

# **Rules of Procedure**

## **Town Of Beaufort Board of Commissioners**

### **Part I. Applicability**

#### **Rule 1. Applicability of Rules**

These rules apply to all meetings of the Town of Beaufort Board of Commissioners.<sup>1</sup> For purposes of these rules, a meeting of the Board occurs whenever a majority of the Board's members gather, whether in person or simultaneously by electronic means, to conduct hearings, deliberate, vote, or otherwise transact public business within the Board's real or apparent jurisdiction. The term "majority" as used here and elsewhere in these rules means, unless otherwise specified, a simple majority, that is, more than half.

### **Part II. Quorum**

#### **Rule 2. Quorum**

The presence of a quorum is necessary for the Board to conduct business. A majority of the Board's actual membership plus the mayor, excluding vacant seats, constitutes a quorum. A member who withdraws from a meeting without being excused by majority vote of the remaining members in attendance is deemed present for quorum purposes.

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<sup>1</sup>. In North Carolina, the legal status and authority of a municipality is the same, regardless of whether it is denominated a town, town, or village. *See* G.S. 160A-1(2) (defining the term "town" as used in Chapter 160A to mean "a municipal corporation . . . having the powers, duties, privileges, and immunities conferred by law on cities, towns, and villages"). The same is true of a municipal governing board, which may be known as a Board, board of aldermen, or board of commissioners. *See* G.S. 160A-1(3) (noting that the term "Board" as used in Chapter 160A is interchangeable with the terms "board of aldermen" and "board of commissioners"). These rules employ the term "town Board" for the sake of convenience and in deference to the terminology found in Chapter 160A, the primary statutes governing municipal corporations.

## **Part III Open Meetings**

### **Rule 3 Remote Participation in Council Meetings**

**Attendance via Simultaneous and/or Electronic Communication.** In order to participate in a meeting via simultaneous and/or electronic communication, the following criteria must be met:

1. The official meeting was properly noticed under G.S. §143-318.12 and under any other requirement for notice applicable to the public body.
2. The member or members participating from a remote location by simultaneous communication can fully participate in the deliberations.
3. The member or members of the board participating from a remote location by simultaneous communication can be heard by the other members of the board and any other individual in attendance at the official meeting.
4. The vote of the member or members of the public body participating from a remote location by simultaneous communication is not by electronic mail or facsimile.
5. If the chair of the board is participating from a remote location by simultaneous communication, the vice chair or some other member of the board who is physically present shall preside at the official meeting. The chair or presiding officer of the board participating from a remote location by simultaneous communication shall retain the same voting rights he or she has when presiding.
6. The official meeting, or part of an official meeting with a member or members of the board participating from a remote location by simultaneous communication is not allowed in any of the following:
  - a. A quasi-judicial proceeding.
7. No written ballots may be taken at the official meeting with a member or members of the board participating from a remote location by simultaneous communication.
8. If the official meeting involves a member of the board participating from a remote location by simultaneous communication by which the member or members cannot be physically seen by the public body, that member must comply with all of the following:

- a. The participation of the member or members must be announced when the meeting is commenced or at the beginning of participation.
  - b. The member identifies himself or herself prior to participating in the deliberations during the official meeting.
  - c. The member identifies himself or herself prior to voting.
9. The member or members participating from a remote location by simultaneous communication shall have been provided with any documents to be considered during the official meeting.

#### **Rule 4. Meetings to Be Open to the Public**

Except as permitted by Rule 5, all meetings of the Board shall be open to the public, and any person may attend its meetings.

#### **Rule 5. Closed Sessions**

**(a) Motion to Enter Closed Session.** The town Board may enter a closed session from which the public is excluded only upon a motion duly made and adopted in open session. The motion to enter closed session must cite one or more of the permissible bases for closed session listed in paragraph (b) of this rule. A motion to enter closed session under subparagraph (b)(1) or (b)(2) must contain the additional information specified in those provisions.

**(b) Bases for Closed Session.** A closed session is permissible under the following circumstances and no others:

- (1) To prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to the law of North Carolina or of the United States or that does not constitute a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes. The motion to enter closed session must name or cite the law that renders the information confidential or privileged.
- (2) To consult with the town attorney or another attorney employed or retained by the town in order to preserve the attorney–client privilege. If the Board expects to discuss a pending lawsuit with its attorney, the motion to enter closed session must include the names of the parties to the lawsuit.
- (3) To discuss matters relating to (a) the location or expansion of industries or

other businesses in the area served by the town or (b) the closure or realignment of a military installation. The Board may reach agreement in closed session on a tentative list of economic development incentives to be offered in negotiations, but the approval of the signing of any economic development contract or commitment and the authorization of the payment of economic development expenditures must take place in open session.

- (4) To establish or instruct staff or agents concerning the town's position in negotiating the price or other material terms of an agreement for the acquisition of real property by purchase, exchange, or lease.
- (5) To establish or instruct staff or agents concerning the amount of compensation or other material terms of an employment contract.
- (6) To consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, or conditions of appointment or employment of a public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee, except when the individual in question is a member of the town Board or other public body or is being considered to fill a vacancy on the town Board or other public body. Final action to appoint or employ a public officer or employee must take place in open session.
- (7) To hear or investigate a charge or complaint by or against a public officer or employee. Final action discharging an employee or removing an officer must occur in open session.
- (8) To plan, conduct, or hear reports concerning investigations of alleged criminal misconduct.
- (9) To view a law enforcement recording released pursuant to G.S. 132-1.4A.
- (10) On any other basis permitted by law.

**(c) Closed Session Participants.** Unless the Board directs otherwise, the town manager, town attorney, and town clerk may attend closed sessions of the Board. No other person may attend a closed session unless invited by majority vote of the Board.

**(d) Motion to Return to Open Session.** Upon completing its closed session business, the Board shall end the closed session by adopting a duly made motion to return to open session.

## **Rule 6. Meeting Minutes**

**(a) Minutes Required for All Meetings.** The Board must keep full and accurate minutes of all of its meetings, including closed sessions. To be “full and accurate,” minutes must record all actions taken by the Board. They should set out the precise wording of each motion and make it possible to determine the number of votes cast for and against each motion. The minutes need not record discussions of the Board, though the Board in its discretion may decide to incorporate such details into the minutes.

**(b) Record of “Ayes” and “Noes.”** At the request of any member of the Board, the minutes shall list each member by name and record how each member voted on a particular matter.

**(c) General Accounts of Closed Sessions.** In addition to minutes, the Board must keep a general account of each closed session. The general account must be sufficiently detailed to provide a person not in attendance with a reasonable understanding of what transpired. The Board may combine the minutes and general account of a closed session into one document, so long as the document contains both a complete record of actions taken and the level of detail required for a general account.

**(d) Sealing Closed Session Records.** Minutes and general accounts of closed sessions shall be sealed until unsealed by order of the Board or, if the Board delegates the authority to unseal to one or more staff members, in accordance with guidelines adopted by the Board. The sealed minutes and general account of any closed session may be withheld from public inspection so long as public inspection would frustrate the purpose(s) of the closed session.

## **Rule 7. Broadcasting and Recording Meetings**

**(a) Right to Broadcast and Record.** Any person may photograph, film, tape-record, or otherwise reproduce any part of a Board meeting that must take place in open session. Except as provided in paragraph (c) of this rule, any radio or televi-

sion station may broadcast any such part of a Board meeting.

**(b) Advance Notice.** Any radio or television station that plans to broadcast any portion of a Board meeting shall so notify the town manager or town clerk no later than twenty-four hours before the meeting. The failure to provide notice is not, by itself, grounds for preventing the broadcast of a Board meeting.

**(c) Equipment Placement.** The town manager may regulate the placement and use of camera or recording equipment in order to prevent undue interference with a Board meeting, so long as he or she allows the equipment to be placed where it can carry out its intended function. If the town manager determines in good faith that the equipment and personnel necessary to broadcast, photograph, or record the meeting cannot be accommodated without undue interference to the meeting, and an adequate alternative meeting room is not readily available, the town manager may require the pooling of the equipment and the personnel operating it.

**(d) Alternative Meeting Site.** If the news media request an alternative meeting site to accommodate news coverage, and the Board grants the request, the news media making the request shall pay the costs incurred by the town in securing an alternative meeting site.

## **Part IV. Organization of the Board**

### **Rule 8. Organizational Meeting; Selection of Mayor Pro Tempore**

**(a) Scheduling Organizational Meeting.** The Board must hold an organizational meeting following each general election in which Board members are elected. The organizational meeting must be held on the Monday next following the certification of the results of the election (1959 Session Law Chapter 970). The organizational meeting may not be held before municipal election results are officially determined, certified, and published as required by law.

**(b) Oath of Office.** As the first order of business at the organizational meeting, all newly elected members of the Board must take and subscribe the oath of office set out in Article VI, Section 7, of the North Carolina Constitution. Each member's oath must be filed with the town clerk. Although a member who is not present for the organizational meeting may take the oath of office at another time,

every member must take, subscribe, and file the oath before he or she begins performing any of the duties of the member's office.

**(c) Selection of Mayor Pro Tempore.** As the second order of business at the organizational meeting, the Board shall elect from among its members a mayor pro tempore using the procedures specified in Rule 38. The mayor pro tempore shall serve at the Board's pleasure.

## **Part V. Types of Meetings**

### **Rule 9. Regular Meetings**

**(a) Regular Meeting Schedule.** The Board shall hold a regular meeting on the second Monday of each month, except that if a regular meeting day is a legal holiday, the meeting shall be held on the next business day. The meeting shall be held at the Train Depot located at 614 Broad Street and begin at 6 pm. The Board shall adopt a meeting schedule each year consistent with this rule. A copy of the Board's current meeting schedule shall be filed with the town clerk and posted on the town's website and in Town Hall.

**(b) Work Session Meeting Schedule.** The Board shall hold a work session meeting on the fourth Monday of each month, except that if the regular work session meeting day is a legal holiday, the meeting shall be held on the next business day. The meeting shall be held at the Train Depot located at 614 Broad Street and begin at 4 pm. The Board shall adopt a meeting schedule each year consistent with this rule. A copy of the Board's current meeting schedule shall be filed with the town clerk and posed on the town's website and in Town Hall.

**(c) Change to Meeting Schedule.** Notwithstanding paragraph (a) of this rule, the Board may amend its regular meeting schedule to add or delete meetings or to change the date, time, or location of one or more meetings on the schedule. The amended schedule shall be filed with the town clerk at least seven (7) calendar days before the day of the first meeting held pursuant to the revised schedule and

posted on the town's website and in Town Hall.

## **Rule 10. Special Meetings**

**(a) Calling Special Meetings.** A special meeting of the Board may be called by the mayor, the mayor pro tempore, or any two Board members. A special meeting may also be called by vote of the Board in open session during a regular meeting or another duly called special meeting.

**(b) Notice to the Public.** At least forty-eight hours before a special meeting of the Board, notice of the date, time, place, and purpose of the meeting shall be (1) posted on the Board's principal bulletin board or, if the Board has no such board, at the door of the Board's usual meeting room and (2) delivered, e-mailed, or mailed to each newspaper, wire service, radio station, television station, and person who has filed a written request for notice with the town clerk. Furthermore, if the Board has a website maintained by at least one town employee, notice of the special meeting's date, time, place, and purpose shall be posted on the website in advance of the meeting.

**(c) Notice to Members.**

- (1) *Meeting called by the mayor, the mayor pro tempore, or any two Board members.* At least forty-eight hours before a special meeting called by the mayor, the mayor pro tempore, or any two Board members, written notice of the meeting stating its date, time, and place, as well as the subjects to be considered, shall be delivered to the mayor and each Board member or left at his or her usual dwelling place.
- (2) *Meeting called by vote of the Board in open session.* When a special meeting is called by vote of the Board in open session during a regular meeting or another duly called special meeting, the motion or resolution calling the special meeting shall state the meeting's date, time, place, and purpose. Written notice of the special meeting's date, time, place, and purpose shall be mailed or delivered at least forty-eight hours before the meeting to each Board member not present for the meeting at which the special meeting was called, and to the mayor if he or she was not present at that meeting.



**(d) Transacting Other Business.** Unless all members are present or any absent member has signed a written waiver of notice, only those items of business specified in the notice to Board members may be taken up at a special meeting. Even when all members are present or any absent member has signed a waiver, the Board may take up an item of business not covered by the notice only if the Board first determines in good faith that the item must be discussed or acted upon immediately.

## **Rule 11. Emergency Meetings**

**(a) Grounds for Emergency Meeting.** Emergency meetings of the Board may be called only to address generally unexpected circumstances demanding the Board's immediate attention.

**(b) Calling Emergency Meetings.** There are two methods by which an emergency meeting of the Board may be called.

- (1) The mayor, the mayor pro tempore, or any two members of the Board may at any time call an emergency Board meeting by signing a written notice stating the date, time, and place of the meeting and the subjects to be considered. The notice shall be delivered to the mayor and each Board member or left at his or her usual dwelling place at least six hours before the meeting.
- (2) An emergency meeting may be held when the mayor and all members of the Board are present and consent thereto, or when any absent member has signed a written waiver of notice.

**(c) Notice to Media of Emergency Meetings.** Notice of an emergency meeting shall be given to each local newspaper, local wire service, local radio station, and local television station that has filed a written request with the town clerk for notice of emergency meetings. To be valid, the request must include the newspaper's, wire service's, or station's telephone number. Notice may be given by telephone, e-mail, or the same method used to notify Board members. Notice must be provided immediately after Board members have been notified and at the expense of the party notified.

**(d) Transaction of Other Business Prohibited.** Only business connected with the emergency may be considered at an emergency meeting.

## **Rule 12. Recessed Meetings**

**(a) Calling Recessed Meetings.** When conducting a properly called regular, work session, special, or emergency meeting, the Board may recess the meeting to another date, time, or place by a procedural motion made and adopted, as provided in Rule 29, Motion 3, in open session. The motion must state the time (including the date, if the meeting will resume on a different day) and place at which the meeting will reconvene.

**(b) Notice of Recessed Meetings.** If the Board has a website maintained by one or more town employees, notice of the recessed meeting's date, time, and place must appear on the webpage prior to the meeting. No further notice of a properly called recessed meeting is required.

## **Part VI. Agenda**

### **Rule 13. Agenda**

#### **(a) Draft Agenda.**

- (1) *Preparation.* The presiding officer, town manager and town clerk shall prepare a draft agenda in advance of each meeting of the town Board.
- (2) *Requesting placement of items on draft agenda.* For a regular meeting, a request to have an item of business placed on the draft agenda must be received by the town manager at least five working days before the date of the meeting. The town manager/town clerk must place an item on the draft agenda in response to a Board member's timely request.
- (3) *Supplemental information/materials.* If the Board is expected to consider a proposed ordinance or ordinance amendment, a copy of the proposed ordinance or amendment shall be attached to the draft agenda. An agenda package shall be prepared that includes, for each item of business listed on the draft agenda, as much background information on the topic as is available and feasible to provide.

- (4) *Delivery to Board members.* Each Board member shall receive a hard or electronic copy of the draft agenda and the agenda package. Except in the case of an emergency meeting, the agenda and agenda package shall be furnished to each member at least twenty-four hours before the meeting.
- (5) *Public inspection.* The draft agenda and agenda package shall be available to the public when the document[s] are ready to be, or have been, circulated.

**(b) Adoption of the Agenda.**

- (1) *Adoption.* As its first order of business at each meeting, the Board shall review the draft agenda, make whatever revisions it deems appropriate, and adopt a formal agenda for the meeting.
- (2) *Amending the agenda.* Both before and after it adopts the agenda, the Board may add or subtract agenda items by majority vote of the members present and voting, except that
  - the Board may not add to the items stated in the notice of a special meeting unless the requirements in Rule 10(d) are satisfied and
  - only business connected with the emergency may be considered at an emergency meeting.
- (3) *Designation of items “For Discussion and Consideration.”* The Board may designate an agenda item “for discussion and consideration.” The designation signifies that the Board intends to discuss the item and may, if it so chooses, take action on the item following the discussion.

**(c) Consent Agenda.** The Board may designate part of an agenda for a regular meeting as the *consent agenda*. Items may be placed on the consent agenda by the person(s) charged with preparing the draft agenda if the items are judged to be noncontroversial and routine. Prior to the Board’s adoption of the meeting agenda under subparagraph (b)(1) of this rule, the request of any member to have an item moved from the consent agenda to unfinished business must be honored by the Board. All items on the consent agenda must be voted on and adopted by a single motion, with the minutes reflecting the motion and vote for each item.

**(d) Informal Discussion of Agenda Items.** The Board may informally discuss an agenda item even when no motion regarding that item is pending.

#### **Rule 14. Acting by Reference to Agenda or Other Document**

The Board shall not deliberate, vote, or otherwise take action on any matter by reference to the agenda or any other document with the intention of preventing persons in attendance from understanding what action is being considered or undertaken. The Board may deliberate and vote by reference to the agenda or any item on the agenda, including the consent agenda, provided copies of the agenda are available for public inspection at the meeting and are sufficiently worded to enable the public to understand what is being deliberated or acted upon.

#### **Rule 15. Order of Business**

Items shall be placed on a regular meeting agenda according to the order of business. The usual order of business for each regular meeting shall be as follows:

- adoption of the agenda,
- public comments,
- calendar,
- project updates,
- town manager report,
- items of consent,
- public hearings,
- items for discussion and consideration,
- Mayor and commissioner comments.

Without objection, the mayor may call agenda items in any order most convenient for the dispatch of business.

### **Part VII. Role of the Presiding Officer**

#### **Rule 16. The Mayor**

**(a) Presiding Officer.** When present, the mayor shall preside at meetings of the Board.

**(b) Right to Vote.** The mayor may vote only when an equal number of affirmative and negative votes have been cast.

**(c) Recognition of Members.** A member must be recognized by the mayor (or other presiding officer) in order to address the Board, but recognition is not necessary for an appeal pursuant to Rule 29, Motion 1.

**(d) Powers as Presiding Officer.** As presiding officer, the mayor is to enforce these rules and maintain order and decorum during Board meetings. To that end, the mayor may

- (1) rule on points of parliamentary procedure, to include ruling out of order any motion clearly offered for obstructive or dilatory purposes;
- (2) determine whether a member or other speaker has gone beyond reasonable standards of courtesy in his or her remarks and entertain and rule on objections from other members on this ground;
- (3) entertain and answer questions of parliamentary procedure;
- (4) call a brief recess at any time; and
- (5) adjourn in an emergency.

**(e) Appeals of Procedural Rulings.** A member may appeal a decision made or answer given by the mayor under subparagraph (d)(1), (2), or (3) in accordance with Rule 29, Motion 1.

## **Rule 17. The Mayor Pro Tempore**

**(a) Presiding in Mayor's Absence.** When present, the mayor pro tempore shall preside over Board meetings in the mayor's absence with all the powers specified in Rule 16(d).

**(b) Delegation of Mayor's Powers/Duties.** In the mayor's absence, the Board may confer on the mayor pro tempore any of the mayor's powers and duties. Likewise, if the mayor becomes physically or mentally unable to perform the duties of his or her office, the Board may by unanimous vote declare the mayor incapacitated and confer any of the mayor's powers and duties on the mayor pro tempore. When the mayor announces that he or she is no longer incapacitated, and a majority of the Board concurs, the mayor shall resume the exercise of his or her powers and duties.

**(c) Duty to Vote.** Even when presiding over a Board meeting, the mayor pro tempore has the same duty as other members to vote on all questions unless he or she has been excused from voting on a matter in accordance with Rule 27.

### **Rule 18. Other Presiding Officer**

If both the mayor and mayor pro tempore are absent, the Board may elect from among its members a temporary presiding officer to chair the meeting. While serving as temporary presiding officer, a member has the powers listed in Rule 16(d). Service as a temporary presiding officer does not relieve a member of the duty to vote on all questions unless excused from voting pursuant to Rule 27.

### **Rule 19. When the Presiding Officer Is Active in Debate**

If the mayor becomes active in debate on a particular proposal, he or she may have the mayor pro tempore preside during the Board's consideration of the matter. If the mayor pro tempore is absent or is also actively debating the matter, the mayor may designate another member to preside until the matter is concluded. Similarly, if the mayor pro tempore or a temporary presiding officer is presiding and takes an active part in debating a topic, he or she may designate another Board member to preside temporarily.

## **Part VIII. Motions and Voting**

### **Rule 20. Action by the Board**

Except as otherwise provided in these rules, the Board shall act by motion. Any member may make a motion, not including the mayor.

### **Rule 21. Second Not Required**

No second is required on any motion.

### **Rule 22. One Motion at a Time**

A member may make only one motion at a time.

### **Rule 23. Withdrawal of Motion**

The member who introduces a motion may withdraw the motion unless the motion has been amended or the presiding officer has put the motion to a vote.

## **Rule 24. Debate**

The presiding officer shall state the motion and then open the floor to debate, presiding over the debate according to the principles listed below.

- The maker of the motion is entitled to speak first.
- A member who has not spoken on the issue shall be recognized before a member who has already spoken.
- To the extent practicable, the debate shall alternate between proponents and opponents of the measure.
- No member may speak more than twice on the same substantive motion. A member's first speech on a substantive motion shall be limited to 10 minutes, and any second speech on the same motion shall be limited to five minutes. The same rules apply to debate on a procedural motion, except that a member's first speech shall not exceed five minutes, and any second speech shall be limited to two minutes.

## **Rule 25. Adoption by Majority Vote**

A motion is adopted if supported by a simple majority of the votes cast, a quorum being present, except when a larger majority is required by these rules or state law.

## **Rule 26. Changing a Vote**

A member may change his or her vote on a motion at any time before the presiding officer announces whether the motion has passed or failed. Once the presiding officer announces the result, a member may not change his or her vote without the unanimous consent of the remaining members present. A member's request for unanimous consent to change a vote is not in order unless made immediately following the presiding officer's announcement of the result.

## **Rule 27. Duty to Vote**

**(a) Duty to Vote.** Every Board member must vote except when excused from voting as provided by this rule.

**(b) Grounds for Excusal.** A member may be excused from voting on a matter involving the member's own financial interest or official conduct, though not if

the proposal in question is one to alter the compensation or allowances paid to Board members. Members may also be excused from voting when prohibited from voting under G.S. 14-234 (contract providing direct benefit to member), G.S. 160A-381(d) (legislative zoning decision likely to have a direct, substantial, and readily identifiable financial impact on member), or G.S. 160A-388(e)(2) (member's participation in quasi-judicial decision would violate affected person's right to an impartial decision maker). Questions about whether a basis for excusal exists should be directed to the town attorney.

**(c) Procedure for Excusal.**

- (1) *At member's request.* Upon being recognized at a duly called meeting of the Board, a member who wishes to be excused from voting shall so inform the presiding officer, who must then submit the matter to a vote of the remaining members present. If a majority of the remaining members present vote to excuse the member, the member is excused from voting on the matter.
- (2) *On Board's initiative.* Even when a member has not asked to be excused from voting on a matter, a majority of the remaining Board members present may by motion and vote excuse the member from voting if grounds for doing so exist under paragraph (b).

**(d) Consequence of Non-Excused Failure to Vote.** Except as specified in paragraph (e), if a member who has not been excused from voting fails to vote on a matter, the member's failure to vote shall be recorded as an affirmative vote, provided

- (1) the member is physically present in the Board chamber, or attending through electronic means or
- (2) the member has physically withdrawn from the meeting or severed the electronic connection without being excused by majority vote of the remaining members present.

**(e) Failure to Vote on Certain Zoning Matters.** A member's unexcused failure to vote shall not be recorded as an affirmative vote if the motion concerns a proposal to amend, supplement, or repeal a zoning ordinance. Instead, the member's unexcused failure to vote shall be recorded as an abstention.



## **Rule 28. Substantive Motions**

A substantive motion is not in order if made while another motion is pending. Once the Board disposes of a substantive motion, it may not take up a motion that presents essentially the same issue at the same meeting, unless it first adopts a motion to reconsider pursuant to Rule 29, Motion 14.

## **Rule 29. Procedural Motions**

**(a) Certain Motions Allowed.** The Board may consider only those procedural motions listed in this rule. Unless otherwise noted, each procedural motion may be debated and amended and requires a majority of votes cast, a quorum being present, for adoption.

**(b) Priority of Motions.** The procedural motions set out in this paragraph are listed in order of priority. A procedural motion is not in order so long as another procedural motion of higher priority is pending, except that

- any procedural motion other than an appeal under Motion 1 is subject to amendment as provided in Motion 12, and
- a motion to call the question (end debate) may be made with regard to any procedural motion in accordance with Motion 9.

When several procedural motions are pending, voting must begin with the procedural motion highest in priority, provided that a motion to amend or end debate on the highest priority motion must be voted on first.

**Motion 1. To Appeal a Ruling of the Presiding Officer.** Any member may appeal the presiding officer's ruling on whether a motion is in order or on whether a speaker has violated reasonable standards of courtesy. The presiding officer's response to a question of parliamentary procedure may also be appealed by any member. An appeal is in order immediately after the disputed ruling or parliamentary response and at no other time. The member who moves to appeal need not be recognized by the presiding officer, and if timely made, the motion may not be ruled out of order.

**Motion 2. To Adjourn.** This motion may be used to close a meeting. It is not in order if the Board is in closed session.

**Motion 3. To Recess to a Time and Place Certain.** This motion may be used to call a recessed meeting as permitted under Rule 12. The motion must state the time (including the date, if the meeting will reconvene on a different day) and place at which the meeting will resume. The motion is not in order if the Board is in closed session.

**Motion 4. To Take a Brief Recess.**

**Motion 5. To Follow the Agenda.** This motion must be made at the time an item of business that deviates from the agenda is proposed; otherwise, the motion is out of order as to that item.

**Motion 6. To Suspend the Rules.** To be adopted, a motion to suspend the rules must receive affirmative votes equal to at least two-thirds of the Board's actual membership, excluding vacant seats. The Board may not suspend provisions in these rules that are required under state law.

**Motion 7. To Divide a Complex Motion.** This motion is in order whenever a member wishes to consider and vote on parts of a complex motion separately. The member who makes this motion must specify how the complex motion will be divided.

**Motion 8. To Defer Consideration.** The Board may defer its consideration of a substantive motion, and any proposed amendments thereto, to an unspecified time. A motion that has been deferred expires unless the Board votes to revive it pursuant to Motion 13 within 100 days of deferral. A new motion having the same effect as a deferred motion may not be introduced until the latter has expired.

**Motion 9. To End Debate (Call the Previous Question).** If adopted, this motion terminates debate on a pending motion, thereby bringing it to an immediate vote. This motion is not in order until every member has had an opportunity to speak once on the pending motion.

**Motion 10. To Postpone to a Certain Time.** This motion may be employed to delay the Board's consideration of a substantive motion, and any proposed amendments thereto, until a designated day, meeting, or hour. During the period

of postponement, the Board may not take up a new motion raising essentially the same issue without first suspending its rules pursuant to Motion 6.

**Motion 11. To Refer a Motion to a Committee.** The Board may vote to refer a substantive motion to a committee for study and recommendations. While the substantive motion is pending before the committee, the Board may not take up a new motion raising essentially the same issue without first suspending its rules pursuant to Motion 6. If the committee fails to report on the motion within 60 days of the referral date, the Board must take up the motion if asked to do so by the member who introduced it.

**Motion 12. To Amend.**

**(a) Germaneness.** A motion to amend must concern the same subject matter as the motion it seeks to alter.

**(b) Limit on Number of Motions to Amend.** When a motion to amend is under consideration, a motion to amend the amendment may be made; however, no more than one motion to amend and one motion to amend the amendment may be pending at the same time.

**(c) Amendments to Ordinances.** Any amendment to a proposed ordinance must be reduced to writing before the vote on the amendment.

**Motion 13. To Revive Consideration.** The Board may vote to revive consideration of any substantive motion that has been deferred pursuant to Motion 8, provided it does so within 100 days of its vote to defer consideration.

**Motion 14. To Reconsider.** The Board may vote to reconsider its action on a matter, provided the motion to reconsider is made (a) at the same meeting during which the action to be reconsidered was taken and (b) by a member who voted with the prevailing side. For purposes of this motion, “the same meeting” includes any continuation of a meeting through a motion to recess to a certain time and place (Motion 3). The motion is not in order if it interrupts the Board’s deliberation on a pending matter.

**Motion 15. To Rescind.** The Board may vote to rescind an action taken at a prior meeting provided rescission is not forbidden by law.

**Motion 16. To Prevent Reintroduction for Six Months.** This motion may be

used to prevent the reintroduction of a failed substantive motion for a time, but it is in order only when made immediately following the substantive motion's defeat. To be adopted, this motion must receive votes equal to at least two-thirds of the Board's actual membership, excluding vacant seats. If this motion is adopted, the ban on reintroduction remains in effect for six months or until the Board's next organizational meeting, whichever occurs first.

## **Part IX. Ordinances and Contracts**

### **Rule 30. Introduction of Ordinances**

For purposes of these rules, the "date of introduction" for a proposed ordinance is the date on which the Board first votes on the proposed ordinance's subject matter.

### **Rule 31. Adoption, Amendment, and Repeal of Ordinances**

#### **(a) Adoption of Ordinances.**

- (1) *Proposed ordinances to be in writing.* No proposed ordinance shall be adopted unless it has been reduced to writing and distributed to members before a vote on adoption is taken.
- (2) *Adoption on date of introduction.* To be approved on the date of introduction, a proposed ordinance or any action having the effect of an ordinance must receive affirmative votes equal to at least two-thirds of the Board's actual membership, excluding vacant seats.
- (3) *Adoption after date of introduction.* To be approved after the date of introduction, a proposed ordinance or any action having the effect of an ordinance must receive affirmative votes equal to at least a majority of all Board members not excused from voting on the matter. In calculating the number of affirmative votes necessary for approval, the Board shall count the mayor's vote if there is an equal division.

**(b) Amendment and Repeal of Ordinances.** The same voting requirements that govern the adoption of proposed ordinances also apply to the amendment or repeal of an ordinance.

## **Rule 32. Adoption of the Budget Ordinance**

### **(a) Special Rules for the Adoption or Amendment of the Budget Ordinance.**

Notwithstanding any provision in the town charter, general law, or local act,

- (1) the Board may adopt or amend the budget ordinance at a regular, work session, or special meeting of the Board by a simple majority of those members present and voting, a quorum being present;
- (2) no action taken with respect to the adoption or amendment of the budget ordinance need be published or is subject to any other procedural requirement governing the adoption of ordinances or resolutions by the Board; and

**(b) Notice Requirements for Budget Meetings.** During the period beginning with the submission of the budget to the Board and ending with the adoption of the budget ordinance, the Board may hold any special meetings that may be necessary to complete its work on the budget ordinance. Except for the notice requirements of the open meetings law, which continue to apply, no provision of law concerning the call of special meetings applies during that period so long as

- each member of the board has actual notice of each special meeting called for the purpose of considering the budget and
- no business other than consideration of the budget is taken up.

**(c) No Authority for Closed Sessions.** This rule shall not be construed to authorize the Board to hold closed sessions on any basis other than the grounds set out in Rule 5.

## **Rule 33. Approval of Contracts and Authorization of Expenditures**

**(a) Contracts to be in Writing.** No contract shall be approved or ratified by the town Board unless it has been reduced to writing at the time of the Board's vote.

**(b) Approval of Contracts.** To be approved or ratified, a contract must receive affirmative votes equal to at least a majority of all Board members not excused from voting on the contract, including the mayor's vote in the event of a tie.

**(c) Authorization of Expenditure of Public Funds.** The same vote necessary to approve or ratify a contract is required for the Board to authorize the expenditure

of public funds, except when the expenditure is authorized pursuant to Rule 32.

## **Part X. Public Hearings and Comment Periods**

### **Rule 34. Public Hearings**

**(a) Calling Public Hearings.** In addition to holding public hearings required by law, the Board may hold any public hearings it deems advisable. The Board may schedule hearings or delegate that responsibility to town staff members, as appropriate, except when state law directs the Board itself to call the hearing. If the Board delegates scheduling authority, it must provide adequate guidance to assist staff members in exercising that authority.

**(b) Public Hearing Locations.** Public hearings may be held anywhere within the town or within the county where the town is located.

**(c) Rules for Public Hearings.** The Board may adopt reasonable rules for public hearings that, among other things,

- fix the maximum time allotted to each speaker,
- provide for the designation of spokespersons for groups of persons supporting or opposing the same positions,
- provide for the selection of delegates from groups of persons supporting or opposing the same positions when the number of persons wishing to attend the hearing exceeds the capacity of the hall (so long as arrangements are made, in the case of a hearing subject to the open meetings law, for those excluded from the hall to listen to the hearing), and
- provide for the maintenance of order and decorum in the conduct of the hearing.

**(d) Notice of Public Hearings.** Any public hearing at which a majority of the Board is present shall be considered part of a regular or special meeting. Consequently, the relevant notice and related requirements of the open meetings law, as set out in Rules 9 through 12, apply to such hearings. Some statutes mandate additional notice for particular types of hearings, and such notice must be provided

together with notice of the meeting during which the hearing will take place.

**(e) Continuing Public Hearings.** The Board may continue any public hearing without further advertisement to a time and place certain, provided the time (including the date, if the hearing will resume on a different day) and place of the continued hearing are announced in open session. Except for hearings conducted pursuant to paragraph (g), if a quorum of the Board is not present for a properly scheduled public hearing, the hearing must be continued until the Board's next regular meeting without further advertisement.

**(f) Conduct of Public Hearings.** At the time appointed for the hearing, the mayor shall call the hearing to order and proceed to allow public input in accordance with any rules adopted by the Board for the hearing. Unless the Board extends the hearing, when the time allotted for the hearing expires, or when no one wishes to speak who has not done so, the mayor shall entertain a motion to close the hearing, and the Board shall resume the regular order of business.

**(g) Public Hearings by Less Than a Majority of Board Members.** Nothing in this rule prevents the Board from appointing a member or members to hold a public hearing on the Board's behalf, except when state law requires that the Board itself conduct the hearing.

### **Rule 35. Public Comment Periods**

**(a) Frequency of Public Comment Periods.** The Board must provide at least one opportunity for public comment each month at a regular meeting, except that the Board need not offer a public comment period during any month in which it does not hold a regular meeting.

**(b) Rules for Public Comment Periods.** Following are the rules for public comment periods:

1. The maximum time allotted to each speaker is three minutes.
2. The Mayor may require the designation of spokespersons for groups supporting or opposing the same positions,
3. The Mayor may require selection of delegates from groups supporting or opposing the same positions when the number of persons wishing to attend the public comment period exceeds the capacity of the hall (so long as

arrangements are made for those excluded from the hall to listen to the hearing), and

4. The Mayor will ensure that order and decorum is observed in the conduct of the public comment period.

**(c) Content-Based Restrictions Generally Prohibited.** The Board may not restrict speakers based on subject matter, as long as their comments pertain to subjects within the Board's real or apparent jurisdiction.

## **Part XI. Appointments and Appointed Bodies**

### **Rule 36. Appointments**

**(a) Appointments in Open Session.** The Board must consider and make any appointment to another body or, in the event of a vacancy on the Board, to its own membership in open session.

**(b) Nomination and Voting Procedure.** The Board shall use the following procedure to fill a vacancy in the Board itself or in any other body over which it has the power of appointment. The mayor shall open the floor for nominations, whereupon Board members may put forward and debate nominees. When debate ends, the mayor shall call a vote of the members on each nominee. The voting shall continue until a nominee receives a majority of votes cast.

**(c) Duty to Vote.** It is the duty of each member to cast a vote for or against each nominee.

### **Rule 37. Committees and Boards**

**(a) Establishment and Appointment.** The Board may establish temporary and standing committees, boards, and other bodies to help carry on the work of town government. Unless otherwise provided by law or the Board, the power of appointment to such bodies lies with the Board.

**(b) Open Meetings Law.** The requirements of the open meetings law apply whenever a majority of an appointed body's members gather in person or simultaneously by electronic means to discuss or conduct official business. They do not apply to meetings solely among the town's professional staff.



**(c) Procedural Rules.** The Board may prescribe the procedures by which the town's appointed bodies operate, subject to any statutory provisions applicable to particular bodies. In the absence of rules adopted by the Board, an appointed body may promulgate its own procedural rules, so long as they are in keeping with any relevant statutory provisions and generally accepted principles of parliamentary procedure.

## **Part XII. Miscellaneous**

### **Rule 38. Amendment of the Rules**

These rules may be amended at any regular or work session meeting, or at any properly called special meeting for which amendment of the rules is one of the meeting's stated purposes. Any amendment to these rules must be consistent with the town charter, any relevant statutes, and generally accepted principles of parliamentary procedure. To be adopted, a motion to amend these rules must be approved by a majority of the Board's members, excluding vacant seats.

### **Rule 39. Reference to Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised**

The Board shall refer to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* for guidance when confronted with a procedural issue not covered by these rules or state law. Having consulted *Robert's*, the mayor shall make a ruling on the issue subject to appeal to the Board under Rule 29, Motion 1.