# Rules of Council Proceedings

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RULES OF COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS
As established in Phoenix City Code, Chapter 2, Article II

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter IV, Section 7, of the Charter of the City of Phoenix, the Rules of Council Proceedings were established in 1969 and incorporated into the Code of the City of Phoenix, Section 2-60.

Rule 1: Applicability

The proceedings of the Council of the City of Phoenix shall be governed by these Rules, resorting to the latest standard edition of Robert's Rules of Order, if necessary.

Rule 2: Meetings

(a) The Council shall meet regularly according to the adopted meeting calendar as follows:

(1) Policy Sessions to receive information and determine policy at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesdays.

(2) Formal Meetings to consider and act on general business at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesdays.

(3) Zoning Meetings to consider and act on zoning matters immediately following formal meetings, but no earlier than 6:00 p.m. on Wednesdays.

(b) Special meetings may be called by the Mayor or three Council Members.

(c) Meeting times, dates, and locations may be changed, or meetings may be canceled by the Mayor or the Council.

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1 Charter, Chapter IV, Section 19, requires the Council to meet at least once a month. Generally, meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday of the month.

2 Charter, Chapter IV, Section 4, requires the Council to provide for the time and place of its regular meetings.

3 See Rule 4 for description of meetings.

4 Charter, Chapter IV, Section 4, requires the Council to provide the manner in which special meetings will be called. Charter, Chapter IV, Section 20, provides that special meetings may be called by the Mayor or three Council Members.
Rule 3: Order of Business for Formal Meetings

The City Clerk shall prepare and publish an agenda for each formal meeting in the following order:

(a) Roll call of members;
(b) Approval of minutes of the preceding meeting;
(c) Appointment of and administering oaths to Board and Commission members;
(d) Consideration of bids;
(e) Liquor license, bingo, and off-track betting license applications;
(f) Petitions, public hearings, and ratification of planning/zoning cases;
(g) Consideration of old business;
(h) Reading and passage of ordinances and resolutions;
(i) Consideration of formal recorded actions and other new business;
(j) Reports from the City Manager, committees, or city officials;
(k) Public hearings of planning and zoning matters.

Rule 4: Policy Sessions

The Policy Sessions shall be conducted as follows:

(a) The agenda shall be set by the Mayor, provided that an item may be placed on the agenda upon the written request of four Council Members.

(b) The agenda shall include time for Council Members to request information from City staff.

(c) The agenda may include a consent agenda set by the Mayor, which shall be adopted, rejected, or continued without discussion.

5 Code, Section 2-78 provides that ordinances and resolutions may be read by title and agenda item only if the titles of the proposed ordinances and resolutions were available to the public in the City Clerk’s office at least 24 hours before a meeting. If not available, the text of the ordinance or resolution must be read in full before the vote. Council may waive the reading by a 2/3 majority vote.

6 When meeting in Policy Session, the Council may consider and debate information presented and take final action on items.
(d) Items, except those relating to the removal of board or commission members, shall be removed from the consent agenda upon the request of any Council Member prior to 5:00 p.m. of the day preceding the meeting.

(e) The Policy agenda may include a section in which formal actions, ordinances, and resolutions may be approved or adopted by the City Council. These items may be placed in this section upon City Manager’s Office approval of a Request for Council Action (RCA), in accordance with the normal RCA process and deadlines adjusted one day earlier for a Tuesday meeting.

Rule 5: General Procedures

(a) A majority of the members of the Council shall constitute a quorum.7

(b) The Mayor shall be the presiding officer8 and have a voice and vote in all Council proceedings. During the absence or disability of the Mayor, the Vice Mayor shall act as Mayor.9 During the absence or disability of both Mayor and Vice Mayor, the Council shall elect a presiding officer for all meetings. The Council shall select a new Vice Mayor once each calendar year.

(c) Members shall occupy seats assigned by the Mayor.

(d) Council Members may request additional information on any formal agenda items no later than the Tuesday Policy Session preceding the formal meeting.

(e) No more than one amendment to a motion shall be permitted.

   (1) When a motion to amend a motion has been made and seconded, the next vote shall be on that motion to amend.

   (2) If the motion to amend fails, the original motion remains on the floor and shall be voted on.

(f) Any member, at any time, may request a roll call vote.

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7 Charter, Chapter IV, Section 6, establishes a majority of the Council (5) as a quorum. Charter, Chapter IV, Section 10, requires the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the council (5) to pass any substantive item.

8 Charter, Chapter IV, Section 3, provides that the Mayor shall preside at Council meetings.

9 Charter, Chapter III, Section 5(A), provides that in the Mayor’s absence the Vice Mayor shall act as Mayor pro tempore.
(g) Council Members shall not be excused from voting. A failure to vote or a voluntary abstention shall count as an "aye" vote unless excused by an announced conflict of interest.  

(h) The Journal of the Proceedings of the Council shall record individual votes on all ordinances, resolutions, franchises, formal actions, and liquor license applications recommended for disapproval. For voice votes of ayes and nays that are not unanimous, the Mayor shall indicate the individual votes. The Mayor may require that Council Members' votes be clarified.  

(i) In the case of a tie in the vote on any measure, the measure shall be considered defeated.  

(j) A motion to reconsider any measure that was voted upon at that meeting may be made only by a member on the prevailing side.  

(k) Requests for reconsideration may also be filed with the City Clerk within seven (7) business days following the date of original action.  

   (1) The request for reconsideration should be addressed to the City Clerk and contain the meeting date, item subject, and number of the item requested for reconsideration.  

   (2) If properly and timely filed, the City Clerk should place the request for reconsideration on the next available formal meeting agenda. Except for zoning cases, the item being reconsidered should be placed on the agenda to immediately follow the item to request reconsideration. Reconsidered items for zoning cases should be placed on the next available formal or recessed meeting agenda that allows compliance with the applicable posting period.  

(l) A motion to reconsider must receive a second, which may come from any Council Member. 

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10 Charter, Chapter IV, Section 23, requires Council Members to vote on all matters.  

11 Charter, Chapter IV, Section 9, requires Council votes to be recorded in the Journal of the Proceedings of the Council.  

12 Charter, Chapter IV, Section 13, provides that if an ordinance fails to pass, and a motion to reconsider is made, the vote on the motion shall not be taken within 24 hours thereafter.
Rule 6: Debate and Decorum

(a) When a measure is presented for consideration, the presiding officer shall recognize the appropriate person or persons to present the matter.

(b) Council Members may speak after recognition by the presiding officer. The presiding officer shall not unreasonably withhold such recognition; however, the presiding officer may not recognize similar repetitive discussions or motions which would delay the meeting.

(c) When two or more members of Council wish to speak, the presiding officer shall determine the order of speaking and recognize the first speaker.

(d) While a member of the City Council is speaking, no other member shall interrupt except to make a point of order or point of personal privilege.

(e) When a motion is made and seconded, the presiding officer shall ensure that the debate is confined to the motion.

(f) The Council may agree to limit debate on any matter before it. A limit may be formalized by a majority vote of the Council, or the presiding officer may announce time limits on any agenda item.

(g) Any member may call for the previous question on any issue under debate. The call for previous question must receive a second and then receive at least a two-thirds vote. Passage of a motion to address the previous question terminates all debate on the original motion. The Council shall immediately vote on such motion.

(h) If a member breaks these rules, the presiding officer shall, or any Council Member may, call that member to order. The member so called shall immediately cease speaking, but may appeal to the Council. The Council shall decide the appeal without debate. If the appeal is granted, such member may continue speaking. If the appeal is denied, such member shall remain silent. Such offender is subject to censure or other punishment as the Council, by a three-quarters vote, deems just and proper under the law.

Rule 7: Enforcement, Suspension of Rules

(a) These rules shall be enforced by the presiding officer, subject to an appeal to the Council.

(b) Unless otherwise provided by law, these rules may be suspended or modified at any time by a majority vote of the Council.
Rule 8: Citizen Comments

Immediately after adjournment or recess of the regular weekly formal meeting, any member of the public may address the Council to comment on issues of interest or concern to them. A quorum of the City Council may or may not be present, but in either event, no decisions will be made and no action on any issue raised will be taken.

Rule 9: Open Meeting Law

The Council and its committees, subcommittees, and ad hoc committees shall hold all meetings and conduct all business in accordance with the provisions of the Arizona Open Meeting Law, A.R.S. § 38-431 et seq.

Rule 10: Conflict of Interest

Each member shall comply with the Arizona Conflict of Interest Law, A.R.S. § 38-501 et seq. When a member recognizes a potential conflict of interest, the member shall disclose the interest giving rise to the potential conflict and refrain from voting or participating in any manner in the disposition of the matter.

Rule 11: Emergencies

Emergencies shall be handled as provided by the Charter, Chapter IV, Section 14 and Chapter V, Section 4; the City Code, Administration Article II, Section 2-79; and the provisions of the Arizona Open Meeting Law, A.R.S. § 38-431 et seq.

Rule 12: Use of Staff

No Council Member shall request any staff project requiring over eight hours of staff work without first seeking approval of the full City Council.

Rule 13: Subcommittees

(a) The Mayor may establish, modify, and terminate subcommittees of the Council and charge them with their powers, duties, and responsibilities. Subcommittee membership shall not exceed four. The Rules of Council Proceedings shall govern all subcommittee proceedings.

(b) The Mayor may refer matters to subcommittees for the purpose of collecting information, providing analysis, and making recommendations to the Council. Subcommittees may conduct public hearings on matters referred to them.

(c) The Mayor shall appoint and remove the members and chairperson for each subcommittee. Only the Mayor and Council Members may serve on a subcommittee. The Mayor shall be a non voting ex-officio member of all subcommittees, unless otherwise designated.
(d) The subcommittee chairperson shall determine the agenda for subcommittee meetings consistent with the subcommittee’s charge.

(e) The Mayor may establish, modify, and terminate ad hoc committees of the Council and charge them with their powers, duties, and responsibilities. The Mayor shall appoint and remove the members and chairperson for each ad hoc committee. Membership of ad hoc committees may include citizens and up to four Council Members. Ad hoc committees shall be established to study, review, and make recommendations regarding specific issues designated by the Mayor. Ad hoc committees shall be established only for a limited, clearly defined, time and at the end of the designated time shall automatically be abolished unless the time is extended by the Mayor.

(f) The Mayor shall file with the City Clerk a list of all subcommittees and ad hoc committees, together with each subcommittee’s and ad hoc committee’s members, chairperson, and charge. Any changes in subcommittee or ad hoc committee information shall also be filed with the City Clerk.
This guide was designed as a reference tool for the Mayor and Council, City staff, and the citizens for Chapter 2, Article II of the Phoenix City Code relating to rules governing City Council proceedings.

The City Clerk Department is available to provide additional information and resource materials covering Phoenix City Council meetings, agenda procedures, Open Meeting Law compliance, and information on the City’s Lobbyist Ordinance. The City Clerk Department is available at (602) 262-6557.

Upon request, the City Clerk Department will make this publication available through appropriate auxiliary aids or services to accommodate an individual with a disability by calling the City Clerk Department at (602) 262-6557; faxing a request to (602) 495-5847; or calling TTY number (602) 534-2737.