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Memorandum

To: Mayor & Council
From: David Reynolds
Re: Agenda Item: Review of Parliamentary Procedures
Date: 07/15/2025

Purpose:

The purpose of this agenda item is to briefly review basic parliamentary procedures as discussed in the Council Candidate Orientation Manual.

As described in the Council Orientation Manual, **Basic Parliamentary Practices** are as follows:

The object of parliamentary rules of order is to facilitate the smooth functioning of meetings. For the most part, Council meetings tend to be informal, with no need to refer to Robert's Rules of Order. However, these are recognized customs in Council meetings:

- The Mayor is referred to by his or her title, "Mr./Madam Mayor."
- No Council Member should speak until recognized by the Mayor.
- The maker of a motion has the right to speak first in debate. No member should speak a second time in debate until all other members have had a chance to speak once.
- Speakers should always yield the floor to the Mayor.

These are the steps for presenting a motion:

- A Council Member addresses the Mayor: "Mr. Mayor?"
- The Mayor recognizes the Member: "Councilor Smith."
- The Member proposes a motion: "I move that . . ."
- Another member seconds the motion: "Second" or "I second the motion." This only shows that the member agrees that the motion should be debated, not necessarily that s/he favors it.
- The Mayor states the motion and opens debate: "It has been moved and seconded that . . . Is there any discussion/debate?"
- Council debates the motion.

- The Mayor calls for a vote on the motion. The Town Charter requires votes by “yes” or “no” (not “yea,” “aye,” or “nay”). Roll call votes are taken on ordinances; votes on other matters may be by voice vote only. Every Council Member, when present, must vote upon ordinances and resolutions, except when s/he has a conflict of interest.
- The Mayor announces the results of the vote.

After reviewing New Castle’s procedures and reading about variations in standard practices, it may be helpful to consider adding one of the following:

- After a motion is introduced and seconded, the Mayor calls on each Council Member in a set order (e.g., clockwise from the Mayor’s left) to offer comments or questions. Members may speak or say “pass.” After the first round, additional rounds can occur as needed.
- The Mayor invites each Council Member, in turn, to comment or ask questions before a vote is called.
- After opening debate, the Mayor shall invite each Council Member by name to speak or pass, ensuring every member has the opportunity to comment before proceeding to a vote.

In addition, it has been some time since we’ve discussed meeting times (7:00 – 10:00) and the use of Workshop Sessions. Staff would be happy to take suggestions related to how workshops and meeting times have been working.