

2026

WHITTIER CITY COUNCIL OPERATIONS MANUAL: City Council Rules of Procedure

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Manual is to provide Whittier City Council and the public it serves with standard policies and procedures for conducting City Council business. This manual is a reference point for directives not appropriately placed elsewhere. The policies and procedures adopted in this Manual are designed to ensure the City Council operates openly, efficiently, and productively. These policies and procedures were adopted by Whittier City Council in compliance with Whittier Municipal Code 2.08.070 entitled “Rules of procedure-Adoption.”

THE CITY OF WHITTIER

The City of Whittier is a second-class general law city incorporated on July 15, 1969. In 1974, the Whittier voters adopted a manager plan of government.

The Alaska Constitution and its statutes both afford broad powers to municipal governments. Under Alaska law, municipalities and their governing bodies have the power to raise revenues, provide services, and regulate activities within the municipality. These powers are extended to second-class cities, such as Whittier¹.

Limits on these powers and how they are executed (such as, by ordinance or with voter approval) are put in place by the Alaska legislature and the Whittier Municipal Code. In addition, there are federal and state laws that further affect how the City exercises its powers.

¹ AS 29.35, Municipal Powers and Duties

SPECIAL RULES OF ORDER

Whittier Municipal Code (WMC) adopted Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (12th Edition) as the parliamentary authority of the City Council and commissions. In addition, the following are special rules of order that supplement the WMC or modify Robert's Rules:

Rule 1. Absences

Every effort should be made to give advance notice of absences. All requests for an excused absence must be made in writing to the City Clerk. In the event of the absence of a Council or commission member from a meeting, after establishing a quorum through roll call, the Clerk, or the Clerk's designee, will state any automatically excused absences or excused absence requests for the record. In the event an absence is not automatically excused, the presiding officer will then request a motion from the Council or commission to excuse the member. Absences are discussed in more detail in WMC 2.04.070.

Rule 2. Consent Agenda

The following business items are appropriate for the consent calendar. These items are acted upon by one motion for approval of the Consent Agenda. If discussion is requested on an item by a Council member, that item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Agenda.

- A. Minutes approval
- B. Alcohol license renewals and transfers
- C. Any gaming permit requiring approval of the City, City Council or any City board or commission.
- D. Confirmation of City commission & board appointments
- E. Resolutions (of a general nature required for normal business operations of the City)
- F. Change Orders
- G. Travel Authorization
- H. Introduction of ordinances

In order to ensure that the public understands the "consent calendar" process, the following notice should be printed directly on the agenda:

Note to the Public: The items contained under this section are approved by Council through a single motion and a single vote after the reading of the titles only by the City Clerk. However, a Council member may request to remove an item(s) for discussion and separate vote.

Rule 3. Teleconference or Virtual Attendance

All Council members, including the Mayor, should be physically present and on time for all scheduled meetings. Council members may attend a maximum of four regular meetings virtually during the 12-month period commencing November 1st of each year unless attendance of additional meetings virtually is approved by City Council. Council

members must attend the first three meetings of their first term as a Council member in person. Virtual attendance limits may be waived by Council.

All rules regarding virtual participation are as follows:

1. **Login Information.** The City Clerk shall send by email to every Council member requesting to attend virtually, as soon as practicable after receiving the request, the time and the telephone number or virtual meeting link and any access code needed to connect to the meeting. The City Clerk shall also include a copy of, or a link to, these rules.
2. **Call-in Time.** The City Clerk shall open the telephone conference call or virtual meeting five minutes before the start of each meeting.
3. **Meeting-room Equipment.** The City shall provide appropriate equipment to enable virtual participation in the meeting room at each meeting.
4. **Location of the Chair.** The chair of the meeting must be physically present in the meeting room.
5. **Arrival Announcements.** Members who participate in the meeting telephonically or virtually shall announce themselves at the first opportunity after joining the telephone conference call or virtual meeting, but should not interrupt a speaker at the meeting to do so.
6. **Departure Announcements.** Members who leave the telephone conference call, virtual meeting, or the meeting room before adjournment shall announce their departure, but should not interrupt a speaker to do so.
7. **Quorum Calls.** The presence of a quorum shall be established by roll call at the beginning of the meeting and on the demand of any Council member. Such a demand may be made following the departure of any member or following the taking of any vote for which the announced totals add to less than a quorum.
8. **Obtaining the Floor.** To seek recognition by the Mayor or presiding officer of the Council, a member shall address the Mayor or presiding officer and state that person's name.
9. **Voting Methods.** The final vote on ordinances, resolutions, and substantive motions shall be taken by roll call. Other business may be conducted by unanimous consent.
10. **Loss of Meeting-Room Connection.** Any business transacted while the meeting-room speakerphone is disconnected from the telephone conference call or virtual meeting is null and void if there is no longer sufficient Council members present virtually or in-person to make a quorum.
11. **Other Technical Malfunctions and Requirements.** Each member is responsible for that member's connection to the telephone conference call or virtual meeting; no action shall be invalidated on the grounds that the loss of, or poor quality of, a member's individual connection prevented participation in the meeting. If a Council member is participating virtually, the City shall presume for all purposes that the Council member can hear the other meeting participants and be heard by them.
12. **Forced Disconnections.** The Mayor or presiding officer may order the City Clerk to disconnect or mute a member's connection if it is causing undue interference

with the telephone conference call or virtual meeting. The Mayor or presiding officer's decision to do so shall be announced during the meeting and recorded in the minutes.

Electronic attendance is discussed in more detail in WMC 2.04.075.

Rule 4. Motions Must Have a Second

Motions must have a second and must have been stated by the presiding officer before debate or discussion unless otherwise provided by special rule.

Rule 5. Prohibiting Voting by Secret Ballot

No secret ballot shall be utilized to determine any decision at any meeting except the selection of the Mayor and Vice-Mayor².

Rule 6. Order of Business

The order of business for regular meetings of the city council shall be as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Opening Ceremony
3. Roll Call
4. Public Comments on Any Agenda Item Except Those Items Scheduled for Public Hearing
5. Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda
6. Conflict of Interest
7. Presentations and Reports
8. Public Hearings
9. Unfinished Business
10. New Business
 - a) Ordinances for Introduction
 - b) Resolutions
 - c) Other New Business
11. Informational Items and Reports
12. Council Comments/Discussion
13. Public Discussion
14. Council and Administration Response to Public Comments
15. Adjournment

The certification of any election shall be made under that portion of the agenda entitled "new business." Under appropriate circumstances, the City Manager may invite directors or other staff members to make reports under that portion of the agenda entitled "City Manager's Report."

² AS 44.62. 310(a)

The order of business for special meetings shall be as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Opening Ceremony
3. Roll Call
4. Approval of Special Meeting Agenda
5. Public Comments on Agenda Items not Scheduled for Public Hearing
6. Public Hearings
7. Special Meeting Business Item(s)
8. Council Discussion
9. Public Discussion
10. Council and Administration Response to Public Comments
11. Adjournment

Rule 7. Action Required

All council members present must vote on all matters before the Council for which they are present, virtually or in person, except for matters in which they are found by Council to have a conflict of interest or they are prohibited from voting under law.

Rule 8. Violation of Rules

If any Council member violates these rules, the Mayor or presiding officer shall, or any Council member may, identify the violation of the rules and request that the violation stop immediately. When a Council member violates these rules and is called to order, that member shall immediately cease discussion on the matter unless permitted by the Mayor or presiding officer to continue. City Council has the sole discretion to determine if there is a violation of these rules and to interpret these rules. A Council member shall not proceed after Council determines that the Council member violated these rules without first obtaining leave of Council to do so.

Rule 9. Violation of Confidentiality

In compliance with the Code of Ethics³, if any member, in speaking or otherwise, divulges facts or discussions of a confidential nature discussed, written or otherwise presented at an executive session, that member shall be called to order by any member and shall explain the release of said information.

Rule 10. Withdrawal of a Motion

After a motion is stated or read by the Mayor or presiding officer, it shall be deemed to be in the possession of the Council and shall be disposed of by vote, but the mover may withdraw it at any time before the decision or amendment, by consent of the second.

Rule 11. Motion to Reconsider

A motion to reconsider may be made at the same meeting or at the next succeeding meeting but only by a Council member who voted on the prevailing side of an action and only when the subject matter has not passed out of the control of the Council. All

³ WMC 2.10.130 – Prohibited Acts

other conditions and procedures related to the motion to reconsider, as set forth in Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 12th Edition, shall apply, except as otherwise provided in this code.

Rule 12. Public Comments

A person desiring to address the Council may do so at the times identified on the agenda at regular, special, and in some cases emergency meetings. Members of the public may also submit written correspondence for distribution to Council. Public comment should be directed at the Council as a body and no individual person. The Mayor or the Mayor's designee may remove any person from a City meeting if the Mayor or the Mayor's designee determines that the person is disruptive and that person does not stop being disruptive after receiving a warning on the record.

- A. In a public hearing on a legislative matter, persons or their authorized legal representatives may address the Council on matters under discussion. Each person testifying shall limit their presentation to five minutes unless the Mayor or presiding officer grants further time.
- B. Quasi-judicial hearings before Council, the Board of Adjustment, the Board of Equalization or any other quasi-judicial body comprised of City Council members shall be conducted in compliance with the Code and any procedural orders adopted and applicable to that body and the action before it.
- C. For an agenda item not scheduled for public hearing, individual comments may be made during Citizen's Comments and shall be limited to two minutes unless further time is granted by the presiding officer.
- D. For a matter not appearing on the agenda over which the council has control, individual comments may be made during Citizen's Discussion and shall be limited to five minutes per person unless the presiding officer grants further time.

Rule 13. Formal Presentations

Formal presentations on items not on the agenda require prior written notice to the clerk by noon on the Wednesday preceding the meeting. This notice must include the presenter's name, mailing address, telephone number, and the nature of the communication. Supporting documents must be provided in nine sets to the clerk before the item is called on the agenda. Presentations are limited to fifteen minutes unless further time is granted by the presiding officer and no more than four presentations per meeting.

STANDING RULES

Whittier Municipal Code (WMC) and Alaska State Statutes (AS) govern powers and operations of the Council. The following are additional **standing rules** that address the administration of the Council.

Rule 1. All Communications May be Public

Council members should remember that letters, emails, media posts, voicemail messages, text messages, and all other forms of communications may be subject to public disclosure. All communication should reflect the oath of office taken by Council members and full compliance with the City's Code of Ethics.

Rule 2. Agenda Items

It is the goal of City Administration and City Council to foster open and transparent communication of the people's business. In order to do so, it is important to City Council that the agenda reflect the matters before it for discussion and action, providing the public proper notice so it may actively participate in the meeting. To this end, City Council has adopted specific time periods in which items must be submitted to the City Clerk for inclusion in the agenda for an upcoming meeting.

Adding a Discussion Item to the Agenda

Any Council member wishing to add an item to a future regular meeting agenda that is not an ordinance, resolution or action memorandum may request the addition of such an item to the next regularly scheduled meeting during "Council Comments". Alternatively, two Council members may jointly request the addition of a discussion item on the agenda. The item will be added to the agenda for the regularly scheduled meeting scheduled 14 or more days after the request for addition is filed with the City Clerk and if the request is received from both Council members.

Addition of Resolutions

A resolution may be added to the agenda by the Mayor or two Council members. The requested resolution shall be included on the agenda for the regularly scheduled meeting scheduled 14 or more days after the request for the addition of the resolution is filed with the City Clerk.

Addition of Ordinances to the Agenda

Council members may introduce ordinances following the guidelines of AS 29.25.020(b)(1) and WMC 2.08.300(A). Non-emergency ordinances properly requested under these rules shall be placed on the agenda within 30 days after the final ordinance has been received, attorney review has been completed, and the Finance Director has reviewed and approved the ordinance when a fiscal note is required if the ordinance is adopted. For emergency ordinances meeting the criteria in WMC 2.08.310(A), procedures will differ according to the nature of the emergency and the best interest of the community.

Council members may utilize "Council Comments" during any meeting to bring up topics upon which Council is authorized to act. Council members may request the addition of a discussion item upon which no action shall be taken during the "Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda" portion of a regular meeting.

Rule 3. Tentative Agendas and Packet Deadlines

To support timely public notice and packet preparation, agenda items should be submitted to the City Clerk by 5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday one week before a regular meeting. Submissions should identify the type of item, a working title, and any available draft materials. Agenda packets are posted on the City's website and available for downloading at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting.

Rule 4. Amendments to the Council Manual

Amendments to City Code that are adopted by Ordinance and are referenced in this manual will be updated by the City Clerk and will not require approval by resolution. All other amendments to the Council Manual must be approved by resolution. This Manual will be reviewed every two years.

Rule 5. Complaints and Suggestions to Council

Complaints against the Administration shall be provided to the Mayor for consideration. Complaints addressed to the Council as a whole shall be provided to City Council as a whole within 14 days of receipt by the Administration.

Rule 6. Council Vacancy

Alaska Statute 29.20.180 delegates responsibility for the appointment to a vacated Council seat exclusively to the City Council. Upon the Council's acceptance of a vacancy, the City Clerk shall prepare an advertisement soliciting applications for candidates for appointment to the vacated seat to be submitted within a time certain. Applications, which are a public record, shall be submitted on a form approved by Council who shall meet in a regular or special meeting within 30 days of the vacancy occurring and cast a vote for a successor. A Council Member appointed in accordance with WMC 2.04.150 shall serve until the next regular election, when a successor shall be elected to serve the balance of the term.

Rule 7. Evaluation Process

The evaluation process for the City Manager and City Attorney employees is as follows:

1. Two regular Council meetings before an evaluation, the City Council will be provided the currently adopted evaluation form(s) via Microsoft Forms for the Officer being evaluated and appoint a Council member to serve as "evaluation chairperson" for that specific evaluation.
2. Each City Council Member will fill out the evaluation form(s) individually.
3. One regular Council meeting before the evaluation, the City Council will meet in Executive Session (without the Officer being evaluated*) with legal counsel (if applicable) to discuss the performance and reach consensus regarding final disposition of the evaluation form(s).

4. The evaluation chairperson will compile the final version of the evaluation form(s) and provide a copy to the full Council and the Officer being evaluated, not less than seven calendar days prior to the evaluation.
5. The evaluation will occur at the next regular City Council meeting in open session and/or Executive Session*.
6. All evaluation forms will be considered confidential and will not be released without the express written permission of the Officer. However, Council members should keep in mind that draft and final evaluations may be released publicly by consent of the Officer.

*AS 44.62.310 (c) (2) allows a governing body to meet in executive session on matters which tend to prejudice the reputation and character of any person, except that the person to be discussed is entitled to notice and may insist upon open discussion.

Rule 8. Fiscal Notes

Every action item on Council's Agenda is to include both negative and/or positive financial impact. If a fiscal note is not required or not applicable the action item is to be so marked.

Rule 9. Lobbying Activities

The City Council annually adopts by Resolution the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and Legislative Priorities for the upcoming fiscal year.

When working with a contract lobbyist or lobbying on behalf of the City, the City Council will adopt resolutions in support of capital projects or legislation which will direct Council's position. Questions from the Council for the contract lobbyist can be brought forward during Council Discussion at a regular or special meeting.

When opportunities arise for Mayor and Council Members to lobby on behalf of the City, City staff and/or the contract lobbyist will prepare a schedule of meetings with legislators and other State officials to address specific matters related to Council supported capital projects or legislation. If a Council Member chooses to address non-city related legislative issues or positions, they should make separate appointments outside of and so as not to conflict with the staff/lobbyist prepared schedule.

Upon returning from travel on City business, including lobbying trips or other trips made on behalf of the City, the Council Members and Mayor will provide verbal or written reports for inclusion in the next Council meeting.

Rule 10. Orientation

A general orientation to municipal government, Council conduct and expectations will take place in close proximity to being sworn into office. The City Manager, City Clerk, and Mayor (unless newly elected) are responsible for providing orientation for newly elected officials.

Rule 11. Requests of Administration

Requests for information that is readily available or for tasks of an incidental nature may be made by any individual Council member, any time, without notification of or approval by Council. Requests that will result in the use of staff time for the development of new documents, or to conduct activities that would not occur in the normal course of business, as determined by the City Manager, or that would require expenditure of legal fees or outside costs shall require verbal consent by Council.

Rule 12. Statements on Behalf of the City

Statements of the Mayor and Council on behalf of the City are based on actions taken by the Council as a body. Council Members should not distribute letters independently on City letterhead or use City email accounts to share or disseminate personal viewpoints or positions. Letters sent on behalf of City Council shall be executed by the Mayor unless otherwise directed by Council. All correspondence from the "City of Whittier" must be approved by City Council or must fall within the authority of and be executed by the City Manager in the administrator arena.

Rule 14. Student Representative

It is important to seek out and consider student ideas, viewpoints and reaction to City decisions and policies affecting students. In order to provide student input and involvement, the City Council may appoint a Student Representative and an Alternate Student Representative to the various governmental bodies of the City, including the Council, as it deems necessary.

Rule 13. Travel

Any Council member who intends to travel outside the City, on behalf of the City, must apply for and obtain approval in advance of such travel if such travel was not previously included in the adopted budget. The Council, by motion, approves all travel in or outside the State of Alaska, except the Mayor may approve travel if time does not allow for Council approval and the Mayor submits the Mayor's basis for approving the travel to City Council at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

Any Mayor or Council Member who travels at the City's expense will be required to submit a report of their activities verbally or in writing at the next meeting attended following said travel.

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