

# TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES

## TOWN COUNCIL RULES OF ORDER AND PROCEDURE Adopted \_\_\_\_\_

### **Rule 1. Public Meetings.**

- 1.1 All Town Council meetings shall be open to the public except as otherwise provided by law.

### **Rule 2. Regular Meetings.**

- 2.1 The Town Council shall meet the first Tuesday of each month at 7 ~~6:30~~ p.m. in Town Hall. ~~The meeting shall not be continued to the next day except due to special circumstances or an emergency.~~ This date may be changed from time to time as needed by a majority vote of the Town Council. In order to continue a meeting beyond 10:30 p.m. ~~a majority of the Council must approve by vote and to continue the meeting for each ½ hour thereafter must be approved by a majority of the Council.~~ Agenda items scheduled but not considered during a meeting shall be automatically set over by the town clerk to the next town council meeting or may be considered at a special meeting called for that purpose in the manner provided herein. In setting matters over to the next meeting or a special meeting, the town clerk is directed to take into consideration all notice provisions relative to municipal ordinances and, specifically, F.S. § 166.041.
- 2.2 The Town Clerk or designee shall prepare the agenda, notices, and package materials for the meetings as required by Florida law.

### **Rule 3. Special Meetings**

- 3.1 A Special Meeting may be called by the Mayor or a majority of the Town Council as necessary. The Town Clerk or designee shall prepare the agenda, notices, and package materials for the meetings as required by Florida law. Such notification shall be given no less than 72 hours before commencement of the special meeting and shall state the time, place, and subject of the meeting. **In the event a Council Member, preferable in writing, requests a special meeting, the Town Manager shall, as soon as practicable, confer with the Mayor and then Council members to determine if a special meeting should be scheduled.**
- 3.2 The Mayor, Town Manager, or a majority of the Council Members may call an Emergency Town Council meeting when a sudden, urgent event or situation arises necessitating immediate action and judgment. The Town Clerk or designee shall post the agenda and notify each Town Council Member, the Town Manager, and Town Attorney immediately. Such notification shall be given as soon as practicable before commencement of the meeting and shall state the time, place, and subject of the meeting. **In the event a Council**

**Member, preferable in writing, requests an emergency meeting, the Town Manager shall, as soon as practicable, confer with the Mayor and then Council members to determine if an emergency meeting should be scheduled.**

**Rule 4. Adjourned Meeting** A Town Council session may be adjourned or continued from day to day or for more than one day, but the adjournment shall not be extended beyond the next regular meeting.

**Rule 5. Presiding Officer**

- 5.1 The Mayor shall preside at Town Council meetings and shall be recognized as head of the Town government for ceremonial purposes and by the Governor for martial law purposes.
- 5.2 The Vice-Mayor shall act as Mayor during the absence or disability of the Mayor and if a vacancy in the office of the mayor occurs, shall become interim Mayor until a Mayor is selected by a majority vote of the Council at the next regular council meeting.
- 5.3 In the absence of the Mayor and Vice-Mayor the Council member with the most seniority shall act as the Presiding Officer. In the event there is more than one Council member with the most seniority the Council members shall select the Presiding Officer.

**Rule 6. Corporate Seal** The duly appointed Town Clerk shall keep in custody the Town's corporate seal and ensure its proper and lawful use on behalf of the Town. No person shall use the Town Seal for a purpose other than official Town business.

**Rule 7. Presentations & Public Comment**

- 7.1 Town Council meetings are business meetings of the Council and the right to limit discussion rests with the Council.
- 7.2 Except as otherwise set forth in these Rules, persons who make a presentation to the Town Council must limit the duration of their presentation to 15 minutes. Exceptions may be granted by the Presiding Officer.
- 7.3 Public Comments made by a member of the public will be limited to one time per subject matter for a total of three minutes. Exceptions may be granted by the Presiding Officer. Individuals addressing the Council on the same topic as an individual who has already spoken should attempt to provide new information and not repeat the comments of the previous speakers. Where possible, individual grievances should first be taken up with Town Staff before comments are made at a Town Council meeting. Persons desiring to speak on a topic shall submit a comment card to the Town Clerk. Public Comments received in writing will be made part of the record of the meeting but shall not be read aloud.

- 7.4 The Town Council may withhold comment or direct the Town Manager to take action on requests or comments.
- 7.5 Each person addressing the Council shall step up to the podium and state his/her name ~~and address~~ in an audible tone of voice for the record. It is preferred that each person also state his/her address. All public comments must be addressed to the Council as a body and not to individuals. Personal verbal attacks upon Council members, staff, and/or members of the public will not be tolerated. Any person making impertinent obscene, personally insulting, defamatory, or slanderous remarks or who becomes boisterous or disruptive while addressing the Council shall be barred by the presiding officer from speaking further, unless permission to continue or again address the Council is granted by a majority vote of the Council members present.
- 7.6 Each person addressing the Council should refrain from advocating the election or defeat of a candidate for public office of the Town, either partisan or non-partisan: (1.) through the use of words, dates, signs, props and/or wearing apparel that convey a message of express advocacy for a person or group of persons; or (2) through comments that, when taken as a whole, can only be interpreted as advocating the election or defeat of one or more identified candidates.

#### **Rule 8. Decorum and Order**

- 8.1 The presiding officer shall preserve decorum and order and decide all questions of order subject to the Council's appeal.
- 8.2 During all meetings of the Town Council, Council members must preserve order and decorum and a Council member shall neither by conversation or otherwise, delay or interrupt the proceeding or the peace of the Council nor disturb any Council member while speaking, or refuse to obey the rules of the Council or its Presiding Officer, except as otherwise provided herein.
- 8.3 No member of the public shall, during a Council meeting, make or cause to be made any disruptive noise or sound, or display any sign or graphic material of any kind in the Council Chambers, except in connection with a presentation made to the Council by a speaker at the podium.
- 8.4 The presiding officer shall have the authority to recess a meeting in order to re-establish the decorum of the meeting.
- 8.5 The Town Council is committed to maintaining civility in public and political discourse and expects the public to do the same. All comments by members of the Council, advisory board members, staff, and/or the public shall respect the right of all citizens in our community to hold different opinions; avoid rhetoric intended to humiliate or question the wisdom of those whose opinions are different from ours; strive to understand differing perspectives; be truthful, not

accusatory and avoid distortion; and avoid violence, prejudice and incivility towards citizens, employees, and officials of the Town of Loxahatchee Groves.

- 8.6 If it becomes necessary, the Presiding Officer may recuse the meeting in order to restore decorum and may request the Sheriff's Office assist in maintaining order and decorum at the meeting.

### **Rule 9. Rules of Debate**

- 9.1 Sequence of Debate: With the exception of quasi-judicial matters, items before the Town Council shall be commenced by presentation of the item by a staff member, followed by public comment on the item. Once the presiding officer closes public comment, he or she shall call for a motion and a second on the item and then open debate by the Council. Once debate has concluded on the item, the presiding officer shall call for a vote on the item. A roll call vote may be requested by any Council member on any item.
- 9.2 Presiding Officer May Move, Second & Debate: The Presiding Officer may make a motion or second on any item subject only to such limitations of debate as are imposed by these rules on all Council members and shall not be deprived of any of the rights and privileges of a Council member by reason of the Council member acting as the Presiding Officer.
- 9.3 Responsibility of Presiding Officer: The Presiding Officer has the responsibility of controlling and expediting debate. A Council member who has been recognized to speak on a question has a right to the undivided attention of the Council. The Presiding Officer responsibility is to keep the subject clearly before the Council members, to rule out irrelevant discussion, and to restate the question whenever necessary.
- 9.4 All Members Shall Vote: No member of the Council who is present at any meeting of the Council at which an official decision, ruling or other official action is to be taken or adopted may abstain from voting in regard to such decision, ruling or act and a vote shall be recorded or counted for each such member present, except when, with respect to any such Council member, there is a conflict of interest under the provisions of Chapter 112, Florida Statutes. In such cases, such Council member shall comply with the disclosure requirements of Section 112.313, Florida Statutes.
- 9.5 Getting the Floor; Improper References to be Avoided: Every Council member desiring to speak shall address the Presiding Officer and upon recognition by the Presiding Officer, shall confine comments to the item under debate, avoiding all personalities and indecorous language.
- 9.6 Interruptions: A Council member, once recognized, shall not be interrupted when speaking except to call the Council member to order or as herein otherwise provided. If a Council member while speaking is called to order, said

Council member shall cease speaking until the question of order is determined, and if in order, the Council member shall be permitted to proceed.

- 9.7 Withdrawal of Motions: Any motion before the Council may be withdrawn at any time prior to a vote being taken thereon by the Council member making such motion, upon agreement by the Council member seconding said motion to withdraw the second.
- 9.8 Amending of Motions: At any time during discussion of a motion on the floor, a motion to amend said motion may be made. If the amending motion is seconded, the Council shall at the conclusion of discussion, first vote on the amending motion and then vote upon the original motion in its amended form. An amending motion may be withdrawn in the same manner as set forth in subparagraph 9.7 above.
- 9.9 Motion to Reconsider: A motion to reconsider any action taken by the Council may be made only during the meeting that such action was taken. Such motion must be made by one of the Council members on the prevailing side, but may be seconded by any Council member. The motion to reconsider may be made at any time and have precedence over all other motions. Nothing herein contained shall be construed to prevent any member of the Council from making or remaking the same or any other motion at a subsequent meeting of the Council. **If a meeting is continued to a second night, that is the next day, then this shall be deemed to be part of the initial meeting.**

#### **Rule 10. Appointments to the Council and Boards & Committees**

- 10.1 Vacancies on the Town Council or any Board or Committee of the Town of Loxahatchee Groves shall be announced on the Town Council agenda, and on the Town website. All interested persons shall submit an application letter of interest and resume to the Town Clerk by the deadline stated in the announcement. The Town Clerk shall determine whether or not the interested person is a qualified elector of the Town and submit that information to the Town Council.
- 10.2 To fill a vacancy on the Town Council, the Town Council shall vote by ballot. The Town Clerk shall prepare the ballots, listing the qualified candidates that submitted a letter of interest and resume by the stated deadline. The Town Council may, by majority vote of the Council, change the voting process at any time.
- 10.3 To fill a vacancy on any Board or Committee of the Town other than the Town Council, the Town Council shall vote on the appointment by motion and second.

**Rule 11. Quorum** A majority of the full Council shall constitute a quorum. No ordinance, resolution, or motion shall be adopted except by the affirmative vote of at least three members of the Town Council. If no quorum exists within fifteen(15) minutes after the

time designated for the meeting of the Council to commence or if a quorum is lost, the Mayor or the Vice Mayor or, in their absence, the Council Member with the most seniority, shall adjourn the meeting. The names of the members present and the time of adjournment shall be recorded in the minutes by the Clerk.

**Rule 12. Absent Member Participation by Telephone Conference**

A member of the Town Council who is absent, with excuse, may participate and vote by telephone conference in a Council meeting where there is a physical quorum present at the physical meeting site and where the Council determines that extraordinary circumstances exist to justify the Council allowing the Member to participate by telephone. However, a Council member shall not be allowed to participate by phone in a quasi-judicial hearings.

**Rule 13. Suspension and Amendment of these Rules**

13.1 Suspension of Rules: Any provision of these rules not governed by the Town Charter or Town Code may be temporarily suspended by a vote of a majority of the Town Council.

13.2 Amendment of Rules: These rules may be amended, or new rules adopted, by a majority vote of the Town Council, provided that the proposed amendments or new rules shall have been introduced into the record.

**Rule 14. Preparation/Delivery of Agenda** The Town Manager, Town Clerk or designee shall prepare the agenda and make every effort to deliver a complete agenda kit to the Council Members no later than 5 :00 P.M. on the Wednesday prior to the regular meeting. Agenda kits for special and emergency meetings will be distributed in as timely a manner as possible. The agenda, as well as lengthy reports and standard contracts that are part of the agenda's back-up documentation, shall be available for review in Town Administration.

**Rule 15. Special Presentations** This is the segment of the meeting where positive recognition is expressed. Proclamations are typically presented at the beginning of the meeting. Should a Council Member desire a proclamation that will be delivered elsewhere, it should be brought up under their comments for Council authorization. A proclamation should always "proclaim" a day, week, or month as something specific. Certificates of Appreciation and Commendation should be done when honoring an individual or accomplishment. Whenever practical, the use of certificates is encouraged.

**Rule 16. Council Member Comments**

16.1 The purpose of Council Member Comments is to promote the public discussion of matters relating to Town business and to encourage the dissemination of information. Any Council Member may submit reports and information on items relating to Town business. When possible, the other Council Members, the Town Manager, and the Town Attorney should receive such materials in advance. Council Members may also request the preparation of proclamations, resolutions, ordinances, reports, and other actions of the Council during this portion of the agenda, subject to majority consensus. All such requests shall be referred to the Manager or the Attorney, as appropriate.

16.2 Official actions may not be taken under Council Member Comments ~~comments in the case of an emergency or for other situations necessitating immediate action as may be determined by~~ other than a majority of the Council to provide staff direction.

16.3 Council Members should refrain from advocating the election or defeat of a candidate for public office, either partisan or non-partisan: (1.) through the use of words, dates, signs, props and/or wearing apparel that convey a message of express advocacy for a person or group of persons; or (2) through comments that, when taken as a whole, can only be interpreted as advocating the election or defeat of one or more identified candidates.

**Rule 17. Council Member Attendance at Other Meetings**

17.1 Council Members may attend but may not speak at Town advisory board meetings.

17.2 Council Members may attend and speak at meetings of outside boards and committees. If speaking at such meetings, the Council Member speaks for Town Council and must accurately represent the position of Town Council and not that of the individual Council Member.

*Adopted by Resolution* \_\_\_ *on* \_\_\_\_\_.