

RULE 1- MEETINGS

- A. **Regular Meeting.** The regular meeting of the Town Council shall be held on the second Tuesday of the month within the confines of the Town of Warren, in accordance with § 3.06 of the Charter.
1. Councilors who must be absent from the regular meeting of the Town Council should inform the Council President prior to the meeting, whenever possible.
 2. Councilors asking to be excused from a meeting or vote shall notify the Council President or Town Clerk.
- B. **Special Meetings.** Special meetings shall be held at the call of the Council President as provided in § 3.07 of the Charter.
- C. **Workshops.** Workshop sessions shall be called by the Town Clerk on the request of the Council President. A work session is a meeting of the Town Council that may include other officials, bodies, agencies or groups. The primary purpose of a work session is to obtain information and exchange ideas rather than to take formal action. Consequently, work sessions are open to the public, but participation is limited to officials, bodies, agencies, groups or individuals invited to participate by the Town Council. Unless an emergency exists, no official vote on any business may be taken at a work session or informational meeting. If such a vote is taken, the same motion shall be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting for ratification.
- D. **Public Hearings.** The main purpose of most public hearings is to obtain public testimony or comment. Both proponents and opponents of the proposal are allowed to speak. The Council President may administer oaths to those persons providing testimony at public hearings.
1. **Time of Hearings.** Notice of all public hearings shall be posted in accordance with the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act and all other applicable state and local laws and ordinances. Public hearings shall be included as part of the regular business of the Town Council at any regular meeting unless scheduled otherwise by vote of the Council or at the call of the Council President.
 2. **Order of Business.** The order of business for a public hearing may vary, depending upon the type of hearing that is being conducted. The Town Clerk, under the direction of the Council President, shall list the order of business for public hearings on the appropriate agenda, whether that be a regular meeting agenda or an agenda for a public hearing scheduled by votes of the Town Council or at the call of the Town Council President.
 - a. Comments/Input/ from Applicant(s)/ Sponsor(s)/ Petitioner(s) (as applicable)
 - b. Comments/Input/ Recommendations by Administration- Solicitor, Town Manager and Administrative Staff
 - d. Proponents
 - e. Opponents
 - f. Closure of the public hearing

- g. Town Council Deliberation
- h. Vote/Decision

3. **Time Limits for Oral Argument.** While these rules do not set forth a specific time limit for comments, the Council President retains the authority to limit the amount of time allotted to each speaker. The Council President will state the rules relative to time limits at the opening of the public hearing.

4. **Rules Regarding Public Testimony.**

- a. All speakers must give their names and addresses.
- b. All comments should be addressed to the hearing body, should be relevant to the subject of the public hearing, and should not be of a personal nature.
- c. Speakers should avoid repeating comments made by other speakers or becoming repetitive themselves.
- d. If there are a large number of speakers, including many who are part of groups or organizations, a representative should speak on behalf of the organization or group.

- E. **Emergency Meetings.** In accordance with the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act, “Upon a votes by a majority of the public body, an emergency meeting may be convened ‘to address an unexpected occurrence that requires immediate action to protect the Public.’”

RULE 2- PRESIDING OFFICER- DUTIES

- A. **Conduct of Meeting.** The presiding officer at all meetings of the Council shall be the Council President, or in the President’s absence, the Vice President, who shall conduct the business and deliberations of the Council under these rules. The Council President and Vice President shall be elected in accordance with § 3.09 of the Charter.

The Council President shall:

- 1. Preserve order and decorum in the Council Chambers;
- 2. Observe and enforce all rules adopted by the Council for its government;
- 3. Decide all questions on order, in accordance with these rules, subject to appeal by any member to the Council.
- 4. Recognize any Councilor who seeks the floor when that Councilor is appropriately entitled to do so. Any Councilor wishing to speak must first obtain the floor by being recognized by the Town Council President. No member shall be recognized and given the floor to speak on the same matter more than once until after all other members of the Council have had an opportunity to be recognized and be heard.
- 5. Retain the authority, during Public Comment, to determine whether a speaker’s remarks fail to comply with these rules. The Town Council President shall have the authority to suspend such person’s right to speak, subject to the Council’s right to overrule such decision.

The Council President, as a member of the Council shall be governed in all matters and issues by the same rules and restrictions as other Councilors.

B. Questioning.

1. Any member of the Council shall have the right to question any individual, including members of the staff, on matters germane to the issue properly before the Council for discussion.
2. Potential disciplinary or personnel matters of the administrative staff shall be referred of the Town Manager and not discussed publicly.

C. Agenda Items Taken Out of Order. The Town Council President may, without the necessity of any vote, call for the agenda items out of the prescribed "Order of Business."

RULE 3- REMARKS AND DEBATES.

A. Speaking to Motion. Any Councilor wishing to speak must obtain the floor by being recognized by the Council President. No member shall be recognized and given the floor to speak on the same matter more than once until after all other members of the Council have had an opportunity to be recognized and be heard. After the motion is voted upon and before the next item is read, a member shall be able to speak briefly to the previous motion.

B. Courtesy. All speakers, including members of the Council, in the discussion, comments, or debate of any matter or issue, shall be courteous in their language and deportment and shall not engage in argumentative, contemptuous or disorderly behavior, or discuss or comment on personalities, or indulge in derogatory remarks or insinuations in respect to any other member of the Council, or any member of the staff or the public, but shall at all times, confine their remarks to those facts which are germane and relevant, as determined by the Council President, to the question or matter under discussion.

C. Remedy. The Council shall have the power to impose sanctions on its members, short of removal of office, for violation of these rules. If a member of the Council shall breach these rules, the Council President shall call such member to order, in which case such member shall be silent except to explain or continue in order. Additional consequences may include a verbal admonition, written reprimand, censure, expulsion from the meeting at which the conduct is occurring. Expulsion for such behavior in the Council's presence shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of the Council, specifying in the order of expulsion the cause thereof.

D. Town Manager. The Town Manager shall have the right to enter into a discussion of any matter coming before the Council.

RULE 4. - ORDER OF BUSINESS

- A. **Order of Business.** The order of business for Town Council meetings is set forth in § 2-33 of the Warren Town Code and shall be as follows:
1. Pledge of Allegiance
 2. Presentations, if any.
 3. Appointments, if any.
 4. Interviews, if any.
 5. Consider/Accept Minutes.
 6. Consent agenda.
 7. Introduction of Ordinances, if any.
 8. Public Hearings.
 9. Petitions, if any.
 10. Old business
 11. New business
 12. Reports of the manager, department heads, solicitor, if any.
 13. Adjournment

*Reports shall be received monthly and not at each regular meeting of the Town Council.

- B. **Recess.** The Town Council President may call a recess during any regular or special meeting.

RULE 5- EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. The Town Council shall follow the letter and the spirit of the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act.
- B. The Town Council may meet in executive session upon request by the Town Solicitor, Town Manager, or any member of the Town Council.
- C. **Electronic Devices:**
1. No recording devices of any kind shall be allowed during Executive Session, with the exception of the equipment used to make an official record of the session.
 2. Listening devices provided to the hearing impaired or for other reasons shall not be removed from the meeting room during an executive session.
- D. Personnel matters involving administrative staff shall only be considered as prescribed by the Town Charter, Town Ordinances, the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act, employee contract, collective bargaining agreements and personnel policies and procedures.
- E. The Open Meetings Act requires that discussions related to job performance, character, or physical or mental health of a person, which includes administrative staff, shall be conducted only after the person is notified in writing and given an opportunity to have the matter discussed in a public session.

- F. Councilors shall keep confidential all written materials and verbal information provided to them relative to Executive Sessions until such time as the matter is disclosed publicly, under provisions of the Rhode Island Open Meeting Act.

RULE 6- AGENDA

- A. The Town Clerk, under the direction of the Council President and with the input and cooperation of the Town Manager, shall prepare the agenda for each session of the Council in regular order in accordance with these rules. Such agenda shall include all matters requested by any Councilor, but it subject to review by the Solicitor and Town Manager.
- B. The Council President shall coordinate with the Town Clerk as to which items submitted by residents, organizations or other individuals shall be included on any agenda.
- C. Proclamations shall be requested through and sponsored by a Councilor. Residents, organizations and other individuals requesting a proclamation will be referred to the Council President.
- D. Any request for an item to be placed on the agenda must be submitted to the Town Clerk no later than 12:00pm noon on the Wednesday before a Tuesday meeting. Items for consideration by the Council should include name, address and telephone number of the person (or contact person (s) for a group asking) to be included on the agenda and should accompanied by supporting documentation for review by the Councilors prior to the meeting.
- E. The agenda for regular meetings will be finalized on the Wednesday before a Tuesday meeting, and made available for Councilors and the general public on Friday after 12:00 p.m. noon. Under unexpected or extraordinary circumstances, with the consent of the Council President, the agenda may be amended prior to 48 hours of a scheduled meeting, emergency meetings excepted.
- F. The Town of Warren will provide accommodations needed to ensure equal participation. Contact should be made with the Warren Town Clerk at least three (3) business days prior to the meeting so arrangements can be made to provide such assistance at no cost to the person requesting it. A request for this service can be made in writing or by calling (401) 245-7340 or “via RI Relay 1-800-745-5555” (TTY).
- G. When the Warren Town Council receives a request for support of a resolution from another Rhode Island City or Town Council or School Committee, the Council President will determine whether the Town Council has taken a position on the proposed legislation.
 - 1. If the Town Council has not taken a position on the proposed legislation, the resolution will be included in the Town Council’s packet for action and informative purposes.

RULE 7-PUBLIC COMMENT

- A. Public Comment on Agenda Items.** It is the practice of the Town Council to allow for public input on items included on an agenda at the time the matter is taken up by the Town Council providing the Town Council President determines that the speaker's comments comply with these rules.
- B. Rules Regarding Public Comment.**
1. The Town Council President will recognize members of the public after members of the Council have had an opportunity to be recognized and be heard.
 2. Speakers are asked to identify themselves by name and address.
 3. Dialogue between members of the audience is not permitted; comment and testimony are to be directed to the Council as a whole.
 4. It is understood that a person making a request to speak does so on his/her own behalf. For this reason and to guarantee all persons an ample opportunity to be heard, all speakers will be recognized for the same amount of time. No speaker will be allowed to yield part of all of his/her time to another, and no speaker will be credited with time requested but not used by another.
- C. Courtesy.** All speakers during Public Comment, in the discussion, comments, or debate of any matter or issue, shall be courteous in their language and deportment and shall not engage in or discuss or comment on personalities, or indulge in derogatory remarks or insinuations in respect to any members of the Council, or any member of the staff or the public, but shall at all times confine their remarks to those facts which are germane and relevant, as determined by the Council President, to the question or matter under discussion.
- D. Remedy.** The Council President shall retain authority to determine whether a speaker's remarks fail to comply with these rules or exceed the scope of the designated forum, and the Council President shall have the right to suspend such person's right to speak, subject to the Council's right to overrule such decision by a majority vote of the Council.

RULE 8- INTRAGOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION/INTERACTION

- A. Solicitor.** The following officials are authorized to contact the Town Solicitor regarding municipal matters: Councilors, Town Manager, Town Clerk and other department heads as authorized by the Town Manager.

- B. **Department Heads.** In accordance with the Charter, the Town Manager is the chief administrative officer of the Town. Therefore, Councilors who have matters that concern the several and various departments or area of responsibility under the jurisdiction of the Town Manager shall address these issues through the Town Manager in accordance with § 3.12 of the Charter.
- C. **Confidential Information.**
1. In the course of their duties, councilors may receive information through the administration about events in the community that may need to be treated as confidential. Councilors must not use or disclose confidential information.
 2. If a councilor has any doubt whether information should be released to the public or the press, he/she will contact the Council President or the Town Manager for authorization to disclose the information.
 3. If a councilor transgresses these rules, the council reserves the right to vote to instruct the administration that the member who transgresses the rule will be excluded from future confidential communications from the administration for a period of time to be established by a majority votes of the Town Council.
- D. The Town Manager will coordinate attendance by administrative staff at all meetings of the Council and its subcommittees.

RULE 9- MISCELLANEOUS

- A. No rule shall be suspended except by a majority vote of Councilors present at the meeting, and a motion to suspend a rule is not debatable.
- B. **Robert's Rules of Order.** On all questions of practice or procedure not provided for by these rules, the practice and procedure set forth in *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall prevail. If there is a conflict, these rules shall supersede *Robert's Rules of Order*.
- C. **Amendments to Rules.** Amendments to these rules shall be made by resolution.

APPENDIX I

Procedural Rules of Order. Once the main motion is properly placed on the floor, several related motions may be employed in addressing the main motion, and if properly made and seconded, must be disposed of before the main motion can be acted upon. The following motions are appropriate and may be made by the Councilor at any appropriate time during the discussion of the main motion. They are listed in order of precedence. The first three subsidiary motions are not debatable; the last three are debatable.

1. **Subsidiary Motions.**
 - a. **Lay on the Table.** Any Councilor may move to lay the matter under discussion on the table. This motion temporarily suspends any further discussion of the pending motion without setting a time certain to resume debate. To bring the matter back before the Council, a motion must be adopted that the matter be taken from the table. A motion to take from the table must be made at the same meeting

at which it was placed on the table or at the next meeting of the Council held within five calendar days of the original meeting. Otherwise the motion that was tabled dies, although it can be raised later as a new motion. A motion to lay on the table is not debatable.

- b. Move Previous Question.** Any Councilor may move to immediately bring the question being debated by the Council to a vote, suspending any further debate. The motion must be made and seconded without interrupting one who already has the floor. A majority vote of the quorum present is required for passage. A motion to move previous question is not debatable.
- c. Limit or Extend Limits of Debate.** Any Councilor may vote to put limits on the length of debate. The motion must be made and seconded and requires a majority votes of the quorum present to pass. A motion to limit or extend limits of debate is not debatable.
- d. Postpone to a Time Certain.** Any Councilor may move to postpone debate and action on a motion to a date and time certain. A motion to postpone to a time certain is debatable.
- e. Commit of Refer.** Any Councilor may move that the matter being discussed should be referred to staff, a committee, or a commission for further study. The motion may contain directions for the staff, committee, or commission, as well as a date upon which the matter will be returned to the Council's agenda. If not date is set for returning the item to the Council Agenda, any Councilor may move, at any time, to require that the item be returned to the Agenda. A motion to commit of refer is debatable.
- f. Amend.** Any Councilor may amend the main motion or any amendment made to the main motion. Before the main motion may be acted upon, all amendments and amendments to the amendments must be first acted upon. An amendment must be related to the main motion or amendment to which it is directed. Any amendment that substitutes a new motion rather than amending the existing motion is out of order and may be so declared by the Council President. A motion to amend is debatable.

2. Motions of Privilege, Order, and Convenience.

The following actions by the Council are to ensure orderly conduct of meetings and are for the convenience of the Councilors.

These motions take precedence over any pending main or subsidiary motion and may be debated except as noted.

- a. Call for Orders of the Day.** Any Councilor may demand that the Agenda be followed in the order stated herein. No second is required, and the Council President must comply unless the Council, by majority vote, sets aside the Agenda order of the day. A motion to call for orders of the day is not debatable.
- b. Request for Privilege.** Any Councilor, at any time during the meeting, may make a request to accommodate the personal needs of the Council for such things as reducing noise, adjusting room temperature, ventilation, etc. The validity of the request is ruled on by the Town Council President.

- c. **Recess.** Any Councilor may move for a recess. No second is required, and the Town Council President must comply unless the Council, by majority vote, sets aside the motion.
- d. **Adjourn.** Any Councilor may move to adjourn at any time, even if there is business pending. The motion must be seconded, and a majority vote is required for passage. A motion to adjourn is not debatable.
- e. **Point of Order.** Any Councilor may require the Council President to enforce the rules of the Council by raising a point of order. The point of order shall be ruled upon the Council President.
- f. **Appeal.** Should any Councilor be dissatisfied with a ruling from the Council President, he or she may move to appeal the ruling to the full Council. The motion to appeal requires a second, and the ruling of the Council President may be overturned by a majority vote.
- g. **Suspend the Rules.** Any Councilor may move to suspend the rules if necessary to accomplish a matter that would otherwise violate the rules. The motion requires a second, and a majority vote is required for passage.
- h. **Division of Question.** Any Councilor may move to divide the subject matter of a motion which is made up of several parts so that Councilors can vote separately on each part. This motion may also be applied to complex ordinance or resolutions.
- i. **Reconsider.** Except for votes regarding matters that are quasi-judicial in nature or matters that require a noticed Public Hearing, the Council may reconsider any vote taken at the same meeting, but no later than the same or next regular meeting, to correct inadvertent or precipitant errors or to consider new information not available at the time of the vote. The motion to reconsider must be made by a Councilor who voted on the prevailing side, must be seconded, and requires a majority vote of the quorum for passage, regardless of the vote required to adopt the motion being reconsidered. If the matter is to be reconsidered at the next regular meeting, a Councilor on the prevailing side must ask the Town Clerk to place the matter on the Agenda. If the matter to reconsider is successful, the matter to be reconsidered takes no special precedence over other pending matters and any special voting requirements related thereto still apply. Except pursuant to a motion to reconsider, once a matter has been determined and voted upon, the same matter cannot be brought up again at the same meeting.
- j. **Rescind, Repeal or Annul.** The Council may rescind, repeal, or annul any prior action taken with referenced to any legislative matter so long as the action to rescind, repeal, or annul complies with all the rules applicable to the initial adoption, including any special voting or notice requirements or unless otherwise specified by law.