



City of Grass Valley City Council Agenda Action Sheet

Title: A Resolution Adopting Rosenberg’s Rules of Order (2011)

CEQA: Not a project

Recommendation: That Council adopt Resolution 2024-81 to establish simplified rules of procedure for meetings of the Council, committees, boards, and commissions of the City.

Prepared by: Taylor Whittingslow

Council Meeting Date: 11/26/2024

Date Prepared: 11/20/2024

Agenda: Consent

Background Information: The Council has expressed its preference to adopt the rules of order for Council meetings and meetings of all subordinate legislative bodies to ensure meetings are conducted in an orderly, fair, efficient, and democratic manner. The proposed Resolution adopts the 2011 Rosenberg’s Rules of Order, a simplified version of Robert’s Rules of Parliamentary Procedure more suited to bodies with fewer numbers than those for which Robert’s Rules were designed. These rules were drafted by Davis City Attorney (and later Yolo Superior Court Judge) David Rosenberg and are widely adopted by California local governments.

To the knowledge of present staff, the Council has not adopted rules of order. As a result, no clear rule governs the treatment of abstention. So, for example, was the recent vote to urge support for Proposition 36 passed by two “yes” votes, one “no” vote, one abstention, and one absence? After a study, the City Attorney’s office concluded it was, but adoption of Rosenberg’s Rules would provide a simple, clear answer – abstentions acquiesce in the action or non-action of most of those who vote.

Rosenberg’s Rules of Order identify two treatments of abstention. If the Rules instruct to count the votes of “those present,” then an abstention vote counts both towards quorum and against the motion. The other strategy and Rosenberg’s default rule (which staff recommends) is to count an abstention only for a quorum, not as a vote on the motion. Thus, abstaining members are present for the purpose of determining quorum but do not weigh for or against the motion.

Article VI, section 3 of the Charter allows a majority of a quorum (i.e., two “yes” votes of a quorum of three) to approve an action other than the budget (for which at

least three votes are required). Thus, Rosenberg's default rule is consistent with the Charter.

Council Goals/Objectives: Orderly, fair, efficient, and democratic public meetings.

Fiscal Impact: None. This resolution was prepared and can be implemented with budgeted resources.

Funds Available: N/A

Account #: N/A

Reviewed by: _City Manager

Attachments:

- Resolution 2024-81
- Rosenberg's Rules of Order (2011)