



**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS POLICY HANDBOOK**  
**Resolution 2023-05**  
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## ARTICLE I

### OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS AND REPRESENTATION OF THE CITY PROTOCOL

The City Charter provides information on the roles and responsibilities of the Board of City Commissioners. In accordance with City Charter, Sec. 4.5 (B), the Board of Commissioners shall determine its own rules and order of business by resolution within 90 days following each election. Once adopted by resolution, the legislation must be adhered to until any modifications thereof are made. The Board of Commissioners hereby adopt these policy guidelines describing the protocol for various official communications and representations on behalf of the City of Madeira Beach.

#### I. OVERVIEW OF ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities of elected officials can be found in the City Charter, City Code as well as established past practices.

#### CITY CHARTER DUTIES

##### 1. Mayor (City Charter, Section 4.3)

- Presides at all meetings of the Board of Commissioners.
- Have a voice and vote in the proceedings of the Commission.
- Recognized as the official head of the City of Madeira Beach, Florida, government for all ceremonial purposes and may issue Proclamations and award the Key to the City.
- Official for service of process (receives lawsuits and other documents on behalf of the City of Madeira Beach).
- Official designated to represent the City of Madeira Beach, Florida, in all agreements with other entities or certifications to other government entities but shall have no administrative duties except as required to carry out the responsibilities herein.

##### 2. Vice-Mayor (City Charter, Section 4.4)

- Appointed by the Board of Commissioners at the first regular or special meeting, which shall be held on or before the last day of the month in which the election was held to serve as Vice-Mayor for a one (1) year term.
- Act as Mayor during the absence or disability of the Mayor. Should the Vice-Mayor be required to act as Mayor for a period in excess of thirty (30) days, he/she shall receive the compensation of the Mayor retroactive to the date upon which he/she assumed the Mayoral duties.

##### 3. Board of Commissioners (City Charter, Article IV)

All members of the Board of Commissioners have equal votes. No Commission member has more authority than any other Commission member. Each Commission member shall fully participate in the Board of Commissioners' meetings and may represent the City at ceremonial and/or formal functions at the request of the Mayor or District Commissioners.

## **II. GUIDELINES RELATED TO COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS**

### **1. Ceremonial Events**

- Requests for City representative(s) at ceremonial events will be handled by the City Manager's Office. The Mayor serves as the designated City representative for ceremonial purposes. If the Mayor is unavailable to attend, the Vice-Mayor will be asked to represent the City, and if the Vice-Mayor is unavailable, another Commission member will be asked to represent the City. District Commissioners can also represent the City at ceremonial events if requested.
- Invitations received at City Hall by mail or email are presumed to be for official City representation. Invitations addressed to Commission members at their homes are presumed to be unofficial, personal invitations.
- All Commissioners are encouraged to show up and positively represent the City without violating the Sunshine Law.

### **2. Official Correspondence**

- Each Commission member may prepare and send correspondence under their signature on City letterhead, but City letterhead shall not be used for personal or election or campaign correspondence. However, before sending correspondence, the Commission member shall check with the City Manager or the City Clerk to see if an official City response has already been sent or is in progress. A signed copy of the correspondence shall be given to the City Clerk to be filed as part of the public record and may be placed on the City Website.
- No written commitment or position shall be made by any individual member of the Board of Commissioners on behalf of the City without first having obtained a majority direction from the Board of Commissioners. A copy of all correspondence shall be given to the City Clerk to be filed as part of the public record and may be placed on the City Website.
- All official and legal correspondence of the City, including contracts, agreements and ordinances, shall be signed by the Mayor or as otherwise provided within the correspondence. In the absence of the Mayor, the Vice-Mayor shall sign on behalf of the City. A copy of all official and legal correspondence of the City shall be given to the City Clerk to be filed as part of the public record.
- All correspondence received at City Hall for the Mayor and Commissioners is considered official mail, excluding anonymous mail, and shall be opened by the City Clerk. Originals shall be filed as part of the public record and a copy of the mail shall be placed in the mailbox of the Commission member to whom the mail was addressed to. Although, anonymous mail is considered a public record it is not considered official mail and will be treated accordingly depending on the nature of its contents.

### 3. Public Communications

- The Board of Commissioners will endeavor to inform and interact with the public in meaningful and respectful ways that convey accurate information, using the following guidelines:
- Commission members frequently are asked to explain an action made by the Board or to give their opinion about an issue as they meet and talk with constituents in the community. Commission members may give a brief overview of a decision made by the Board or City policy and to refer to City staff for further information.
- Commission members may not overtly or implicitly promise Board of Commissioners action, or to promise City staff will do something specific (i.e., fix a pothole, void a parking ticket, plant new flowers in the median, etc.). Commission members shall make no promises on behalf of the Board of Commissioners.
- Commission members may not make any personal comments, verbal or nonverbal, about other Commission members.
- Commission members may publicly disagree about an issue, but one should refrain from making derogatory and/or inflammatory comments, verbal or nonverbal, about other Commission members, based on their opinions, and actions.
- A Commission member may have the City Manager inform and interact with the public on their behalf.
- Commission members should not give any opinions on issues to be decided by the Board of Commissioners.

### III. COMMISSION CONDUCT WITH CITY STAFF

Governance of a City relies on the cooperative efforts of elected officials, who set policy, and City staff, who implements and administers the policies of the Board of Commissioners. Therefore, every effort shall be made to be cooperative and show mutual respect for the contributions made by each individual for the good of the community.

#### 1. Do not get involved in administrative functions. (City Charter, Section 4.6. C.)

- Board of Commissioners shall not interfere with Administration.

Language as written in City Charter, Section 4.6., B. “*Appointments and removals.*” Neither the Board of Commissioners nor any of its members shall in any manner dictate the *appointment or removal* of any City administrative officer or *employees whom the City Manager or any of his/her subordinates are empowered to appoint*, but the Board of Commissioners may express its views and fully and freely discuss with the Manager anything pertaining to appointment and removal of such officers and employees.”

Language as written in City Charter, Section 4.6., C. *“Interference with administration. Except for the purpose of inquiries and investigation, the Board of Commissioners or its members shall deal with the City officers and its employees who are subject to the direction and supervision of the City Manager solely through the City Manager, and neither the Board of Commissioners or its members shall give orders to any such officers or employee, neither publicly nor privately, except as provided under the emergency powers section of this Charter. The Board of Commissioners or any of its committees or members, individually or collectively, shall not direct or request the appointment of any person or his/her removal from, office by the City Manager or any of his/her subordinates or in any manner, directly or indirectly, take part in the appointment or removal of any officers or employees or members of Boards in the Administrative Service of the City of Madeira Beach, Florida. The Board of Commissioners nor any member thereof shall give orders to any subordinate or Officer of said City, either publicly or privately, directly or indirectly.”*

- It is permissible for a Commission member to ask questions of or request information from a City officer or its employees for clarification of an item listed on the agenda in preparation of a meeting, as long as the request is through the City Manager.
- Language as written in City Charter, Section 4.9. Investigations. “The Board of Commissioners may make investigations into the affairs of the City by appointing a Charter Officer to investigate internal affairs of the City and report their findings to the Board of Commissioners.”

**2. Check with City staff on correspondence before taking action.**

Often, the City Manager or City Clerk will be aware of a response already provided on behalf of the City that can be useful to the Board of Commissioners in understanding the status of projects, complaints and other inquiries.

**3. Do not attend meetings with City staff unless requested by a department director through the City Manager.**

Even if a Commission member does not say anything, his/her presence implies support, shows partiality, intimidates staff, and hampers staff’s ability to do their job objectively.

**4. Limit requests for staff support.**

Routine secretarial support will be provided to the Board of Commissioners by the City Clerk’s Office. All mail for the Mayor and Commissioners is opened and a copy retained by the City Clerk. Mail addressed to the Mayor that may need immediate response or action may be reviewed first by the City Manager who may note suggested action and/or follow-up items. Depending on the nature of the contents of anonymous mail, the City Attorney will first review it.

Requests for staff support - even in high priority or emergency situations -- shall be made to the City Manager who is responsible for allocating City resources to maintain a professional, well-run City government.

## **5. Do not solicit political support from staff.**

Board of Commissioners shall not solicit any type of political support (financial contributions, display of posters or lawn signs, name on support list, etc.) from City staff. City staff may, as private citizens with constitutional rights, support political candidates and engage in other political activities, but all such activities shall be done away from the workplace. City staff in uniform shall not be asked to pose with candidates for office nor shall City equipment, letterhead, logos, paper, envelopes or other city materials be used in, or to create, political campaign advertisements.

## **IV. COMMISSION CONDUCT WITH THE PUBLIC**

The Board of Commissioners are held to the highest standards of ethics and shall maintain the utmost standards of personal integrity, trustfulness, honesty, and fairness in carrying out their public duties, avoid any improprieties in their roles as public servants, comply with all applicable laws, and never use their official position or authority improperly or for personal gain.

### **1. In Public Meetings**

- The Board of Commissioners will only use city issued electronic devices on the dais and/or in a public meeting and refrain from the use of personal electronic devices on the dais and/or in a public meeting, unless authorized by the Board of Commissioners.
- The Board of Commissioners shall make the public feel welcome, which is an important part of the democratic process. No signs of partiality, prejudice or disrespect shall be evident on the part of individual Commission members toward an individual participating in a public forum. Every effort shall be made to be fair and impartial in listening to public testimony. Commission members should be fair and impartial in listening to the public during public comment.
- The public will be given a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a proposition before a board or commission.

Section 286.0114(3), F.S., states that the public's "opportunity to be heard" does not apply to:

- 1) An official act that must be taken to deal with an emergency situation affecting the public health, welfare, or safety, if compliance with the requirements would cause an unreasonable delay in the ability of the board or commission to act;
- 2) An official act involving no more than a ministerial act, including, but not limited to, approval of minutes and ceremonial proclamations;
- 3) A meeting that is exempt from s. 286.011; or
- 4) A meeting during which the board or commission is acting in a quasi-judicial capacity. See AGO 17-01 (s. 286.0114, F.S., does not require that members of the public be given a reasonable opportunity to be heard at quasi-judicial code enforcement hearings held by a special magistrate pursuant to authority delegated from the county code enforcement board).



The statute does not prohibit a board or commission from “maintaining orderly conduct or proper decorum in a public meeting.” Section 286.0114(2), F.S. In addition, the opportunity to be heard is “subject to rules or policies adopted by the board or commission” as provided in s. 286.0114(4), F.S. These rules or policies are limited to those that:

- 1) Provide guidelines regarding the amount of time an individual must address the board or commission;
  - 2) Prescribe procedures for allowing representatives of groups or factions on a proposition to address the board or commission, rather than all members of such groups or factions, at meetings in which a large number of individuals wish to be heard;
  - 3) Prescribe procedures or forms for an individual to use in order to inform the board or commission of a desire to be heard; to indicate his or her support, opposition, or neutrality on a proposition; and to indicate his or her designation of a representative to speak for him or her or his or her group on a proposition if he or she so chooses; or
  - 4) Designate a specified period of time for public comment.
- If a board or commission adopts such rules or policies and thereafter complies with them, it is deemed to be acting in compliance with the statute.

- 1) The Board of Commissioners adopted a “Pledge of Civility” and a “Mission and Vision Statement” in 2018 to maintain orderly conduct and proper decorum in the public meetings:

**PLEDGE OF CIVILITY** (Resolution 2018-10; 08/14/2018)

- We will always show respect to one another.
- We will direct all comments to the issue before us.
- We will refrain from personal attacks.

- 2) **MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT** (segments of Resolution 2018-08)

- **Public Trust** – We believe that honesty and integrity are the foundation of all constructive relationships and the basis of public trust. We will ensure that there is thorough ethical behavior and decision making.
- **Transparency** – We will protect and preserve open and honest governance to maintain the public’s trust and confidence.
- **Teamwork** – We are committed to working together, embracing diversity and inclusion to best serve one another and the public.
- **Accountability** – We define accountability as taking ownership and responsibility for the outcomes of our decisions, actions, and management of our resources.

- **Professionalism** – Professionalism is dedication to excellence through integrity, requiring careful analysis of issues, free of personal biases, with a commitment to the organization and the community.
- **Respect** – We value all viewpoints and opinions and treat each other with courtesy and respect.

## **2. In Unofficial Settings**

Board of Commissioners are constantly being observed by the community every day that they serve in office. Their behaviors and comments serve as role models for the City. Honesty, integrity and respect for the dignity of each individual shall be reflected in every word and action taken by Commission members, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is a serious and continuous responsibility.

Board of Commissioners shall keep in mind that to the public they are first and foremost an elected official and that distinction makes the City Commissioner different from other residents, electors or citizens. All Commission members shall guard against any actions or words that would give even the appearance of bullying or misuse of their position.

## **3. In Official Forms of Media**

Communication through media is an integral part of any governmental agency. All forms of media (television, newsletter, web site, etc.) play an important role in getting messages out to our community. The Board of Commissioners recognize a responsibility to make available accurate information to the public in a timely manner; understanding that people form opinions about the City based on what they read, hear and see. The objective of the City's media communications is to ensure public opinions are formed upon the basis of accurate information. To that purpose, the Board of Commissioners has established multiple media for proactively communicating with the community. The Commission members may ask that the City Manager speak on their behalf.

## **4. Monthly City Manager's Report**

The City Manager shall put out a monthly report for purpose of conveying City news, events and project status reports to the community. Monthly reports include more detailed information when necessary.

## **5. Website**

The City maintains a website, [www.madeirabeachfl.gov](http://www.madeirabeachfl.gov), for the benefit of residents and visitors. The website is intended to provide access to City contact information, services, requests for bids and proposals, general announcements and meeting notices, agendas and results as well as maps, among other features. The website also provides a means for the public to access published reports, such as the Certified Annual Financial Report (CAFR), the Annual Budget and the State of the City Address without coming to City Hall or paying for public records. These reports are generally too lengthy for publication in the monthly City Manager's Report or through the government access channel. While the information at the City's website can be accessed in "real time," it is maintained by City staff on a time available basis and updated as frequently as possible to remain current and accurate.

## **6. Government Access Channel or alternative measure**

The City maintains a government access channel, currently Channel 640 – Madeira Beach TV (MB-TV) through the local cable television franchise provider for the benefit of residents and visitors. MB-TV is available within the corporate limits of Madeira Beach and is programmed from City Hall. The MB-TV channel is used to broadcast. This service provides residents and interested persons with a first-hand account of the City’s conduct of business. The goal is to use Closed Captioning in order to comply with ADA Recommendations.

## **7. Video Live Streaming**

The City video Live Streams its Board of Commissioners (BOC) meetings to allow for more transparency to its citizens. BOC meetings can be watched live through You Tube Streaming on the City’s website or accessed anytime following the meeting. The State retention requirement for Live Streaming videos is two anniversary years after adoption of the official minutes or certification of transcript. Commission members shall make every effort to use the microphone when speaking so that their words can be heard on Live Streams and recordings.

Candidate Forums will be video live streamed on the government access channel even if it involves City personnel.

## **V. COMMISSION CONDUCT WITH OTHER PUBLIC AGENCIES**

### **1. Be clear about representing the City or personal interests.**

If a Commission member appears before another governmental agency or organization to give a statement on an issue, they shall clearly state:

- If his or her statement reflects personal opinion or is the official stance of the City taken by the Board of Commissioners at a noticed meeting;
- Whether this is unanimous or the majority or minority opinion of the Board of Commissioners;
- If a Commission member is representing the City in an official or liaison capacity, they should speak or state the official City position on an issue, not a personal viewpoint. If the Commission member is representing another organization whose position is different from the City, they shall state that during their comments. Commission members shall be clear about when they represent the City and when they are speaking in an individual or other capacity.

### **2. Correspondence shall be equally clear about representation.**

City letterhead may be used when a Commission member is representing the City and the City’s official position. A copy of official correspondence shall be given to the City Clerk to be filed in the Clerk’s Office as part of the public record and placed on the website. It is best that City letterhead is not used for correspondence of City Commissioners representing a personal point of view, or a dissenting point of view from an official Board of

Commissioners position. City letterhead should only be used for official City business and shall not be used for personal correspondence or for any election or campaign correspondence. The City Clerk or the City Manager shall approve that letter to be sent out.

## **VI. COMMISSION CONDUCT WITH BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

The City has established various appointed Boards and Committees as a means of gathering recommendations after providing more public opportunities for more community input. Citizens who serve on Boards and Committees become more involved in government and serve as advisors to the Board of Commissioners. They are a valuable resource to the City's leadership and shall be treated with appreciation and respect.

### **1. If attending a Board or Committee meeting, be careful to avoid influencing the Board or Committee's consideration or prejudicing the Board of Commissioners eventual consideration.**

- Commission members may attend any Board or Committee meeting, which are always open to any member of the public. However, they shall be sensitive to the way in which their presence may be viewed as unfairly affecting the process, especially if Commission members attend as a formal liaison on behalf of the Board of Commissioners. Commission members shall remember that attendance at a quasi-judicial hearing before a Board may place him/her in a position to be asked to disclose their attendance and any written or oral ex parte communications, or even recuse him/herself if there is evidence of prejudice or bias when the quasi-judicial matter is brought to the Board of Commissioners.
- Any public comments by a Commission member at an advisory Board or Committee meeting shall be clearly made as individual opinion and not a representation of the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners appoint Boards and Committees at large to provide independent recommendations to the Board of Commissioners and/or the City Manager. Commission members should be careful when suggesting a course of action or recommendation to an advisory Board or Committee because this could interfere with the independent judgment of the advisory Board or Committee contrary to the purpose and intent of the system.

### **2. Limit contact with Board and Committee members to questions of clarification.**

- Remember that the Board of Commissioners appoint Boards and Committees to serve the community, not individual Commission members.
- It is prohibited for a Commission member to contact a Board or Committee member to lobby on behalf of an individual, business, or developer or to suggest or recommend an action be taken. Board and Committee members are appointed to take public comment and make independent recommendations to the Board of Commissioners and/or the City Manager, not vice versa (i.e., not to follow recommendations that may be desired by an individual Commission member). It is prohibited for advisory Board members and/or Committee members to contact Board of Commissioners to influence or to communicate a perspective counter to the official actions of the Board or Committee actions. All positions of an advisory Board or Committee shall be reduced

to a written recommendation that is voted upon and, if desired, the written recommendation(s) may contain majority, minority or individual comments or concerns.

- The Board of Commissioners appoint individuals to serve on Boards and Committees, and it is the responsibility of Boards and Committees to follow policy established by the Board of Commissioners. Board and Committee members do not report to individual Commission members, nor shall Commission members feel they have the power or right to threaten Board and Committee members with removal if they disagree about an issue. Appointment and re-appointment to a Board or Committee shall be based on such criteria as expertise, ability to work with staff and the public and commitment to fulfilling official duties. A Board or Committee appointment shall not be used as a political "reward" for assistance in any campaign activities.

### **3. Be respectful of diverse opinions.**

A primary role of Boards and Committees is to represent many points of view in the community and to provide the Board of Commissioners with advice based on a full spectrum of concerns and perspectives. Commission members may have a closer working relationship with some individuals serving on Boards and Committees but shall be fair, balanced and respectful of all citizens serving on Boards and Committees.

### **4. Keep political support away from public forums.**

Board and Committee members may offer political support to a Commission member, but not in a public forum while conducting official duties. Conversely, Board of Commissioners may support Board and Committee members who are running for office, but not in an official forum in their capacity as a Commissioner.

## **VII. BOARD MEMBERS ATTENDING MEETINGS OR SERVING AS MEMBERS OF ANOTHER PUBLIC BOARD**

### **1. Board members attending meetings of another public board.**

2022 Government in the Sunshine Manual, Page 20 & 21:

“Several Attorney General Opinions have considered whether one or more members of a board may attend or participate in a meeting of another public board. For example, in AGO 99-55, the Attorney General’s Office said that a school board member could attend and participate in the meeting of an advisory committee appointed by the school board without prior notice of his or her attendance. However, the opinion cautioned that “if it is known that two or more members of the school board are planning to attend and participate, it would be advisable to note their attendance in the advisory committee meeting notice.”

“Moreover, while recognizing that commissioners may attend meetings of a second public board and comment on agenda items that may subsequently come before the commission for final action, the Attorney General Opinions have also advised that if more than one “commissioner is in attendance at such a meeting, no discussion or debate may take place among the commissioners on those issues.” AGO 00-68. *Accord* AGO 98-79 (city commissioner may attend a public community development board meeting held to consider a proposed city ordinance and express his or her views on the proposed ordinance even

though other city commissioners may be in attendance; however, the city commissioners in attendance may not engage in a discussion or debate among themselves because “the city commission’s discussions and deliberations on the proposed ordinance must occur at a duly noticed city commission meeting”). *See also* AGOs 05-59 and 77-138.”

## **2. Board members serving as members of another public board.**

2022 Government in the Sunshine Manual, Page 21:

“Board members who also serve on a second public board may participate in the public meetings of the second board held in accordance with s. 286.011, F.S., and express their opinions without violating the Sunshine Law. AGO 07-13. In other words, “when two county commissioners are presently serving on [a regional planning] council this does not turn a meeting of the planning council into a county commission meeting, and the Sunshine Law does not require any additional or different notice of planning council meetings because of the presence of these county commission members.” *Id.* “Similarly, AGO 98-14 concluded that membership of three city council members on the metropolitan planning organization did not turn a council meeting into a metropolitan planning organization meeting that required separate notice. Because, however, the discussion of metropolitan planning organization matters was planned for the council meeting, the city council had properly included mention of such items in its notice of the council meeting.”

“Similarly, in AGO 91-95, the Attorney General’s Office concluded that a county commissioner may attend and participate in the discussion at a public meeting held by the governing board of a county board on which another commissioner serves. However, “in an effort to satisfy the spirit of the Sunshine Law,” the opinion also recommended that the published notice of the county board “include mention of the anticipated attendance and participation of county commission members in board proceedings.” *Id.*”

## **VIII. COMMISSION CONTACT WITH THE MEDIA**

Board of Commissioners are frequently contacted by the media for background, quotes and interviews. Whenever possible, Commission members, as the City's policy makers, shall be the first contact with the media. The City Manager is also a frequent contact and shall manage the staff's contact and communications with the media. Following are the Board of Commissioners general policies for conduct with the media:

### **1. Legal Issues.**

Media inquiries relating to any existing or potential liability or suit against the City shall immediately be referred to the City Attorney. In the absence of the City Attorney, the City Manager may respond or direct the media to special counsel contacts on legal issues. The City Attorney has sole discretion as to whether or not to comment, and the substance of any comments, on any legal issues or litigation in the press.

### **2. Use a designated spokesperson for the City’s position on controversial issues.**

When sensitive or controversial issues arise, it is essential that a central focal point for information be established. The City Manager may be designated for such contact. The City can best ensure a clear and consistent message by limiting involvement to a designated or limited number of contacts.

**3. In the absence of designation, Board of Commissioners shall be clear for the record.**

If an individual Commission member is contacted by the media, they shall be clear about whether their comments represent the official City position or a personal viewpoint. Commission members are urged to avoid instigative or preemptive contact directly with the media or through others for purposes espousing a position contrary to that of the majority of the Board of Commissioners or in the absence of an official position by the City.

**4. Guidelines for Media Contacts:**

What to Say:

Make sure the information released is factual, accurate, timely and consistent. Strive to provide full and honest disclosure and stay within legal limits by not making any slanderous or libelous statements. Choose words carefully and cautiously to avoid being taken out of context.

**5. Guidelines for Email, Texts, and Social Media:**

All email, text messages, and social media postings (for example: twitter, Facebook, snapchat, Instagram, etc..) regarding any issue that may come before the Board of Commissioners is official business and a public record, must be retained, shall not be deleted and should be forwarded to your official City email address for record retention and search purposes. Appointed and elected City officials *shall not* make anonymous postings on any electronic media with regard to any issue that may come before the City as official business.

## ARTICLE II.

### RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR BOARD OF COMMISSIONER MEETINGS

Pursuant to the Madeira Beach City Charter, Section 4.5, the Board of Commissioners shall determine its own rules and order of business, by resolution, within 90 days in which the election is held.

#### I. POLICY

##### 1. General Rules

- **Meetings to be Public.** All meetings of the Board of Commissioners shall be noticed and open to the public, except for such meetings as are exempt by general law. Any meeting of two or more Commission members, in which City business is discussed is prohibited without the appropriate notice as specified in Florida State Statues.
- **Quorum.** A simple majority of the members of the Board of Commissioners shall, free of voting conflict, constitute a quorum and be necessary to conduct business of the Board of Commissioners. If a quorum is not present, those in attendance will be named and they shall adjourn.
- **Minutes of Proceedings.** Meeting minutes of the Board of Commissioners shall be kept by the City Clerk, except for such meetings as are exempt by general law.
- **Voting.** As set forth in the Charter, ordinances, resolutions and other action requiring a vote of the Board of Commissioners shall require three (3) affirmative votes for passage and shall be by roll call vote upon request of any member of the Board of Commissioners. A super-majority vote of four members of the Board of Commissioners for any Planned Development Rezoning or Special Area Plan shall be required for approval. The City Clerk shall record the vote of all Commission members.

In the event one or more members are absent and any motion for a final decision fails to achieve the affirmative vote of three (3) Commission members, and no further action by the Board of Commissioners to achieve three (3) affirmative votes can be obtained, then such ordinance, resolution or other action shall be automatically continued to the next regularly scheduled meeting or a special meeting scheduled for that purpose. No ordinance, resolution or other action shall be automatically continued more than once and if upon one continuance it does not obtain three (3) affirmative votes the matter shall fail.

- **City Manager.** The City Manager is expected to attend the meetings of the Board of Commissioners and shall have the right to take part in all discussions.
- **City Attorney.** The City Attorney or their designated substitute counsel is expected to attend the meetings of the Board of Commissioners and provide guidance and opinions on questions of law. Under Staff Reports on each BOC regular meeting agenda, the City Attorney shall provide a monthly staff report to the Board regarding the status of any ongoing litigation.



- **City Clerk.** The City Clerk or their designee shall attend the meetings of Board of Commissioners and record all votes and keep the official minutes of the proceedings.
- **Administrative Staff.** The Administrative staff shall attend meetings and workshops when required.
- **Rules of Order.** The current addition of Robert’s Rules of Order shall be the rules of order; in addition to the rules of procedure stated in this policy handbook.

## 2. Types of Meetings [City Charter, Section 4.5 – Rules of procedure; quorum; meetings

- **Regular Meetings.** The Board of Commissioners shall meet in the Commission Chambers or another designated place within the City boundaries, for regular meetings. Regular Meetings shall commence at 6:00 p.m. or as amended from time to time, on the second Wednesday of each month, or as otherwise determined by the City Manager if the regular meeting falls on a Holiday, City Election or other event that warrants rescheduling the meeting. The Board of Commissioners may schedule other regular meetings as it deems necessary in accordance with its established rules of procedure to address items that require official action before the next regularly scheduled meeting. The Board of Commissioners and/or City Manager shall determine date and time of meeting.
- **Special Meetings.** Special meetings may be called by the Mayor by a majority of the Commission with appropriate notice with no less than twenty-four (24) hours’ notice in writing to each member and the public (language stated in City Charter). Special meetings may also be called and noticed in a manner similar to regular meetings for special or specific purposes where formal action of the Board of Commissioners may be necessary or desirable. Special meeting notices shall encompass a minimum of one non-holiday weekday.
- **Workshop Meetings.** The Board of Commissioners may meet in the Commission Chambers for Workshop meetings. Workshop meetings shall commence at 6:00 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month, or as otherwise determined by the City Manager and/ or the Board of Commissioners. Workshop meetings are informal legislative sessions, but to allow the Board of Commissioners to informally discuss topics and gain a better understanding of topics prior to formal consideration. To allow some understanding of the status of discussion of items, a verbal consensus may be ascertained to determine an appropriate next step, but such consensus is *not binding* on the Board of Commissioners.

## 3. Presiding Officer and Duties

- **Presiding Officer.** The Mayor shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Commissioners. In the absence of the Mayor, the Vice Mayor shall preside. In the absence of both the Mayor and the Vice-Mayor, the meeting shall be called to order by the City Clerk for appointing a temporary presiding officer.
- **Parliamentarian.** The City Attorney shall act as the parliamentarian to the Board of Commissioners by advising the Mayor regarding matters of procedure. The Board could choose one of its members who is knowledgeable about the procedures to act as

the parliamentarian. Each Commission member must understand the parliamentary procedures, or it will be impossible to conduct its meeting properly.

- **Preservation of Order.** The Presiding Officer shall preserve order and decorum; prevent attacks on personalities or the impugning of members' or motives, and confine members in debate to the question under discussion.
- **Point of Order.** The Presiding Officer shall determine point of order. Point of order shall not be entertained from the audience.
- **Recognition of Speakers.** The Presiding Officer shall recognize speakers from the public in keeping with the procedures established herein but shall do so in a way that remains constructive without being repetitive. In instances where large contingencies are represented, the Presiding Officer may ask for a limited number of representatives to represent the overall sentiments of the group. However, in no instance shall anyone be precluded from addressing the Board of Commissioners.
- **Recognition of Commission Members wishing to Speak.** The Presiding Officer shall allow an opportunity for Board of Commissioners to comment on items but shall not solicit comment from each member on every item but shall recognize those Commission members wishing to speak.

#### 4. Order of Business for BOC Regular Meetings

- **Order of Business.** The general rule as to the order of business in Board of Commissioners (BOC) regular meetings, with the exception of the Agenda Setting Meeting, shall be as follows:
  1. Call to Order
  2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance
  3. Roll Call
  4. Approval of the Agenda
  5. Proclamations/Presentations
    - 5.1. Proclamations
    - 5.2. Presentations
  6. Public Comment
  7. Approval of Minutes
  8. Consent Agenda
  9. Public Hearings
  10. Unfinished Business
  11. Contracts/Agreements
  12. New Business
  13. Staff Reports
  14. Agenda Setting Meeting
  15. Reports/Correspondence
    - A. City Commission
    - B. City Attorney
    - C. City Clerk
    - D. City Manager
  16. Adjournment

- **Order of Business for the Regular or Special Meeting following the Election.** When newly elected officials are sworn into office, the meeting agenda may be formatted differently to allow for the ceremonial portion of the meeting to take place before any official business listed on the agenda.

## 5. Explanation of Order of Business for Regular Meetings

- **Agenda.** The order of business of each meeting shall be as contained in the Agenda. The Agenda is a listing by order of business of topics to be considered by the Board of Commissioners. Additional guidance is provided below as to the purpose of the agenda sections.

1. **Call to Order.** The Mayor shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Commissioners. In the absence of the Mayor, the Vice Mayor shall preside. In the absence of both the Mayor and the Vice-Mayor, the meeting shall be called to order by the City Clerk for appointing a temporary presiding officer.

2. **Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.**

3. **Roll Call** – The City Clerk calls the roll.

4. **Approval of the Agenda** – Approval of the Agenda consists of all items listed on the meeting agenda.

5. **Proclamations/Presentations.**

- 5.1. **Proclamations.** This section is provided for presentation of Proclamations to be read in full and presented by the Mayor, City Clerk or City Manager. The intent is to list and read only those proclamations that will be formally presented and received by a representative of the requesting agency or organization at the Board of Commissioners Meeting. Otherwise, proclamations may be issued at the Mayor’s discretion and forwarded through the City Clerk’s Office.

- 5.2. **Presentations.** This section is provided for any additional presentations held during City meetings. Presentations can be added during Agenda Setting Meetings and can be requested by the Board as a consensus or requested by an individual Commission member. The City Manager also has the authority to add a presentation to the agenda under his own discretion. The speaker’s presentation shall be limited to 10 minutes.

6. **Public Comment.** This section is reserved for public participation on matters of concern pertaining to City business; and which are not on the agenda. Public comment is made in person and not represented by emails, tweets, or other types of information, unless there is a declared State of Local Emergency requiring virtual meetings of the Board of Commissioners. Public Comment is subject to the following protocol.

**Manner of Addressing the Board of Commissioners.** Each person addressing the Board of Commissioners shall step up to the microphone, give his or her name and address and the organization or group they represent, if

any, in an audible tone of voice for the record and shall limit their address to five (5) minutes unless extended by the Mayor, more time may be granted to applicants and affected persons with legal standing in quasi-judicial hearings. Yielding of time for an additional five-minute period is allowed. If no time is yielded, the person speaking can ask for additional time to speak. If the additional time is appropriate, the Presiding Officer can offer the Commissioners the opportunity to consent to an extension.

**Comment Cards.** Comments cards may be completed by individuals from the audience, whether it is a public forum question or an agenda item. The comment cards shall be available at the back table in the Commission Chambers, and the individual shall write their name, address, and a brief comment about what it is that they would like a response on. It is not mandatory that a speaker complete a comment card.

If you would like someone at the City to follow up on a comment or question made at the meeting, you may fill out a comment card with the contact information and give it to the City Manager. Comment cards are available at the back table in the Commission Chambers. It is not mandatory to complete a comment card.

**Reading of Protests.** Interested persons, or their authorized representatives, may address the Board of Commissioners for the reading of protests, petitions, or communications relating to any matter over which the Board of Commissioners has jurisdiction.

7. Approval of Minutes. Unanimous consent is required to approve the minutes of the previous meetings.
8. **Consent Agenda.** The Consent Agenda shall be used to handle routine matters on the agenda expeditiously. Examples of Consent Agenda items are **minutes**, waivers for special events, bid or purchase awards for equipment, goods or services already approved within the budget, invoices, and budget transfers. There is no separate discussion of these items unless a Commission member requests an item be removed for consideration in its normal sequence on the agenda. Members of the public do not have discretion to remove items from the Consent Agenda, yet the Mayor, as Presiding Officer, may acknowledge any such request and remove an item on their behalf. The approval of the Consent Agenda shall be handled in one motion, i.e. "I move that the Consent Agenda, (items "x" through "z") be approved; or if items are to be removed, a typical motion might be, "I move that we approve Consent Agenda items "x" through "z" with the exception of item "y" for discussion."
9. **Public Hearings.** The section is for items requiring a public hearing required by law. Certain public hearings are quasi-judicial in nature. A quasi-judicial proceeding requires the Board of Commissioners to act in a quasi-judicial, rather than legislative, capacity. At a quasi-judicial hearing, it is not the Board's function to make law but rather to apply law that has already been established. In a quasi-judicial hearing, the Board is required by law to make findings of fact based upon the evidence presented at the hearing and apply

those findings of fact to previously established criteria contained in the code of ordinances in order to make a legal decision regarding the application before it. The Board may only consider evidence at this hearing that the law considers competent, substantial and relevant to the issues. If the competent, substantial and relevant evidence at the hearing demonstrates that the applicant has met the criteria established in the code of ordinances, then the Board must find in favor of the applicant. By the same token, if the competent, substantial, and relevant evidence at the hearing demonstrates that the applicant has failed to meet the criteria established in the code of ordinances then the Board is required by law to find against the applicant. The established procedure which will be followed by the Board is set forth in Chapter 2, Article I, Division 2 of the Code of Ordinances.

- 10. Unfinished Business.** The section is provided to allow completion of matters already under discussion by the Board of Commissioners from a previous meeting, excluding public hearings required by Law. Citizen input may be heard once a motion is made by the Board of Commissioners on items of unfinished business. Citizen input shall be limited to five (5) minutes.
- 11. Contracts/Agreements.** This section is provided to allow more careful consideration of complex contracts and agreements that require individual approval. Citizen input may be heard once a motion is made by the Board of Commissioners on items of contract/agreements and shall be limited five (5) minutes.
- 12. New Business.** This section contains all remaining agenda items for consideration by the Board of Commissioners, excluding public hearings, as required by law. Citizen input may be heard once a motion is made by the Board of Commissioners on items of new business. Citizen input shall be limited to five (5) minutes.
- 13. Staff Reports.** Non-workshop items. This section is set aside for staff reports regarding items such as monthly financial reports, special event updates, project updates, governmental and non-governmental project updates, and other updates on matters that do not get workshopped. Each staff report is limited to five (5) minutes.
- 14. Agenda Setting Meeting.** This section is for the purpose of setting the Workshop Agenda for the Workshop to be held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. Items to be added to the agenda may be requested by the Board of Commissioners, Charter Officers, and City Staff. Not all items need to be workshopped. The City Manager shall determine the form and manner of how the item will be addressed. The City Manager will read back the requested items to be workshopped for clarification purposes if necessary.
- 15. Reports/Correspondence.** This section is set aside for standing reports from Commission members to provide a status report based upon their attendance or representation of the City at various governmental boards and agencies. This section is limited to five (5) minutes.

The Reports section also provides for the City Manager, City Clerk, and the

City Attorney to make reports, announcements, and report on current topics. This section is limited to five (5) minutes.

**Ligation Status Report.** This section will allow for any litigation updates by the City Attorney.

**Outstanding Lien Settlements.** This section will allow for any updates by the City Attorney on Outstanding Lien Settlements and liens that are over \$5,000.00. If the City Attorney is approached by a property owner to settle an outstanding lien, the Commission must be able to review the details of a case at a Workshop followed by final approval or rejection of the proposed settlement during a Regular BOC Meeting. This section is limited to five (5) minutes.

## 6. Agenda Preparation

- **Notice.** The final agenda for regular, special, and workshop meetings shall serve as public notice for each respective meeting. Agendas and public notices shall be posted at City Hall, Gulf Beaches Public Library, if possible, and the City's website by no later than 3:00 p.m. on the Thursday prior to the meeting.
- **Packets.** The City Manager and City Clerk are responsible for publishing the agenda packets. The deadline for publishing agenda packets is on Wednesday afternoon, the week before the scheduled meeting. However, at times it may be necessary to publish the agenda packets by Thursday afternoon to allow for any unforeseen items or emergency items. Only when necessary, paper copies of agenda packets are provided to the Board of Commissioners or at the request of a Commission member. Paper copies of the agenda packet are placed in Commission mailboxes at City Hall.

The publishing deadline allows sufficient time for the Board of Commissioners to review the packet materials, and to obtain additional information on the agenda items from the City Manager, City Clerk, City staff, or other entities, if necessary, to be more knowledgeable in preparation of the meeting and for voting purposes.

For workshop meetings and regular meetings that are not held on a regularly scheduled meeting date, a similar lead time schedule for agenda and packet materials shall be followed, unless otherwise determined by the City Manager or City Clerk.

## ARTICLE III

### SUSPENSION AND AMENDMENT OF RULES

#### I. SUSPENSION AND AMENDMENT OF THESE RULES

1. **Suspension of Rules.** Any provision of these rules not governed by the City Charter or City Code may be temporarily suspended by a vote of a majority of the Board of Commissioners.
2. **Amendment of Rules** This policy shall be reviewed annually and adopted by resolution within 90 days following each election. The policy may be amended, or new provisions made by a majority vote of all members of the Commission. Each year following the regular election, any modifications previously made by motion will be formalized in the resolution, City Charter, Section 4.5 (B).