



**NORTHFIELD BOARD/
COMMISSION RULES OF
BUSINESS & MEETING
RULES**

Approved: April 4, 2023

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Meetings:

Meetings of Boards and Commissions are where important business of the City is conducted and where recommendations for the City's future are made. The main objective of Boards and Commissions in the proper conduct of their meetings is to ensure their designated responsibilities and duties related to their public role is conducted in an efficient manner with full opportunity for Board and Commission Members to participate in and communicate their thoughts on agenda items before the Board and Commission. Board and Commission meetings are open to the public pursuant to the Minnesota Open Meeting Law, with only limited exceptions allowed by the Open Meeting Law.

This policy shall apply to all Advisory Boards and Commissions, with the exception to the Charter Commission and Hospital Board. Additionally, the following Boards and Commissions have existing bylaws which unique procedural provisions shall supersede this policy: Economic Development Authority, Environmental Quality Commission, Heritage Preservation Commission, Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Human Rights Commission, Planning Commission, Library Board, Park and Recreation Board, and the Northfield Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention.

The Board and Commission meeting schedule is approved annually by the Board and Commission and remains in effect until changed. Meeting schedules should be adopted by the Board/Commission by December of the preceding year. The majority of the Boards/Commissions meet at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Northfield City Hall, 801 Washington Street, Northfield as per the attached calendar. There may be exceptions to the time and place of Board/Commission meetings and this will be indicated on the calendar at www.northfieldmn.gov. The Board/Commissions typically meet as follows:

- A majority of the meetings start at 6:00 pm;
- The meetings end by 7:30 pm unless a simple majority (4) of the Board/Commission votes to extend the time (exception: Planning Commission limit is 2.5 hours (8:30 pm) prior to motion to extend);
- A majority of the meetings are held in the Council Chambers of the Northfield City Hall, 801 Washington Street, Northfield;
- All Board/Commission meeting dates/times are posted on the calendar at www.northfieldmn.gov.

On occasion a Board or Commission may call a special meeting or adjust the approved meeting schedule. All meetings, whether open to the public or closed, will be posted and noticed as required by the Minnesota Open Meeting Law.

The Rules of Order attached as Appendix "A" will be used as a simplified guideline for Board and Commission meetings. In the event that further guidance is needed, Robert's Rules of Order, most recent edition, will be used. (City Code, Sec. 2-58). The Boards and Commissions shall use these rules in a reasonable and flexible manner with the goal of ensuring that the will of the majority is fulfilled and the rights of the minority are protected.

Work sessions can be used by the Board/Commission to discuss various upcoming issues. Decision items are forwarded to regular Board and Commission meetings for consideration of approval. Work sessions are for discussion by the Board and Commission members and City staff. The Chair or Staff Liaison may arrange a presentation by an individual or group to the Board or Commission at a work session. There is no public comment at work sessions. Work Sessions should only be scheduled by the Staff Liaison with input from the Board/Commission Chair. Remote attendance by Board and Commission members is not permitted. With the City noticing meetings at least 3 days prior to the meeting and the requirement that members must provide the address of the remote location which must be accessible to the public, the Council decided remote attendance at board/commission meetings is not feasible at this time.

Preparation of Board/Commission Meeting Agendas:

The Staff Liaison, in consultation with the Board/Commission Chair, shall prepare the preliminary agenda for each Board/Commission meeting. An agenda may include a "proposed consent agenda." Board and Commission Members may request items listed on the consent agenda be moved to the regular agenda for discussion purposes. No formal vote is required for removal of an item from the consent agenda to the regular agenda. Advance notice of removal is requested to the Board Chair and Staff Liaison by noon on the day immediately prior to the meeting date. The requestor should state whether the item is being removed from consent for purposes of a separate vote only or for purposes of discussion and separate vote. The purpose of this advance notice if discussion is sought is to provide City staff sufficient time to prepare a presentation on the item and to allow City staff to prepare supplemental information and distribute the same where needed. If advance notice is not given, items must be requested to be removed during the approval of the agenda. The Chair determines placement of the removed item(s) on the regular agenda and will note placement prior to approval of the agenda.

As a general rule, items added to the agenda after 12:00 noon on the day prior will not be placed on the consent agenda. Limited exceptions may include routine items. These items are required to be distributed in a supplemental memo no later than noon on the day of the meeting and immediately before the meeting.

Questions:

If the Board or Commission Members would like a written answer from City Staff in response to their questions, questions should be submitted to staff by noon on the day immediately prior to the meeting date. City staff will try to respond to questions by 9 am on the day of the meeting if possible.

City Staff will also work to be prepared to answer questions submitted after the deadline or follow-up on questions at the meeting.

Supplemental memo(s) will be distributed no later than 12 noon on the day of the scheduled meeting. Supplemental memos will be posted on the Board or Commission materials page at

the same time they are distributed to the Board or Commission Members. Paper copies of Supplemental Memos and eComments, if applicable to the Board or Commission, will not be made for Board or Commission unless requested. Requests should be made to the Staff Liaison.

There are two ways a Board/Commission Member can request an item be placed on a future agenda:

1. Submit a request for consideration to the Chair and Staff Liaison ; or
2. Request by two or more Board/Commission Members that an item be placed on an upcoming agenda.

In either case, the Board/Commission Member's request for an item to be placed on a Board/Commission agenda should be in writing, with some background information provided, and submitted a minimum of 11 calendar days prior to the meeting.

Meeting Agenda:

The order of agenda items is as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call/Notification of Quorum
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes
5. Presentations
6. Consent agenda. The purpose of a consent agenda is to allow for routine motions, resolutions (if applicable), and ordinances (if applicable) to be passed with one motion when no discussion is needed. Board or Commission Members may ask questions for clarification of an item. If a Board or Commission Member wants to discuss an item, it should be removed from the consent agenda by advance notice by noon on the day immediately prior to the meeting date to the Chair and staff liaison, or without said prior notice, during the approval of the agenda.
 - o Consent agenda item titles will not be read during the meeting.
 - o Items are approved by one motion unless a Board or Commission Member requests separate action. All items approved by majority vote unless noted.
7. Open Public Comment. Persons may take one opportunity to address the Board or Commission for two (2) minutes (not including interpreter's time) on any topic, even if on the agenda, with the condition that they may not speak on the same item later in the meeting. No notification of the Chair is required. However, speakers are asked to complete a sign up card. Persons wanting a response to a question must submit the question in writing to the recording secretary. Questions must include name and information on how to contact. You may use the back side of the comment cards available in the meeting room. Persons cannot gift their 2 minute speaking time to other members of the public.

Questions will not be responded to during the comment period but will rather be

followed up by staff at a future time. Staff will determine appropriate responses based on whether there is a need for a formal data request, is a policy debate versus a question or simply a question that can be responded to.

For some Boards or Commissions, comments may also be made electronically, if applicable, until 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting through the eComment (electronic comment) system. The comments are available on the City's website as well as in paper form at the meeting for the public.

8. Public Hearings. 6:00 p.m. or at meeting start time as applicable or later (procedure listed below).
9. Regular agenda.
 - Chair Intro/Staff Report
 - Board/Commission Questions
 - Public Comment (See procedural instructions below)
 - Chair Requests Motion/2nd (If action item)
 - Board/Commission Discussion
 - Vote
10. Public Comment Procedural Instructions for Regular Agenda Items: Persons that wish to speak on a regular agenda item must provide name and address by completing & submitting a sign up card. For certain Boards or Commissions, persons may also use the electronic register to speak option on the City's website or contact the staff liaison no later than 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting. For certain boards/commissions, persons may also provide comments through the eComment (electronic comment) system no later than 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting. These comments are sent to the staff liaison when they are submitted through the eComment system. The comments are available on the City's website as well as in paper form at the meeting for the public. The Chair will call up individuals to speak, based on preregistration and cards submitted, after the staff report on an item.

Please be respectful of the public's and the board or commission's time. Members of the public wishing to speak must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Speak only once for no more than two minutes (not including interpreter's time, if applicable) on the topic unless the speaker is addressed by the board or commission;
 - Identify your relationship to the topic;
 - Have a spokesperson or two for your group to present your comments;
 - Persons wanting a response to a question must submit the question in writing to the staff liaison, including name and how you would like to be contacted. You may use the back side of the comment cards available in the meeting room.
 - Questions will not be responded to during the comment period.
 - Persons cannot gift their 2 minute speaking time to other members of the public.
11. Staff updates
 12. Board member and Commissioner reports
The Board members and Commissioners provide updates on board/commission meetings, public comments received, and other items

pertinent to board/commission business.

13. Adjourn.

Board/Commission Packets:

Packets are available electronically at least 3 days prior to the meeting at www.northfieldmn.gov.

Supplemental memo information will be available on the City's website as soon as it is distributed to the Board or Commission.

Any supplemental packet materials received and shared with the Board or Commission at the meeting will be available in paper form at the meeting. Supplemental materials will be posted on the City's website within 48 hours after the meeting.

Public Hearing Procedure:

A Public Hearing is used by certain Boards/Commissions to solicit the public's comments on various projects or issues as authorized for the board or commission by their enabling authority provided in charter, state law, city code or City Council enabling resolution.

- A. The Chair will open the hearing by identifying the subject.
- B. Staff Presentation- staff will give a presentation on the subject.
- C. Applicant's Presentation- if needed.
- D. Public Input- The public will have the opportunity to speak for or against the issue. The public may ask questions, make comments, voice support, agree or disagree with the issue.
 - 1. The Chair will recognize a speaker at the podium and comments/conversation will be between the Chair and speaker; and between the Chair and Board/Commission Members.
 - 2. At the podium the speaker must give their name, address, and if representing a business, must give the name of the business or corporation. If an Attorney or consultant is representing a client, the client must be identified for the record.
 - 3. Speakers will be allowed to speak a maximum of two (2) minutes per item (not including interpreter's time, if applicable).
 - 4. Speakers who have material to be handed out to the Board/Commission Members will pass the material to the Staff Liaison. The Staff Liaison will then pass the information to the appropriate people. A minimum of twelve (12) copies are needed.
 - 5. Persons cannot gift their 2 minute speaking time to other members of the public.
- E. Questions or Clarifications from Board/Commission – After the public input of the public hearing is completed, the Board/Commission may request questions or clarifications prior to closing the public hearing. This section will be used when there are questions related to the topic on which the public hearing is being held. Questions should be succinct and avoid being rhetorical or leading in nature. Subsequent actions of the Board/Commission provide for opportunities for further questions or clarifications from the Board/Commission.

- F. Any material to be entered into the record shall be noted. Any written communication presented to the Board/Commission during a meeting shall be simply delivered to the Board/Commission and not publically read at the meeting. They shall then be recorded in the minutes by title and filed with the minutes in the office of the Board/Commission liaison.
- G. Motion to Close Hearing- The Chair will state if there is an extension of time for public input into the hearing. If not, the Board/Commission will make a motion, second, and vote on closing the public hearing. Following the public hearing, the Board/Commission members shall deliberate and vote on the matter.

Board/Commission Recognition of Citizens/Groups/Events

Proclamations will be in the form of a resolution, acted on by motion with majority approval and submitted to the City Council as a recommendation for consideration and approval.

Individual Boards/Commissions should not initiating and approving proclamations on their own.

Citizen Participation:

Board/Commissions invite the public to express their views and comments on issues with the Board/Commission agenda items through the following ways:

- Open public comment at Board and Commission meetings
- eComment through the City's website on agenda items, if applicable for Board/Commission
- Meetings of various Boards or Commissions
- Phone calls, e-mails, letters and/or visits with Board and Commission Members or City Staff.
- Public comment via electronic video/audio as provided during a health pandemic or other public emergency in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 13D.021, as applicable.

Mic Etiquette for Board/Commission Members and Citizen Participation

- Mute your microphone when you are not speaking. This is to help keep the background noise to a minimum.
- Be mindful of background noise. Also, be mindful during the meeting if someone else is talking and their microphone is muted, alert them that they are muted and ask them to unmute themselves.
- Position your microphone in a comfortable position (6-12 inches away from your mouth) and remember to speak towards the microphone when speaking.
- When speaking into the microphone, speak at a normal volume.

AV Protocol for Breaks

When the Board/Commission calls for a break Meeting Associate will do the following:

- Mute all microphones during the break.
- Unmute Chair's microphone in preparation for calling meeting back to order.

Capacity of Council Chambers

The Council Chambers will be set up not to exceed the legal occupancy as set by the Building Official. The room set up will take into account all current Minnesota Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines in place. If needed, additional conference room space will be available for seating showing the live stream of the meeting for the public to view.

Minutes

The minutes of a board/commission are not a transcription of the proceedings of the meeting, but capture the actions taken during a meeting. The City of Northfield has a data practices policy that requires permanent retention of all recorded public meetings as of January 1, 2023 that are made that can serve as additional reference of the full board/commission meeting.

Minutes will include:

- a) Time and place of the meeting
- b) Members present
- c) Summary of all decisions made
- d) Who moved and seconded each item
- e) Who voted for and against each item
- f) Names of all persons other than members who spoke at the meeting, and subject on which they spoke

Board/Commission meetings which are informal in nature e.g. strategic planning sessions, retreats, special topic discussion, etc., are not generally recorded. However, minutes including a summary of meeting purpose/items discussed, Board/Commission attendance, time, date, and location will be kept and filed with the Staff Liaison.

Live Stream/Recording

Regular meetings, work sessions, and special Board/Commission meetings are intended to be live streamed as practical and recorded, if held at City Hall in the Council Chambers. Off-site meetings are not recorded, however may be on an as-needed staff basis.

Role of the City Attorney related to Boards/Commissions.

Staff Liaisons will make direct contact with the City Attorney on matters that need to be reviewed or when an opinion is requested from the City Attorney when authorized by City Administration. Contracts, Resolutions, Ordinances and other items will be reviewed by the City Attorney as requested by City Administration. Individual Board/Commission members will not contact the City Attorney directly.

Role of Staff Liaison related to Board/Commission members

A city staff member(s) will be assigned by the City Administrator to assist boards and commissions with their work as a staff liaison. Board/Commission Members may not direct the

tasks of the Staff Liaisons but can request assistance to complete initiatives. The duties of the staff liaison include, but are not limited to:

- Setting the meeting agenda with input from the Chair.
- Preparing for meetings by reserving meeting rooms, setting up meeting rooms as needed, and coordinating with Communication/IT regarding A/V needs.
- Advising board and commission officers and members of proper parliamentary procedures.
- Recording and preparing meeting minutes (or delegate the responsibility to another city staff member).
- Editing meeting videos, if applicable (or delegating the responsibility to another city staff member).
- Providing technical expertise and/or ensuring other staff members are brought in when needed.
- Preparing staff reports/background memos for agenda items.
- Drafting resolutions and ordinances and ensuring review and approval by the city attorney.
- Present staff reports at meetings and provide background information for other agenda items.
- Serving as a bridge between the City Council and the Board/Commission by communicating information and directives.
- Responding to board or commission inquiries or constituent concerns in a timely manner or forward on as necessary.
- Providing orientation material to newly appointed members.

Board/Commission staff liaisons shall cause notice of meetings, agendas, minutes and related materials to be posted on the City’s website and preserved according to City procedures.

Questions related to Board/Commission agenda items (either e-mail or via telephone) should be directed to the staff liaison.

Seating Assignments

Board/Commission seating shall be determined as follows:

- The Chair of the Board/Commission should be seated in the center of the dais. The Chair and staff liaison will determine the remainder of the seating chart. This arrangement will remain throughout the year. Only voting members, including youth voting members, are seated at the dais. All other non-voting members should be seated on the staff side of the dais as room allows.

Boards/Commissions – Council Liaisons or Ex-Officio Members

Where discussions are being held with an organization, board or commission to which a City Council Member has been appointed as the City liaison or ex-officio, the City Council Member will be kept informed of these discussions. Unless otherwise provided by charter, state law, city

code or City Council enabling resolution, as applicable, the Council liaison attends the meeting to facilitate a close working relationship, but is not a formal member of the board/commission. However, an ex-officio City Councilor shall be a non-voting fully participating member unless otherwise provided by the appointment to a board or commission pursuant to the governing charter, state law, city code or City Council enabling resolution, as applicable.

Governing Law

Boards and Commissions shall operate and exercise their respective duties in accordance with Northfield Code, Chapter 2 – Administration, Article VI. – Boards and Commissions, Division 1 and their governing authority as contained in charter, state law, city code or City Council enabling resolution, as applicable.

Updates to Rules

These rules will be reviewed periodically by the City Council and may only be updated by the City Council.

Rules of Order

Preamble

- a. Purpose. The purpose of these rules is to foster debate and discussion in an orderly manner, not to suppress honest discussion with excessive formality. Without rules, confusion and disorderly proceedings would hamper all City action, no matter how well intended. Rules allow City business to be conducted as efficiently as possible, protect minority groups by giving every person a chance to be heard, prevent discussion of multiple topics at once, and allow decisions to be made by majority rule.
- b. Rights of the City Council and/or Board/Commission members. All City Council Members and/or Board/Commission members are equal and have the same rights to make motions; object to motions in a timely manner; participate in debate; have their votes counted; and speak, when recognized, free of interruption.
- c. Obligations of the City Council and/or Board/Commission members.
 1. The rights of individual City Council Members and/or Board/Commission members cannot be realized unless all City Council Members and/or Board/Commission members also recognize their obligations as members of their respective body. City Council Members and/or Board/Commission members are obligated to receive the recognition of the chair before speaking, except as otherwise provided by these rules and consistent with applicable ordinances. No one has the right to speak at whim. City Council Members and/or Board/Commission members are obligated to speak directly on the subject being considered and observe time limits for comment. Finally, City Council Members and/or Board/Commission members are obligated to address all remarks to the presiding officer, avoid personal attacks, and refrain from using any insulting or demeaning language or indecent or threatening behavior.
 2. Inherent in the duties of holding public office and/or appointment to a Board/Commission is participation in meetings and that includes voting. City Council Members and/or Board/Commission members have a general duty and obligation by virtue of holding public office and/or appointment to vote on business that comes before their respective body, unless a City Council Member and/or Board/Commission member has a disqualifying conflict of interest or other conflict of interest, which either requires abstention or for which the City Council Member and/or Board/Commission member desires to abstain, for example, in order to avoid the appearance of impropriety.
 - i. While a City Council Member and/or Board/Commission member has a duty to vote on matters before their respective body, a City Council Member and/or Board/Commission member cannot be compelled to vote on such a matter, and a City Council Member and/or Board/Commission member should not vote on a matter

upon which the City Council Member and/or Board/Commission member has a disqualifying conflict of interest.

- ii. City Council Members and/or Board/Commission members who have a disqualifying conflict of interest are generally excluded when counting the number of votes needed to approve an action by a supermajority vote. Although City Council Members and/or Board/Commission members may be tempted to abstain from voting on a controversial matter, they should remember that the abstention will ultimately tend to pass or defeat the matter. The best advice is to avoid the kinds of problems that can arise from abstentions and vote, unless an abstention is required because a City Council Member and/or Board/Commission member has a personal interest in the matter or some other disqualifying conflict of interest.
- iii. If any City Council Member and/or Board/Commission member, being present, chooses not to vote, the City Council Member and/or Board/Commission member shall verbally state "Present - Not Voting" and the minutes shall reflect this action.

Rule 1. Motions.

All formal actions of City Council and/or Board/Commissions must be by motion. A City Council Member and/or Board/Commission member may make only one motion at a time.

Rule 2. Language for making a motion.

The appropriate language for making a motion shall be substantially similar to "I move to _____."

Rule 3. Procedure for consideration of a motion.

A motion must be seconded. Once a motion has been made and seconded, the presiding officer shall restate the motion and (if applicable) open the motion up for debate, provided that the presiding officer determines that the motion is in order and no objections to the motion have been made pursuant to Rule 4. A motion is in order if it is made at a proper time in the proper format and does not violate any applicable rules of law, charter, ordinance, or City policy, including City policies on decorum and civility, and is not made for the purpose of unduly delaying the proceedings. Debate shall follow the procedures in Rule 5. Once debate has concluded, the presiding officer shall restate the motion and call for a vote on the issue. A motion shall be considered passed if it receives a majority vote of those present at the meeting, unless otherwise required by law. A resolution or ordinance shall be considered passed if it receives a majority vote of all City Council Members and/or Board/Commission members (4), unless otherwise required by law.

Rule 4. Objections to a motion.

- a. Any member of the City Council and/or Board/Commission may make an objection to a motion if the objector believes the motion is not in order. A motion is in order if it is made at a proper time, in the proper format and does not violate any applicable rules of law, charter, ordinance, or City policy, including City policies on decorum and civility, and is not made for the purpose of unduly delaying the proceedings.

- b. An objection to a motion must be made immediately following the motion and at no other time. The objector does not need to be recognized by the presiding officer in order to voice their objection. The appropriate language for making an objection shall be substantially similar to “I object to the motion as being out of order, and call for a ruling by the presiding officer.”
- c. A motion may be objected to as not being made at a proper time if the motion was made by a person not called upon by the presiding officer to speak, or if it does not follow the agreed upon agenda for the meeting.
- d. The presiding officer shall determine whether the motion is in order.
- e. In determining whether the motion is in order, the presiding officer shall let the objector to the motion speak once explaining the objector’s position. Next, the presiding officer shall let the maker of the motion speak once to answer the concerns of the objector. Then the presiding officer shall make a formal ruling as to whether the motion was in order.
- f. If the motion is ruled out of order, the motion shall not be considered. If the motion is ruled in order, the presiding officer shall open the motion for debate (if applicable).
- g. The presiding officer’s ruling may be appealed as provided in Rule 7.

Rule 5. Debate.

Generally only one motion may be considered at a time in debate. Once a motion has been made, the presiding officer shall restate the motion and open the motion for debate, if the motion is debatable. The presiding officer shall conduct the debate in accordance with the following:

- a. For initial comments, all comments shall be limited to five (5) minutes. For subsequent comments, all comments shall be limited to two (2) minutes.
- b. The maker of the motion shall be permitted to speak first on the issue.
- c. Everyone who wishes to speak on the issue must be permitted to speak once, before City Council Members and/or Board/Commission members who have already spoken are permitted to speak again.
- d. City Council Members and/or Board/Commission members shall avoid repeating points already made in the debate or other duplicative conduct that may delay the proceedings. Where a point has already been made, City Council Members and/or Board/Commission members may affirm agreement or disagreement.
- e. Generally only one motion may be considered at a time in debate. Debate may only be interrupted by a motion to:
 - 1. amend the original motion,
 - 2. take a brief recess,
 - 3. withdraw the motion by the motion’s maker,

4. divide a complex question,
5. defer consideration to a later date,
6. refer an issue to committee,
7. motion for the previous question,
8. limit debate,
9. for a point of order.
10. When debate is interrupted by any of these motions, the interrupting motion shall be resolved prior to resuming debate.

Rule 6. Definitions of motions that may interrupt debate (secondary motions).

As explained in Rule 5, only certain motions may interrupt debate on a motion. These are called secondary motions. When a secondary motion is made, the presiding officer must follow the same procedures in Rule 3 to consider the secondary motion. A secondary motion must be resolved, either by being ruled out of order by the presiding officer or debated and voted upon by the City Council and/or Board/Commission members, before debate on the main motion can resume. Secondary motions may also be made outside of debate, where appropriate. For example, a motion to take a brief recess can be made before, during, or after a debate.

- a. Motion to amend the original motion. The maker of the motion does not need to consent to a motion to amend. However, the maker of the motion may vote against the amendment or withdraw their motion via a motion to withdraw prior to any amendment being approved.
 1. Only two amendments may be made to an original motion to avoid confusion.
 2. The amendments should be voted on in reverse order, with the last amendment being voted upon first.
 3. To avoid confusion, complex language should be put in writing.
 4. A motion may not be amended so substantially as to essentially reject the original motion, though different language may be proposed so as to entirely substitute for the original language.

The appropriate language for making a motion to amend shall be substantially similar to “I move to amend the motion by inserting between . . . and . . .” or “I move to amend the motion by adding after . . .” or “I move to amend the motion by striking out . . .” or “I move to amend the motion by striking out . . . and inserting . . .” or “I move to amend by striking out the motion . . . and substituting the following.”

- b. Motion to take a brief recess is not a motion to adjourn or continue the meeting to another time or place. Instead, it is a motion to take a brief respite no greater than 20 minutes. If a motion to take a brief recess is granted, the presiding officer may set a time for the meeting to resume. In addition, the presiding officer is authorized to call for a brief recess on the presiding officer’s own initiative, without a vote, to maintain order in the meeting.

The appropriate language for making a motion to recess shall be substantially similar to “I move to take a brief recess for ____ minutes.”

- c. Motion to withdraw a motion is not subject to debate, and it can only be made by the motion’s maker before a motion is amended.

The appropriate language for making a motion to withdraw shall be substantially similar to “I move to withdraw my motion.”

- d. Motion to divide a complex question may be used for complex items of business. It allows the City Council to break larger questions into smaller parts, which are considered separately.

The appropriate language for making a motion to divide a complex question shall be substantially similar to “I move to divide the question into ___ parts. Part 1 shall be ____.. Part 2 shall be ____.

- e. Motion to table or defer consideration to a later date is not subject to debate. It may be used to defer or delay consideration of a matter.

The appropriate language for making a motion to defer consideration shall be substantially similar to “I move to defer consideration of the main motion/this item until _____.”

- f. Motion to refer an issue to committee is not subject to debate. It may be used to refer an issue to a City committee, such as the park board or planning commission, for their report. The motion should contain an expected receipt day for the report.

The appropriate language for making a motion to refer an issue shall be substantially similar to “I move to refer the main motion/this issue to the ___ committee for its consideration and recommendation. The committee should report back to the City Council in ___ days/weeks.”

- g. Motion for call of the previous question is not subject to debate. It may be used only after at all members of the City Council and/or Board/Commission have been permitted to speak at least once on the motion. If approved by a super majority (5 of 7), a vote must be taken on the motion under debate immediately. Vote required –super majority (5 of 7).

The appropriate language for making a motion to call the previous question shall be substantially similar to “I move to call the previous question” or “I move for an immediate vote on this issue.”

- h. Motion to limit debate is not subject to debate. It may be used to establish time limits for debate.

The appropriate language for making a motion to limit debate shall be substantially similar to “I move to limit debate on this issue to ___ minutes per person” or “I move to limit City Council and/or Board/Commission debate on this issue to no more than _____ minutes total.” Vote required –super majority (5 of 7).

- i. Motion for a point of order is not subject to debate. It may be used to signal to the presiding officer that the Council Member and/or Board/Commission member feels the proceedings have gotten disorderly.

The appropriate language for making a motion for a point of order shall be substantially similar to “I move for a point of order by the presiding officer.”

NOTE: Most secondary motions should not literally interrupt debate. They may not be made in the midst of the comments of a speaker duly recognized by the presiding officer, or silence the speaker’s speech. To make a secondary motion, the maker must be called upon and recognized by the presiding officer. There are two exceptions to this rule—a motion for a call of the previous question and a motion for a point of order. These motions may be made at any time—even in a manner that interrupts a speaker. However, these motions should be made only in the rare instance where a meeting has become out of control, strayed from the agenda, or become disorderly.

Rule 7. Appealing procedural decisions of the presiding officer.

- a. Any member of the City Council and/or Board/Commission may appeal to the full City Council a ruling on order or procedure made by the presiding officer.
- b. Procedure for appeals. An appeal is made by motion. A second is needed for the motion. The member making the motion may speak once solely on the question involved, and the presiding officer may speak once solely to explain the presiding officer’s ruling, but no other City Council Member and/or Board/Commission member may participate in the discussion. Note: This procedure matches City Code Sec. 2-58(c) pertaining to City Council.
- c. Once both the maker of the motion and the presiding officer have spoken, the matter must be voted upon by the City Council and/or Board/Commission as a whole.
- d. The appeal shall be sustained if it is approved by a majority of the members present, exclusive of the presiding officer.

Rule 8. Other special motions explained.

- a. Motion to adjourn is not subject to debate. It may be used to suggest a conclusion to the meeting. The presiding officer may adjourn a meeting on the presiding officer’s own initiative, without a vote, if necessary to maintain order.

The appropriate language for making a motion to adjourn shall be substantially similar to “I move to adjourn the meeting.”

- b. Motion to go into closed session may be used to close the meeting pursuant to the Minnesota Open Meeting Law. When the motion is made, the basis for closing the meeting and the applicable law must be stated into the record. The presiding officer may also close the meeting on the presiding officer’s own initiative, without a City Council and/or Board/Commission vote, if closing the meeting is mandatory under the law or if directed by the City Attorney.

The appropriate language for making a motion to go into closed session shall be substantially similar to “I move to close the meeting in order to consider _____ pursuant to _____ of the Minnesota Open Meeting Law.”

- c. Motion to leave a closed session may be used to conclude a closed session and return to an open meeting.

The appropriate language for making a motion to leave a closed session shall be substantially similar to “I move to open the meeting.”

- d. Motion to revive consideration of an issue may be used to request consideration of an issue previously tabled, deferred, or referred to committee at any prior meeting.

The appropriate language for making a motion to revive shall be substantially similar to “I move to revive consideration of _____ previously tabled/deferred/referred to committee.”

- e. Motion to reconsider may be made only at the same meeting where the issue was originally considered and voted upon. It may be made only by a person on the prevailing side of an issue. In the event of a tie vote, those voting against the issue shall be considered the prevailing side.

The appropriate language for making a motion to reconsider shall be substantially similar to “I move to reconsider _____.”

- f. Motion to rescind or repeal may be made at any meeting following the meeting where the issue was originally considered and voted upon. It may be made by any City Council Member and/or Board/Commission member, whether or not the maker was on the prevailing side. It may not be made when prevented by law or where substantial reliance on the City Council’s and/or Board/Commission’s previous decision has occurred (for example, in the area of contracts or hiring/termination of employees).

The appropriate language for making a motion to reconsider shall be substantially similar to “I move to rescind/repeal the City Council’s and/or Board/Commission’s previous action related to _____ as stated in resolution number _____.”

- g. Motion to prevent reintroduction of an issue for _____ months is not subject to debate. It may be used to limit discussion of an issue that has been raised and/or moved for reconsideration several previous times.

The appropriate language for making a motion to prevent reintroduction shall be substantially similar to “I move to prevent reintroduction of this issue for _____ months.”

- h. Motion to suspend the rules or to consider a motion informally should be used sparingly on issues likely to be uncontroversial. Complex motions and resolutions should still be put in writing. This motion may permit informal discussion of an issue (such as a roundtable discussion, brainstorming session, visioning session, etc.) where appropriate.

The appropriate language for making a motion to proceed informally shall be substantially similar to “I move that we suspend the rules and proceed informally in discussing the issue of _____.” Vote required –super majority (5 of 7).

Rule 9. Robert's Rules.

These model rules are designed specifically for Minnesota City Councils. Further, these rules were drafted to be an appropriate level of regulation and formality for smaller governing bodies typically seen in Minnesota cities. Robert's Rules of Order will be used in the event that further guidance is needed. Where a situation arises that is not addressed by these rules, the intent of these rules, as expressed in the preamble, should be effectuated by the presiding officer, in consultation with the City Attorney.



Rules of Decorum

City meetings are for the primary purpose of considering action on matters pertaining to City business, public interest, the operation of the City, and the provision of City services. City meetings on important community issues may at times become contentious. Establishing rules of decorum to govern the conduct of all persons attending and/or participating in such meetings is in the public interest and helps to ensure orderly and respectful meetings as well as the safety of attendees and participants. On occasion, however, members of the City Council, Board/Commission, public and/or staff may not follow the rules. On these occasions, the presiding officer's role is particularly important. The presiding officer shall be responsible for maintaining order and decorum of such meetings. All councilmembers, as well as members of committees, boards and commissions, as applicable, shall assist the presiding officer in preserving order and decorum at meetings and in providing for the efficient and orderly operation of meetings. The following rules of decorum shall apply to all persons attending and/or participating in a meeting, unless otherwise expressly noted. The following rules of decorum shall also apply to all persons attending and/or participating in a meeting of any City Council committee, and/or board or commission established by the City.

1. City Council and/or Board/Commission meetings shall be conducted in a courteous manner that recognizes the validity of differing points of view and promotes the ideal of democratic discussion and debate free of insult, slander, and personal attacks and threats.
2. Participants shall conduct themselves at City Council and/or Board/Commission meetings in a manner consistent with the following:
 - a. No person shall engage in conduct which delays or interrupts the proceedings.
 - b. No person shall hinder honest, respectful discussion and debate.
 - c. No City Council member or Board/Commission Member shall engage in private conversation or pass private messages while in the chamber in a manner so as to interrupt the proceedings of the City Council or Board/Commission.
 - d. In keeping with the intent of the Minnesota Open Meeting Law, the City Council and/or Board/Commissions shall not use any form of electronic communications technology, such as sending or receiving text messages or e-mail, to communicate with one another or third parties about the business of the meeting during a public meeting.
 - e. No person shall leave his or her seat or make any noise of disturbance while a vote is being taken and until the result of the vote is announced.
 - f. No person shall use profane or obscene words or unparliamentary language or use language that threatens harm or violence toward another person during a City Council and/or Board/Commission meeting.
 - g. No person shall use dismissive body language (i.e. eye rolling, gestures, turning back to speaker, etc.)
 - h. No person shall speak on any subject other than the subject in debate.

- i. No person shall ask rhetorical or leading questions during City Council and/or Board/Commission question period. Questions of clarification should be succinct.
- j. No person shall speak without being recognized by the chair; nor shall any person interrupt the speech of another person, except where permitted to raise a point of order.
- k. No person shall disobey the City Council Rules of Order and Procedure or a decision of the presiding officer on questions of order or practice or upon the interpretation of the rules of council.
- l. No person shall engage in disorderly conduct that interferes with the effective orderly conduct of any meeting by failing to comply with these rules of decorum or otherwise disrupting or impeding the meeting, where the interference is solely caused by the conduct of the person and not the content of the person's expression. Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, audible demonstrations of approval or disapproval; cheering or shouting; vulgar, profane, threatening, obscene, abusive, or disruptive conduct or unprotected speech; whistling, clapping, or stamping of feet; or, holding, displaying, or placing banners, signs, objects, or other materials in any way that endangers the safety of others, prevents the free flow of individuals within the meeting room or the ingress or egress from the meeting room or any emergency exits thereto, or otherwise obstructs or prevents the viewing of the meeting by other persons in attendance.
- m. All cell phones and other electronic devices shall be silenced during meetings.
- n. Persons should be addressed by use of title and/or last name.

Enforcing decorum:

When a person, attendee or participant violate the above rules of order and decorum, the presiding officer is authorized to take any one or more of the following actions:

- Not recognize a violating or breaching person's, attendee's or participant's request to speak, or limiting their role in debate or comment, as applicable, until decorum is observed.
- Declare the person's, attendee's or participant's actions out of order.
- Temporarily recess the meeting until order is restored.
- Issue the person, attendee or participant a verbal warning and/or directive that the person, attendee or participant is out of order and shall follow the rules of order and decorum, be silent unless recognized to speak and/or immediately cease such conduct.
- If after issuance of a verbal warning as provided above, the person, attendee or participant continues to engage in prohibited conduct or otherwise fails to comply with the presiding officer's warning, the presiding officer may further direct or order the person, attendee or participant to immediately leave the meeting.
- If the person, attendee or participant so ordered as provided above does not immediately abide by the presiding officer's order or directive by leaving the meeting, and/or the person, attendee or participant continues such prohibited conduct, the presiding officer may direct any law enforcement officer to remove the person from the meeting

Members of the council and/or Board/Commission may request action by the presiding officer to curb another member's conduct through a motion for a point of order. The motion may request a specific

response to conduct by the presiding officer. For example, “I make a motion for the presiding officer to call Councilmember and/or Board/Commission Member _____ to order and to desist from making personal attacks.” Any member of the Council and/or Board/Commission may appeal to the full council and/or Board/Commission a ruling on order or procedure made by the presiding officer. The procedure is noted in Rule 7 of the Council Rules of Order.

Members may make a motion for adjournment or for a brief recess, if a participant’s actions are so offensive as to disrupt the orderly process of the meeting.

Generally any councilmember and/or Board/Commission Member (including the mayor and/or chair), may make a motion to censure a City Council member and/or Board/Commission member for conduct that breaches decorum. A censure often takes the form of a resolution adopted by City Council vote noting the member’s conduct and expressing disapproval of such conduct.

State law and City Code also prohibits persons, including City Council members and/or Board/Commission members, from disturbing public meetings, through fighting or threatening words and conduct. Persons or City Council members and/or Board/Commission members who engage in this unlawful conduct may be charged with a misdemeanor.

These rules of decorum shall be available in the City Council Chambers.



Public Participation Guide

The Northfield City Council invites the public to express their views and comments on issues with the City Council through the following ways:

- Public comment times at City Council meetings
- eComment through the City’s website on agenda items
- Meetings of various Boards or Commissions
- Phone calls, e-mails, letters and/or visits with the City Council and/or City Staff.
- Public comment via electronic video/audio as provided for during hybrid City Council Meetings with interactive technology. (City Council meetings only)
- Public comment via electronic video/audio as provided during a health pandemic or other public emergency in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 13D.021. (City Council meetings only)

City Council Meetings:

Meetings of the City Council are where the business of the City is conducted and vital decisions for the City’s future are made. The main objective of the City Council in the proper conduct of its meetings is to ensure the public’s business is conducted in an efficient manner with full opportunity for the City Council to communicate their thoughts on the agenda items before the City Council. City Council meetings are open to the public pursuant to the Minnesota Open Meeting Law. While City Council meetings are open to the public, opportunities for the public to participate in meetings are limited as provided in the publicly noticed meeting agenda as outlined in summary below.

The City Council has also adopted Rules of Decorum (copy attached) for City Council Meetings. The rules of decorum apply to all persons attending and/or participating in a meeting unless expressly noted. When persons, attendees and/or participants violate the adopted rules of order and decorum, the presiding officer is authorized to:

- Not recognize a violating or breaching person’s, attendee’s or participant’s request to speak, as applicable, until decorum is observed.
- Declare the person’s, attendee’s or participant’s actions out of order.
- Temporarily recess the meeting until order is restored.
- Issue the person, attendee or participant a verbal warning and/or directive that the person, attendee or participant is out of order and shall follow the rules of order and decorum, be silent unless recognized to speak and/or immediately cease such conduct.

- If after issuance of a verbal warning as provided above, the person, attendee or participant continues to engage in prohibited conduct or otherwise fails to comply with the presiding officer's warning, the presiding officer may further direct or order the person, attendee or participant to immediately leave the meeting.
- If the person, attendee or participant so ordered as provided above does not immediately abide by the presiding officer's order or directive by leaving the meeting, and/or the person, attendee or participant continues such prohibited conduct, the presiding officer may direct any law enforcement officer to remove the person from the meeting.

The City Council meets:

- The first and third Tuesday of each month in regular session;
- The second Tuesday of the month in a work session;
- 6:00 – 9:00 pm;
- Council Chambers of the Northfield City Hall, 801 Washington Street, Northfield;

Citizens requesting items for an agenda may contact their elected representative or city staff to have their request considered.

The use of cameras, video, and other recording devices, is permitted during City Council meetings. However, these devices must be used in an unobtrusive manner that does not disrupt or delay the meeting. Cell phones and other devices must be silenced during meetings.

City Council Meeting Agendas/Opportunities to Speak at a Meeting:

The typical order of agenda items is as follows:

1. **Call to Order/Roll Call/Notification of Quorum**
2. **Approval of Agenda**
3. **Approval of Minutes**
4. **Presentations**
5. **Consent agenda**
6. **Open Public Comment.** Persons may take one opportunity to address the City Council for two (2) minutes (not including interpreter's time) on any topic, even if on the agenda, with the condition that they may not speak on the same item later in the meeting. No notification of the Mayor is required. However, speakers are asked to complete a sign up card. Persons wanting a response to a question must submit the question in writing to the recording secretary. Questions must include name and information on how to contact. You may use the back side of the comment cards available in the meeting room. Persons cannot gift their 2 minute speaking time to other members of the public.
 - o Questions will not be responded to during the comment period but will rather be followed up by staff at a future time. Staff will determine appropriate responses based on whether there is a need for a formal data request, is a policy debate versus a question or simply a question that can be responded to.

Comments may also be made electronically until 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting through the eComment (electronic comment) system. These comments are automatically sent to the Council when they are submitted through the eComment system. The comments are available on the City's website as well as in paper form at the meeting for the public.

7. **Public Hearings** – 6:00 p.m. or later (procedure listed below).
8. **Regular agenda.** Persons that wish to speak on a regular agenda item must provide name and address by completing & submitting a sign up card. Persons may also use the electronic register to speak

option on the City's website or contact the City Clerk no later than 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting. Persons may also provide comments through the eComment (electronic comment) system no later than 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting. These comments are automatically sent to the Council when they are submitted through the eComment system. The comments are available on the City's website as well as in paper form at the meeting for the public. The Mayor will call up individuals to speak, based on preregistration and cards submitted, after the staff report on an item. Please be respectful of the public's and the City Council's time. Members of the public wishing to speak must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Speak only once for no more than two minutes (not including interpreter's time) on the topic unless the speaker is addressed by the City Council;
- Identify your relationship to the topic;
- Have a spokesperson or two for your group to present your comments;
- Persons wanting a response to a question must submit the question in writing to the City Clerk, including name and how you would like to be contacted. . You may use the back side of the comment cards available in the meeting room.
- Questions will not be responded to during the comment period.
- Persons cannot gift their 2 minute speaking time to other members of the public.

9. City Administrator update

10. Mayor & Council reports

11. Adjourn.

Public Hearing Procedure:

A Public Hearing is used by the City Council to solicit the public's comments on various projects or city operation procedures.

- A. The Chair will open the hearing by identifying the subject.
- B. Staff Presentation- staff will give a presentation on the subject.
- C. Applicant's Presentation- if needed.
- D. Public Input- The public will have the opportunity to speak for or against the issue. The public may ask questions, make comments, voice support, agree or disagree with the issue.
 1. The Chair will recognize a speaker at the podium and comments/conversation will be between the Chair and speaker; and between the Chair and Council Members.
 2. At the podium the speaker must give their name, address, and if representing a business, must give the name of the business or corporation. If an Attorney or consultant is representing a client, the client must be identified for the record.
 3. Speakers will be allowed to speak a maximum of two (2) minutes per item (not including interpreter's time, if applicable).
 4. Speakers who have material to be handed out to the City Council Members will pass the material to the City Administrator. The City Administrator will then pass the information to the appropriate people. A minimum of twelve (12) copies are needed.
 5. Persons cannot gift their 2 minute speaking time to other members of the public.
- E. Questions or Clarifications from City Council – After the public input of the public hearing is completed, the City Council may request questions or clarifications prior to closing the public hearing. This section will be used when there are questions related to the topic on which the public hearing is being held.
- F. Any material to be entered into the record shall be noted. Any written communication presented to the City Council during a City Council meeting shall be read into the record or summarized for the record or simply delivered to the City Council, as the City Council may determine. They shall then be recorded in the minutes by title and filed with the minutes in the office of the city clerk.

- G. Motion to Close Hearing- the Chair will state if there is an extension of time for public input into the hearing. If not, the public hearing will be adjourned.

Assessment Hearing Procedures:

Assessment Hearings are similar to the Public Hearing procedure except written notice of objection pertaining to your assessment is required prior to adjournment of the public hearing.

Mic Etiquette for Citizen Participation

- Mute your microphone when you are not speaking. This is to help keep the background noise to a minimum.
- Be mindful of background noise. Also, be mindful during the meeting if someone else is talking and their microphone is muted, alert them that they are muted and ask them to unmute themselves.
- Position your microphone in a comfortable position (6-12 inches away from your mouth) and remember to speak towards the microphone when speaking.
- When speaking into the microphone, speak at a normal volume.

Documents/Recordings

A complete City Council packet is typically available at City Hall and on the City's website www.northfieldmn.gov by noon on the Friday prior to a City Council meeting for the public to review. A complete paper packet is also placed in the Council Chambers prior to a City Council meeting for the public to review. A meeting notice list and agenda are posted on the bulletin board outside the Council Chambers located at City Hall.

Regular meetings, work sessions, and special City Council meetings are live streamed and recorded, if held at City Hall in the Council Chambers. Recordings, official records, and documents are available on the City's website www.northfieldmn.gov.

City Council Work Session:

The work session is used by the City Council to discuss various upcoming issues. Decision items are forwarded to regular City Council meetings for consideration of approval. Work sessions are for discussion by the Mayor and City Council and City staff. The Mayor or City Administrator may arrange a presentation by an individual or group to the City Council at a work session. There is no public comment at work sessions.

Please watch for publications on the City's Website (www.northfieldmn.gov) for any changes in date and times of meetings and work sessions.

Please contact the City Administration Office if you need special accommodations related to a disability while attending the City Council meeting.

**Board/Commission Rules of Business
Timelines Chart**

Item	Deadline*
Request to add item to an upcoming agenda	11 calendar days prior to meeting
Removal of Items from Consent Agenda*	12:00 Noon day prior to meeting
Question Deadline for written responses	12:00 Noon day prior to meeting
Supplemental Memo(s) Distributed**	12:00 Noon day prior to meeting
Meeting packets available electronically	Three (3) days prior to meeting
eComment Closes (if applicable)	12:00 Noon day of meeting
Information handed out at meetings uploaded to website	48 hours following meeting

*If advance notice is not given, items must be removed during agenda approval.

** Supplemental Memo information will be posted on the website following distribution to Board/Commission.