

Meeting Processes and the Simplified Rules of Procedure

City Clerk's Office

March 4, 2024



Principles of the Rules of Procedure: the Rights of Members

- The majority of members have the right to decide
- The minority of members have the right to be heard
- All members have the right to information to help make decisions
- Members have a right to an efficient meeting
- All members have the right to be treated with respect and courtesy
- All members have equal rights, privileges and obligations



Role of the Chair

- Presides at the meetings
- Maintains order and decorum in the meeting
- Makes procedural rulings
- Determines the order of questioning or speaking
- Rules on whether motions are in order
- Determines when all Members who wish to speak have spoken and are ready to vote, and ensures Members understand what they are voting on
- May call, cancel or reschedule meetings

The Vice Chair has all the powers and performs all the duties of the Chair in the Chair's absence

Responsibilities of Members

- Attend scheduled meetings
- Carefully consider and make decisions about meeting business
- Vote on motions put to a vote
- Respecting the Rules of Procedure
- Speak respectfully, listen attentively, and not interrupt the proceedings
- Refrain from using any offensive, disrespectful or unparliamentary language about any member, City Officials or other City employee, or City Council
- Speak only on the matter or motions under discussion
- Respect the confidentiality of matters discussed in closed session and not disclose the subject or substance of these discussions
- Obey the Chair's rulings and Council's decisions

Open Meetings

- All meetings are open to the public
- Advance notice of the meeting and all agenda items must be given
- All consideration and debate of agenda items takes place at the meeting
- Meetings are streamed on-line, during regular business hours
- The Committee may close a meeting to the public if the subject of debate falls under one of the exceptions to the open meeting rules in the City of Toronto Act
- Examples:
 - Personal matters about an identifiable individual, including a city employee or a local board employee
 - Litigation or potential litigation affecting the city

A meeting agenda

- Prepared by the Committee Secretary
- Closes ten business days before meeting
- Published five business days before meeting, and distributed to members (via weblink)
- Is a “live” document once published – revisions are updated in real time

Agenda Items

- Items must be within the Committee's Terms of Reference, and submitted to the Secretary by the agenda closing
- Staff from Clerk's Office and Social Development, Finance and Administration Division, are able to assist you, if you wish to put an item on the agenda

Who can add Items to an Agenda?

- A member of the Advisory Committee
 - City Council
 - A Council Committee
 - A local board of the City
 - A City official
- Every item has a unique identifier
 - Some items are Ward-specific
 - Some items originate with a report or letter
 - Some items have recommendations for the Committee to consider

Order of Business at a Meeting

- The Chair calls the meeting to order once quorum is present
- Confirmation of Minutes
- The Board considers each Item one at a time
- Once the agenda is complete, the Chair adjourns the meeting – no motion required

On Each Item

- Chair identifies the Item
- Presentation from officials (if there is one)
- Public speakers (if there are any)
- Members may ask questions of public speakers
- Members may ask questions of officials
- Members may speak and move motions
- Members vote

How do Council Advisory Bodies give advice?

- Make recommendations to City Officials on matters within their jurisdiction
- Make recommendations to a Council Committee
- Make recommendations to City Council on a matter on the Council agenda
- The Council Advisory Body must make a decision on every agenda item.
- A recommendation that requires action by City Officials or City Council must first be considered by the appropriate Council Committee and, when necessary, approved by City Council.

How are Decisions Made

- The City-School Boards Advisory Committee may, by motion, decide to:
 - **Receive** the item for information
 - **Adopt** the recommendation(s)
 - **Amend** or add new recommendation(s)
 - **Defer** the item to a future meeting
 - **Refer** the item to a specific person or decision body

Motions

- A decision is made by voting on a proposal contained in a motion
- City Clerk's Office staff will assist members with preparing their motions, as required. Please email your motions to sbac@toronto.ca
- Motions are typed and displayed and should be read aloud so that all Members hear and understand the proposal.
- Motions do not need to be seconded.
- The Chair will rule motions which are not within the mandate of the Committee out of order.

Voting

- All Members present must vote (unless prevented by law)
- Majority vote is required to pass a motion
- Motion fails if the vote is tied
- Members may vote by a show of hands or may ask to have the vote recorded in the minutes

Other Meeting Matters

- Quorum
 - The minimum number of members required to be present to conduct business at the meeting
 - In our case: a majority of the total membership
 - Quorum must be present within 30 minutes of the scheduled start time of the meeting
 - If no quorum present, the meeting cannot take place
- Absence
 - Let the Clerk and the Chair know in advance

Minutes & How to Follow Decisions

- Minutes are prepared without note and comment, they include motions, votes, decisions and attendance
- Agendas, Minutes and all meeting information are posted online <http://www.toronto.ca/council>
- Subscribe to e-updates to receive notification about any Council, Committee or Board agendas and minutes <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/e-updates/subscribe.htm>

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