audience.

D. HANDLING ON-AIR AUDIO/VISUAL PROBLEMS

1. Use humor and stay calm. This is live television occasional sound and/or video problems will happen once you are on the air. Staff will resolve these problems and you should continue the meeting as normal.
Strategies for Success

You experienced the success of winning your election. Now there are new challenges ahead—
and different skills to employ—to be successful in your new role as a city councilmember.

Here are a few strategies to help you as you navigate this new world.

By Christine Becker

Getting my arms around all the issues and the overwhelming amount of information was the hardest part for me," Bertram says. "I never really comprehended the depth of the issues at the city level—and few people do until they sit at the council table."

Being well-prepared for every meeting is essential to becoming a successful individual elected official and a valued team member, he adds. "You have to learn as much as you can about the issues first and then not be afraid to ask questions that will help the group make the best decision."

In addition to good preparation, Brainerd says listening and becoming familiar with the governing environment will contribute to long-term success. "You don't want to dominate or exercise your vocal cords too much in those early meetings," Brainerd says. "Instead, show that you are a team player by listening to what others have to say, respecting their views, and learning how to articulate your views effectively to help the group reach a good decision."

Anderson says the transition from citizen lobbyist to a member of the council team required a different approach and different skills. "As a lobbyist, I knew I needed four of seven votes to be successful on my issues," she says. "When I became a councilmember and later mayor, I had to work effectively with my six colleagues and rely on the entire council to reach the best decision for the community. My ability to collaborate with others—to bring the group together—became very important."

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Daily demands and long-range issues
More than any level of government, local officials face a constant pull between short-term demands—problems, challenges, and questions that need attention now—and the big picture.

Newly elected officials are often anxious to act on the individual needs they heard during the campaign or respond instantly to requests from the voters. While fixing potholes, replacing trees in public areas, or adding stop signs are important, they are best handed off to city staff with confirmation once the job is done.

Strategic plans that set long-term policy goals and priorities, and master plans that establish broad development patterns provide the best organizational tools for maintaining a long-term view. In becoming familiar with these plans, councilmembers must work hard to resist becoming the neighborhood or community fixer.

Anderson says the ability to make decisions that benefit the whole community is a philosophy as much as a skill. “Everyone brings you their problems, and it is satisfying and rewarding to try to solve them,” she says. "But it is not the councilmember's job to fix things for people. Instead I tried to help constituents walk through the governmental system so they could fix it themselves and know where to go the next time they had a problem.”

Park says an effective councilmember needs to be able to be where the community is right now while setting the course for the long term. “By listening and engaging with the public regularly, you can lead them in the direction they want to go even if they haven't articulated that direction yet,” she says. “The mayor and council help articulate it on their behalf.”

From communicating to engaging
Staying in touch with the public is vital to both individual and government success. While some studies suggest that citizens remain skeptical, detached, isolated, and apathetic, according to the book Working Productively with 21st Century Citizens, by Matt Leitgruber, many local governments know a different type of citizen today—one who is knowledgeable, highly skilled, and more interested in governing than being governed.

TEAMWORK SELF-ASSESSMENT

This checklist can be used by individual councilmembers after meetings to assess teamwork skills by scoring each dimension of teamwork from 1 (rarely used the skill) to 5 (always used the skill). It can also be used as a team-building tool with the entire city council.

Did I understand and accept the tasks the team was working on?
Did I listen to others?
Did I feel comfortable disagreeing with others?
Did I feel comfortable when others disagreed with me?
Did I seek consensus/help the group move toward a shared conclusion?
Did I use my knowledge and skills during the session to help the group get its work done?

Engaging citizens involves:
- Connecting regularly with both individuals and groups to find out what citizens really think.
- Mobilizing citizens to take action in their neighborhoods.
- Diffusing tensions and modeling constructive discussion.
- Talking with citizens in a supportive, non-confrontational way.
- Reaching out to people who have felt or been excluded in the past.
- Creating a strong sense of belonging.

Bertram says, “In addition to the structures, I constantly reach out, particularly using e-mail, to say I need to hear from you as we make our decisions.”

Staying connected to citizens in every way possible, Bertram says, is essential to success as a local elected official. “You can never forget why you’re here—to serve the people who elected you.”

A rewarding experience
Local government service is tough, demanding, time consuming, frustrating, and challenging. But elected leaders say the rewards are enormous.

“People come to you sometimes, not knowing where to turn, and it is satisfying and rewarding when you can help them,” Bertram says.

For newly elected officials, Park offers this advice: “Relax, come to the table with a heart that is ready to serve, and be grateful that you’ve been given this wonderful opportunity to make a difference.”

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Becker is also the author of the handbook, Leading Your Community: A Guide for Local Elected Leaders, from which portions of this article were adapted. To learn more about the handbook, visit http://store.ima.org/Elected_Officials_C9.fm.

From Leading Your Community: A Guide for Local Elected Officials published by International City/County Management Association and National League of Cities.
The Role of the Elected Official

One of the most important factors in successful economic development is strong, strategic leadership.

Your community expects that from you as an elected official. Here are 10 things you should know about economic development to deliver that kind of leadership.

By Katie McConnell

Economic development is about jobs and future prosperity—two things that local elected officials and constituents take very seriously. Rare is an election speech or a campaign platform that does not focus on the topic, especially in today’s economic climate.

With that in mind, it is also a complex policy area that needs long-term vision and commitment and that suffers from urgent calls for results, often for understandable reasons, like high unemployment. This makes economic development especially susceptible to fads and shortsighted programs.

Given the dueling need for patience and pressure for results, leadership is consistently identified as a critical factor for success. Particularly needed are strategic elected leaders to help develop and communicate a common vision, provide committed policy and regulatory support, and motivate stakeholders into action.

Your role as a city leader
Local officials are typically generalists out of necessity—keeping track of issues as varied as parking meters, after-school programs, and redevelopment.

With this in mind, to be a leader for economic development, the goal is not to become experts in all the day-to-day details, but instead to occupy roles that maximize the position of elected leaders and partner with other stakeholders and staff to reach goals.

There is a basic principle that local elected officials should keep in mind when thinking about economic development: there is no magic bullet or one-size-fits-all solution for economic development. Cities and regions have different strengths and weaknesses, and importing a “best practice” from one community wholesale into another could be a recipe for disaster. What constitutes success will vary from community to community based on different visions and goals.

Ten things to know
Within this framework, the National League of Cities (NLC) studied successful city practices and interviewed economic development professionals, elected leaders, academics, and business organizations. The goal was to understand the pieces of information and the roles that would be most helpful to local officials. This work produced a list of 10 things elected officials should know about economic development. This list can be useful to local elected officials in helping them initiate conversations with key players in the community about economic development.

The 10 things elected officials should know about economic development are:

1. Your local economic strengths and weaknesses. Your community’s strengths and weaknesses, such as quality-of-life amenities, infrastructure, and workforce, determine the potential of your community for economic growth. This economic profile lays the foundation for creating a realistic vision and strategic direction for economic success that is unique to your community.

With the assistance of your economic development staff and input from stakeholders, you can identify factors within and outside the control of local government that impact and shape your local economy. Identifying strengths and opportunities is crucial, but local officials should also pay attention to weaknesses and potential threats.

2. Your community’s place in the broader regional economy. Competition for tax base and jobs often puts pressure on elected officials to go toe-to-toe with neighboring jurisdictions. The reality is however that local economic success depends on regional economic success. This is particularly true in the global economy where economic competition is from cities abroad. By working together, your region can leverage the collective regional assets versus just what falls between municipal boundaries.

With a firmer grasp on how your community fits into the broader region, you’re better prepared to work with other jurisdictions to share responsibility for regional economic success.

It is important to note that participating in regional activities for economic development may present some political difficulties with constituents if the local economic benefits are not well communicated. Local officials can work with staff to craft clear, accurate messages about how regional economic success translates into improved employment opportunities, tax base, or amenities to your city and the people who live there.

3. Your community’s economic development vision and goals. A primary challenge in economic development is choosing among many competing priorities and activities. A clear economic vision and goals are needed to provide a framework for strategically assessing and coordinating these efforts. A well-designed visioning process will surface an array of ideas, opinions, and objectives from a diverse group of stakeholders. An
important role for elected officials is to help bring people to consensus and agreement on a common purpose that provides clear direction for local economic development efforts.

4. Your community’s strategy to attain its goals. Once the economic development vision and goals are defined, it is important that they guide and determine your city’s economic development activities. There are many local activities that can be used to accomplish your city’s long-term economic development vision. The types of economic development policies and tools pursued by your community will depend on those permitted by your state, as well as how your local government perceives its role in stimulating private sector economic activities.

Elected officials should also work with their staff to determine a set of expected outcomes, the necessary level of resources (staff and budget) needed to achieve these outcomes, and performance metrics to evaluate and measure them. In the context of short-term political cycles, it may be tempting to stray from the strategy and only consider economic development in terms of traditional, more tangible successes, such as attracting a new, large employer. For this reason, it is important that elected officials and staff agree upon, are committed to, and accurately measure even incremental economic achievements. This will allow political leaders to demonstrate success and champion all the various ways the community supports economic activity.

5. Connections between economic development and other city policies. When crafting economic development policies, it is essential to consider how other city policies support or discourage your economic development goals. The scope of economic development, and the interests and needs of the business community extend well beyond market access and transportation networks. For example, social and professional networks, education institutions, quality-of-life amenities, and housing are all important to your community’s economic profile. Additionally, there is an increased recognition that improvements in social and economic equity and the natural environment are critically important to long-term economic success.

6. Your regulatory environment. A community’s regulatory environment directly impacts the ease of doing business in a city. For businesses, time is money, and regulatory process should allow for timely, transparent, and reliable resolution of issues. If your city’s regulatory policies are riddled with delays, confusing and redundant steps, and multiple approval processes, a prospective business may very well choose to locate or expand in another community.

To improve your city’s regulatory process, gather input from your business community about their frustrations and experiences. Working with your local chamber of commerce or other local business organizations may be helpful in this process. It is also important to be mindful not to throw the good out with the bad. Not all development is good development, and it is important that your regulatory processes reflect your long-term economic development vision to safeguard against detrimental projects.

7. Your local economic development stakeholders and partners. A group of diverse stakeholders within and outside local government contribute to economic development. These include both large and small businesses, economic development organizations, education institutions, chambers of commerce, and many others. Local officials should work with staff to strategically identify who needs to be involved on an economic development project, the resources they bring to the table, and how to leverage the position as an elected official to motivate stakeholders into action.

8. The needs of your local business community. It is important for local elected officials to bring the same commitment and enthusiasm to existing businesses as they do to new business prospects. Cities often create incentives or policy packages to attract new employers and celebrate a new company with ribbon cuttings and stories in the local media. By similarly celebrating local business accomplishments, you can show the city’s support, increase the business’s profile, and draw attention to economic development success stories that often go unnoticed.

Additionally, it is important to reach out and communicate with your local business community. Whether through your local chamber of commerce, organized events, or visiting businesses individually, local officials can gather input to help improve local business policies and demonstrate that the community cares about the success of their businesses.

9. Your community’s economic development message. Strong communication and a compelling message are vital to successful economic development efforts. An economic development message that is based on your community’s collective vision and is conveyed by all key stakeholders will establish a consistent community “brand” and competitive identity to the outside world. Local elected officials can use public speeches, interviews, and other communications to rally the community around their economic development message. Presenting a consistent message will also promote confidence in developers, business owners, and others who want to be assured that their investments in your community will have broad support among local leaders, residents, and key partners.

10. Your economic development staff. To be an effective leader in economic development, local officials must be informed on the economic development issues facing their region. To stay up to date, local officials should forge a relationship with and communicate regularly with the city’s economic development staff. This relationship will allow you to gain a better understanding of the economic position of your city, better articulate goals to constituents and the media, and make more informed policy decisions.

For more details, read The Role of Local Elected Officials in Economic Development: 10 Things You Should Know, a new guide produced by the NLC Center for Research and Innovation. This 36-page guide is available on the Economic Development page (under the Find City Solutions tab) of the NLC website at www.nlc.org. For more information about the NLC Center for Research and Innovation work on finance and economic development, contact Katie McConnell using the contact information below.

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