

COUNCIL MEETING PROCEDURES
FOR THE
CITY OF HEWITT, TEXAS

Adopted April 7, 1997

Revised October 5, 1998

**COUNCIL MEETING PROCEDURES
FOR THE
CITY OF HEWITT, TEXAS**

As provided in Section 2-10 of the City of Hewitt Charter and effective immediately following the adoption of this policy by the City Council of the City of Hewitt, the following rules and order of business will be adhered to, and they shall remain in effect unless otherwise changed by the City Council:

A. **MEETINGS** - Three types of meetings are recognized.

1. **Regular Meetings** will be held on the first and third Monday of each month. These meeting will be held in the council room at the city hall commencing at 7:00 p.m. These meeting may be preceded by dinner meetings beginning at 5:30 p.m.
2. **Special Meetings** are subject to call by the mayor, city manager, or any council member, subject to majority will. Except in unusual circumstances, these meetings will be held at the city hall, at a stated time. Purpose of such meetings is to act upon matters of an emergency nature which should not be delayed until a regular meeting. Special meetings, as all other meetings, unless meeting specific criteria shall be open to the public. Minutes of such meetings will be maintained as a regular meeting.

Majority will of the council shall be determined by a canvass of all members by telephone or letter, with a majority of council members expressing themselves as able to attend the meeting if called.

3. **Workshop Meetings** are subject to call by the mayor, city manager or any council member at the majority will. The time, place and purpose will be stated at each instance. The purpose of such meetings shall be to hear reports and to discuss in depth matters of interest to the city, such as a meeting with one of the city's appointed committees, or the council alone may wish to explore a matter in great detail.

Recent policy has been to hold regular workshop meetings at 7:00 p.m. on the Monday of the week preceding the regular meeting. Normally, no official council action will be taken at such meetings and no minutes will be taken. The public is welcome to attend, but will not ordinarily participate in the discussions.

In order to conduct any business or to discuss any matter on the agenda, a quorum (4) of the entire council shall be present at any council meeting.

B. **AGENDA** The following stipulations relate to the agenda for meetings of the council:

**** NO ACTION CAN BE TAKEN ON ANY ITEM UNLESS THAT ITEM HAS BEEN POSTED ON THE AGENDA FOR THAT MEETING AND THE AGENDA POSTED IN A PUBLIC PLACE SEVENTY-TWO (72) HOURS PRIOR TO THE MEETING**

1. All council members may submit agenda items. Agenda items must reach the city manager's office at City Hall by 12:00 noon Thursday of the week prior to the regular Monday meeting. Anyone requesting to place an item on the agenda may do so by letter to the city manager, stating the general subject matter. City manager may delay to the next meeting to research and inform council of all pertinent matters. The city manager will exercise his/her best judgment in determining the most important items received for placing on the agenda and adding other items of business to come before the council. An item not appearing on the agenda shall not be taken up for discussion as a matter of council business during any council meeting. However, the council may receive items as information.

Any member of the city staff wishing to have an item placed on the agenda shall submit that item to the city manager's office, through regular supervisory channels.

2. The agenda packets for all regular meetings will be made up and can be picked up by the council members at the police dept., late Thursday afternoon preceding the meetings. Agenda packets not picked up by 5:30 p.m. will be delivered to the appropriate council member's home on Thursday night. If no one is home, they will be delivered Friday. Council members may call the police dept. to pick-up their packets. This should afford ample time for all council members to inquire into the nature of each matter to be discussed or to personally investigate the matter so as to better inform himself or herself before a council meeting.
3. The city secretary's office will assume responsibility for issuing to any newspaper, radio and television stations who requests, a copy of the agenda advising them of the date, time and place and items to be discussed at all council meetings. The city secretary's office will also assume the responsibility for compliance with the open meetings law and notifying any person requested or required to appear before the council.
4. As it relates to the special meetings, the council will restrict consideration only to the item or items on the agenda. The city secretary will follow the same procedure as above advising the parties concerned. No matter will be accepted by the chair for discussion at any meeting unless it has been posted on the agenda for that meeting; however items may be received as information.

5. Emergency items. In the event that a situation arises in which the mayor, city manager or council members can legitimately classify as an emergency as specified in the statutes, that item may be added to the agenda as late as two hours before a meeting. In such event, the nature of the emergency must be specified in the agenda and notices given to any who have filed a written request for same.

C. COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

These procedures shall apply to all meetings of the city council. The mayor shall be the presiding officer at all meetings of the city council and a vote in all of its proceedings. Council members shall speak in council meetings only upon being recognized by the presiding officer, whose recognition shall not be unreasonably withheld. In the event of the absence of the mayor, the pro-tem mayor shall be the presiding officer. The mayor pro-tem shall have a vote in all matters as the mayor pro-tem continues to be a council member even when presiding. In the event of the absence of the mayor and pro-tem mayor, the council members in attendance, if constituting a quorum, shall select one of its members to preside over that meeting.

1. **Call to Order** All meetings will begin promptly at the hour stated.
2. **Agenda** Ordinarily the mayor or other presiding officer will follow the agenda as published, however the presiding officer shall have, subject to the approval of the council, the prerogative of addressing items out of order should such change facilitate guests or other factors.
3. **Presentation of Agenda Items** Agenda items scheduled by the city manager or city staff will be presented by the city manager or the city manager may call on a staff member to present the item. Staff members may be invited by the city manager to attend council meetings and be available as resource persons, however they are not to speak on city issues unless directed by the city manager. This does not preclude a staff member representing himself or herself at a meeting, but staff members should be cautious about taking positions that could be contrary to the position of their supervisors, for this could cause questions concerning their ability to follow through with instructions from their supervisors. Agenda items scheduled by others will be presented by the one who asked for the item to be placed on the agenda. It shall be the responsibility of the city secretary to notify each person or organization which has requested a spot on the agenda when the item has been scheduled.
4. **Presentations from the Floor** When a staff member, other than the city manager, or a guest from the audience is recognized for a presentation, that person shall move immediately to the podium and make the presentation from that spot. The speaker shall identify herself or himself by name and address, the agency represented, and the nature of the presentation prior to beginning. For items appearing on the agenda,

after the presentation, discussion by the council may be allowed. The speaker shall remain at the podium until all council questions have been answered and the speaker has been dismissed by the mayor. Speaking from the podium will assure that the presentation is picked up by the recording equipment. Any Council member may ask questions for clarification or information, on the topic being discussed, from any member of the audience during any meeting.

5. **Council Action** After the council has heard all of the facts, reviewed the supporting data, and discussed the arguments for and against each agenda item, it will act by approving or disapproving a motion. In the event that there is no motion or no second to a motion, no action will be deemed taken except in situations in which the presiding officer concludes that there is a consensus among the council and that the issue is one that would not require an official vote.

D. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

Minutes of all meetings will be kept by the city secretary. The secretary will record the proceedings and the tapes will be kept for at least six months unless there have been questions raised which indicate possible need to keep the tapes longer. The tape recordings are to assist the secretary in compiling the minutes and are not to be considered as any indication of official council action. The minutes will record the presence of council members, city staff, and all guests speaking to any agenda item. The minutes will include all areas of discussion and identify each speaker and then, as far as possible, the key point or points that were made. The minutes will not be a verbatim recording of all discussions. The minutes will reflect all motions made, who made and who seconded the motions, and the outcome of each motion including the roll call vote if requested. The minutes will include the key points of any specific comments made by members for the record.

Each agenda item will be identified by sub-headings to facilitate review by council members. It is important that the minutes include the name and address of any guests who address the council as well as the specific subject or request presented. The minutes shall not include verbatim copies of all statements nor any extraneous discussions. Copies of the minutes will be included in the agenda packets distributed to council members prior to the next regular meeting.

E. PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

In regular and special meeting, Robert's Rules of order will be followed. The following commonly used procedures shall be followed: For a more detailed description of Parliamentary Procedure, refer to Robert's Rules of Order.

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS, MOTIONS AND THEIR PRECEDENCE

	<u>Debatable</u>	<u>Amenable</u>	<u>A Majority Vote (of those present)</u>	<u>2/3</u>
1. To Adjourn	NO	NO	YES	NO
2. To take a recess	NO	YES	YES	NO
3. For the previous question	NO	NO	NO	YES
4. To continue to a time certain	YES	YES	YES	NO
5. To commit, refer or recommit	YES	YES	YES	NO
6. To amend	YES	NO	YES	NO
7. To amend an amendment	YES	NO	YES	NO
8. To offer a substitute amendment	YES	NO	YES	NO
9. To amend a substitute amendment	YES	NO	YES	NO
10. To postpone indefinitely	YES	NO	YES	NO
11. Take under advisement	YES	NO	YES	NO
12. For the original question	NO	NO	YES	NO
13. To table	NO	NO	YES	NO

Any council member may call for the question and it shall immediately be put to vote. Passage of the motion to address the previous question shall terminate debate on the motion, amendment or item under discussion and action shall be taken on that item.

The council may agree to limit debate on any business before it. That agreement may be formalized by a majority of the council. The presiding officer shall not entertain any dilatory motions.

F. DECORUM AND DEBATE

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE CHAIRPERSON MAINTAIN ORDER AT ALL TIMES. THE CHAIR MUST NOT PERMIT DEBATE OR COMMENTS FROM ANY WHO HAVE NOT BEEN RECOGNIZED. INTERRUPTIONS MUST BE SILENCED BY VOICE, USE OF THE GAVEL OR OTHER MEANS, AND, IN THE EVENT OF ANY PERSON'S FAILURE TO HEED THE DIRECTIONS OF THE CHAIR, THE CHAIR MAY HAVE THAT INDIVIDUAL REMOVED FROM THE ROOM.

When a measure is presented for consideration to the council, the presiding officer shall recognize the appropriate individual to present the case. When two or more members wish to speak, the presiding officer shall name the member who is to speak first. No member of

the council shall interrupt another while speaking except to make a point of order or to make a point of personal privilege. No member shall speak more than five minutes on any amendment to the question except as further provided in this rule.

No member shall speak more than the time limits provided herein on any subject or amendment, and such member may use his/her time in any combination, in separate speech or comments totaling the number of minutes permitted. The mayor shall not be obligated to recognize any council member for a second comment on the subject or amendment until every council member wishing to speak has been allowed a first comment. Council members shall also have the right to yield a portion of time to another member.

Any member deciding to speak more than five minutes on any question or more than five minutes on any amendment to the question, shall be accorded the privilege only upon motion supported by two-thirds of the council. No member shall be permitted to interrupt while another member is speaking.

No council member shall be permitted to indulge in personalities, use language personally offensive, arraign motives of members, charge deliberate misrepresentation, or use language tending to hold a member of the city council or staff up to contempt.

If a member is speaking or otherwise transgressing the rules of the council, the presiding officer shall, or any council member may, call him or her to order in which case he or she shall immediately be quiet unless permitted to explain. The council shall, if appealed to, decide the case without debate. If the decision is in favor of the member called to order, he/she shall be at liberty to proceed, but not otherwise, and if the disruptions continues, he/she shall be liable to censure or to such punishment as the council deem proper consistent with State Statutes, City Ordinances or City Charter if applicable.

G. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS

1. All citizens are encouraged to discuss matters of concern with the staff and individual council members prior to placing items on the agenda. Many times this will expedite a resolution or allow proper investigation of the matter for presentation to the entire council.

NO CITIZEN NOR STAFF MEMBER MAY SPEAK NOR OTHERWISE INTERRUPT ANY MEETING UNTIL RECOGNIZED BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER.

2. To maintain decorum at public hearings, the mayor will ask the citizens present if they wish to speak for or against the item on the agenda. If so, they will be given an opportunity to do so at the proper time, when recognized by the chair. If more than five citizens wish to address the council on any single agenda item, those citizens are advised to select spokespersons to present their case.
3. Citizens who wish to bring up a matter that pertains to city business or address an item

on the agenda may do so, but only under the agenda item, "Hear Visitors." Citizens must remember that the council is prohibited by law from discussing or acting on any item that has not been posted on the agenda.

4. Total time for presentations on any one item or topic shall be limited to twenty-five minutes. Citizens addressing the city council on items not on the agenda shall be limited to five minutes each. The city council members shall not enter into discussion on any subject not properly placed on the agenda, however the council members may ask questions for clarification purposes.
5. As a general rule, citizens may not participate in the discussion of the council workshop session.

H. DEFINITIONS

Receive - shall generally mean a presentation by a member of the council, staff or a citizen after having been scheduled on the agenda of a meeting. May or may not include action by the council.

Consider - shall generally mean discussion by the council and/or staff and will usually include action by the council.

Public Hearing - shall be a meeting wherein the citizens will be allowed to express concerns, pro or con, on a specific item on the agenda.

Adopted this 7th day of April, 1997.

Revised this 5th day of October, 1998.