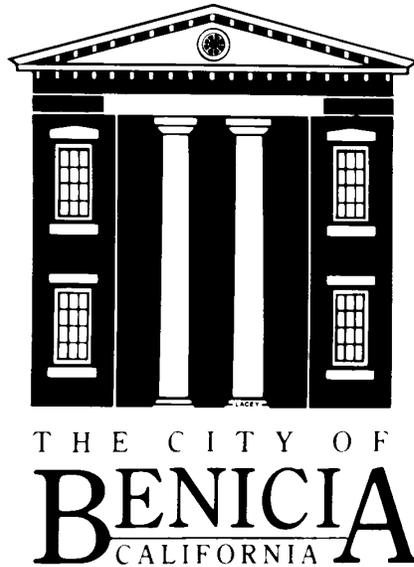


City Council

Rules of Procedure



Created July 17, 2012

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INTRODUCTION.

These rules are assembled to make it easier for people to access city government so that they may be more informed about what the City is doing and so that they may be involved in a more meaningful and knowledgeable way. Open meetings and ethical guidelines help increase the public trust and confidence in the city government and will increase the public awareness and knowledge about their government. A well-educated public and ethical officials are essential to good government.

I. MEETINGS.

A. REGULAR MEETINGS.

The City Council holds regular meetings for the conduct of the City's business on the first, third, and fourth Tuesday of each month unless the meeting is cancelled. The first and third Tuesday regular meetings of the City Council are held in the City Council Chamber at City Hall unless the City Council Chamber are unavailable or inappropriate for the items proposed for the Council's agenda. The fourth Tuesday regular meeting is held in the Community Center unless it is unavailable or inappropriate for the items proposed for the agenda. The City Manager, in consultation with the Mayor, shall determine an alternative location if necessary.

B. SPECIAL MEETINGS.

The City Council holds special meetings as necessary. Special meetings may be used for Closed Session items and for other items of business that require scheduling at a special meeting due to the need to take action prior to a regular meeting or that require a meeting devoted to the subject matter proposed for the meeting.

C. STUDY SESSIONS.

The purpose of a study session is to meet with staff and various people, Boards, Commissions and Committees to receive briefings and background information and discuss policy issues and provide staff direction. A study session allows a range of meeting formats depending on the topic and allows for general discussion of major or controversial items before formal City Council action is required. The fourth Tuesday of the month is reserved for study sessions. Additional dates for study sessions may be scheduled as necessary. Study sessions may be scheduled as regular, adjourned regular or special meetings. Presentations to the City Council will be made by staff members, consultants, representatives of the City's Boards, Commissions and Committees or of other public agencies, and/or by any other person expressly invited for that purpose. Public comment on the item under consideration is allowed. No motions will be offered and no formal action by the City Council will be taken at the study session. The study session allows the Council Members to ask questions and express personal opinions about the item under consideration.

D. CONDUCT AT MEETINGS.

In addition to complying with the Code of Conduct, City Council members shall refrain from electronic communications during a meeting in order to avoid potential Brown Act or due process issues.

E. ADJOURNMENT.

It is the desire of the City Council to adjourn their meetings by 11 p.m. Therefore, no new business will be taken up by the Council after 11 p.m. unless the City Council adopts a motion to continue. The remaining items will be placed on the next regular Council meeting in the appropriate section of the agenda, unless the City Council calls for a special meeting to consider one or more of the continued items. The Council shall review the agenda at approximately 9 p.m. to see if it is likely the agenda items will be completed by 11 p.m. or if items will probably be continued to the next regular meeting. If it appears items will be continued, the Council will let the audience know as soon as is practical. The Open Government Ordinance requirement for public comment on the item will occur when the item is scheduled unless a majority agrees to move it up.

II. AGENDAS.

A. PREPARATION.

The Mayor and the City Manager shall prepare an agenda for each meeting of the Council. Items to be included on the agenda must be submitted to the City Manager in writing by noon on the 7th working day preceding the regular meeting and on the 5th working day preceding a special meeting.

B. TWO-STEP PROCESS.

City Council Members may request that a policy matter be considered by the City Council using the Two-Step Process. A Council Member submits the Council Member Requested Agenda Item form ([Appendix A](#)) to the City Manager. The Council Member shall fill out the form as completely as possible and indicate a desired date for agendaization of Step 1 and for Step 2. Once Step 1 is agendaized, the City Council shall vote whether or not to pursue study or action on the policy matter. If there is interest by a majority of the City Council, the policy proposal shall be directed to the Policy Calendar Process for scheduling a study session (see Section II.E below) or to an upcoming agenda for action if the subject of the request is time sensitive (Step 2). The Council Member submitting the request shall inform the Council if the item is time-sensitive.

C. LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION.

The City Manager, or City Attorney in the case of legal issues, is authorized to provide support or opposition on legislative matters provided that the support or opposition is

consistent with the position taken by the League of California Cities and/or the Solano City/County Coordinating Council (4 C's). Typically, copies of this correspondence will be sent to Council via email in advance of distribution. Should a Council Member have a question or concern, that member will then have the opportunity to contact the City Manager prior to distribution. Occasionally same-day requests from the League of California Cities for letters, emails or faxes expressing support or opposition are received, and in these instances, advance distribution to Council would not be feasible.

In those cases where no position has been taken by either the League or 4 C's, then the request shall be agendaized for Council review and direction. If timing is such that the request cannot be agendaized prior to the specified response date, then the draft response will be emailed to the City Council in advance of distribution. Should a Council member have a question or concern with the proposed response, that member may then contact the City Manager or City Attorney for clarification and/or to request that the item be agendaized for discussion. All letters authorized by the Council shall be signed by the Mayor.

D. REVIEW OF POLICY ITEM CONSIDERED IN PREVIOUS YEAR.

City Council Members may request that the full City Council review a policy matter that has been decided in the last year by following the procedures set forth in Section II.B. A brief write-up of the matter and the date of last action must be included on the Council Member Requested Agenda Item form ([Appendix A](#)). The request for review will be placed in the appropriate section of the agenda.

E. POLICY CALENDAR PROCESS.

Council Members may request that a policy item be placed on a list of policy issues to be considered at a Quarterly Policy Issues Study Session Meeting. At this quarterly meeting, proposals are selected by majority vote of the Council for placement on the Policy Calendar.

At the quarterly meeting, the Council shall consider the following when deciding which policy proposals shall be calendared for Council consideration:

1. Time required for understanding by Council Members,
2. Time required for sufficient deliberation,
3. Time required for analysis and preparation of staff reports,
4. Time required for public understanding,
5. Council interest in subject,
6. Public interest in subject,
7. Conservation of staff time, and
8. Relationship to Council Priorities.

F. PLACEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS.

The Mayor and City Manager shall consider whether an item is time-sensitive, likely to generate a large number of public speakers, or is controversial when determining the order of the agenda items. These items will be placed earlier on the agenda in the appropriate section of the agenda. Items that have been continued from a prior meeting or items for reconsideration shall also be placed as early as possible on the agenda in the appropriate section of the agenda.

G. AGENDA PACKETS.

The City Manager shall prepare and provide to each Council Member and the City Attorney, an agenda packet not later than the Thursday preceding each regular meeting or two working days preceding each special meeting. The City Manager shall mail a copy of the agenda or a copy of all the documents constituting the agenda packet to every person who has requested the same in writing during the preceding year, has provided stamped self-addressed envelopes and has paid the applicable fee, if the request is to receive the packet by mail. A paper copy of the agenda packet will be available for those persons so requesting at the time the agenda is posted or upon distribution to all, or a majority of, the Council Members upon payment of the applicable fee. To the extent feasible, the agenda packet shall be available on-line.

H. REGULAR AGENDA.

The first and third Tuesday regular meeting agenda shall consist of the following sections in order. The fourth Tuesday regular meeting agenda may omit items 2, 4, and 7 if not needed and item 8 may be changed to Workshop.

1. CALL TO ORDER.

2. CLOSED SESSION.

3. CONVENE OPEN SESSION.

- Roll Call
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Reference to the Fundamental Rights of the Public

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS, PROCLAMATIONS, APPOINTMENTS, PRESENTATIONS. This section includes announcements by the Mayor or Council members, appointments to City boards and commissions, and scheduled presentations. Presentations are limited to a maximum of ten minutes to allow the Council to have adequate time to address the agenda items of business. Proclamations are made before presentations for public convenience.

5. ADOPTION OF AGENDA. The Council, by majority vote, shall adopt the agenda as final. Following such adoption, agenda items may not be added,

removed or their order changed unless by the unanimous consent of the Council Members present at the time the agenda was adopted as final. All matters shall be considered by the Council in the order listed on the agenda adopted as final, to the extent of time available. Only matters on the agenda as adopted final or modified under this section may be considered. Agenda items not considered or completed at a meeting for lack of time become agenda items at the following meeting per Section II.F.

6. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT.

a. Written: All written communications suitable for the agenda, received since the preparation of the subject agenda, addressed to or intended for the City Council and not otherwise included in the agenda, shall be listed in this section in the order received.

b. Public Comment: This section of the agenda is for members of the public to make comments to the City Council regarding non-agendized matters of general interest to the citizens of Benicia in accordance with the procedures set forth in Section III below.

7. CONSENT CALENDAR. Items listed under the Consent Calendar are considered routine and will be enacted, approved or adopted by one motion unless a request for removal for discussion or explanation is received from a Council Member, staff, or a member of the public. Items removed from the Consent Calendar shall be considered immediately following the adoption of the Consent Calendar. Routine agenda items that are under \$50,000 and/or are already included in the budget may be listed under the Consent Calendar.

8. BUSINESS ITEMS. This section of the agenda is for the business items of the City Council including Public Hearings, appeals, and status or informational reports from staff and the Council. Council Member requests for future agenda items under the two-step, legislative or consideration of items heard in the last year will be agendized here.

9. ADJOURNMENT.

I. SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA.

A special meeting agenda shall consist of the following sections in order:

1. CALL TO ORDER.
2. CONVENE OPEN SESSION.
 - Roll Call
 - Pledge of Allegiance
 - Reference to the Fundamental Rights of the Public

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA. (if multiple items are on the agenda)

4. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT.

a. Written: All written communications suitable for the agenda, received since the preparation of the subject agenda, addressed to or intended for the City Council and not otherwise included in the agenda, shall be listed in this section in the order received.

b. Public Comment: This section of the agenda is for members of the public to make comments to the City Council regarding non-agendized matters of general interest to the citizens of Benicia in accordance with the procedures set forth in Section III below.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS. This section of the agenda is for the City Council for the Closed Session, action items or study session matters.

6. CLOSED SESSION.

7. ADJOURNMENT.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

A. FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT.

The City Council promulgates these rules in recognition of the public's fundamental right to speak on agenda items for a meaningful amount of time.

B. RECOGNITION.

No person may address the Council without the permission of the Presiding Officer, or a majority of the quorum, or as otherwise required by law. Except as required by law, the Presiding Officer is obligated to recognize members of the Council and staff prior to opening up items for public comment.

C. ADDRESSING THE COUNCIL.

Those persons desiring to speak on an agendized matter or under Opportunity for Public Comment are requested to, but not required to, complete a Speaker's Card and present it to the City Clerk at the beginning of the meeting or upon their arrival in the Council Chambers. The Presiding Officer shall recognize speakers on an agendized matter, including Announcements, Appointments, Presentations, Proclamations, when that item is before the City Council for consideration.

The Presiding Officers shall recognize speakers on matters not on the agenda under the Opportunity for Public Comment portion of the agenda. Persons addressing the

Council shall do so only at the speakers' rostrum and should begin, but are not required to do so, by stating their name and address for the records. All remarks shall be addressed to the Council as a body and not to any member thereof, or to staff, or the public.

No person shall be permitted to enter into any discussion without the permission of the Presiding Officer.

D. ACTION ON NON-AGENDIZED ITEMS.

Any item raised by a member of the public which is not agendized, but may require Council action, shall be automatically referred to the City Staff for investigation and disposition, unless the item requires action to be taken by the Council at the meeting during which it was raised and constitutes an emergency or the need to take such action arose after the posting of the agenda within the meaning of Government Code §54954.2(b). In either event the Council is entitled to discuss the matter before making the determination required under said Government Code provision, and if either finding is made, may take action thereon.

E. TIME LIMITS FOR PUBLIC COMMENT.

1. In order to allow the Council to have adequate time to address the agendized items of business, public comment under Opportunity for Public Comment will be limited to not more than five (5) minutes per speaker on non-agendized items. If a large number of the public desire to speak, the Council may agree to limit the time for each speaker to less than 5 minutes to allow the Council to address the agendized items of business.

2. The Presiding Officer may allow up to 10 minutes for a speaker to speak on multiple agenda items under Opportunity for Public Comment.

3. Each speaker shall speak only once on an agenda item and limit his/her remarks to not more than five (5) minutes when speaking at the time of the agendized item unless a shorter time is authorized by Council.

4. In accordance with the Open Government Ordinance and to promote time efficiency, the Presiding Officer may request spokespersons be designated to represent similar views. A designated spokesperson has 15 minutes to speak.

5. The time for speaking may be extended by the Presiding Officer with the consent of a majority of the Council.

6. Each speaker shall avoid repetition of the remarks of prior speakers and, when speaking at the time an agenda item is being considered, shall speak only to the specific agenda item under consideration.

7. Speakers may not concede any part of their allotted time to another speaker.

F. QUESTIONS.

Following each speaker's remarks, each Council Member shall be given the opportunity to comment further and to address questions to the speaker. The speaker may not be permitted or required to answer such questions if a majority of Council Members present other than the questioner object.

G. PRESENTATIONS SUBMITTED IN WRITING.

Persons who anticipate oral presentations exceeding the allowed time are encouraged to submit comments in writing at the earliest possible time, for distribution to the Council and other interested parties. Comments should be submitted at least one day in advance of the scheduled meeting date to insure distribution to the Council prior to the meeting.

H. POWER POINT PRESENTATIONS.

Members of the public may present a Power Point software presentation to the Council utilizing the City's audio/visual equipment, provided that the public make their request to the City Manager's 72 office hours in advance of the meeting in order to coordinate the use of the equipment.

IV. BUSINESS ITEM PROCEDURES.

A. ONE HOUR FOR HEARINGS.

Individual Business Items, including Public Hearing should not exceed one hour in length. To assist with this goal, time limits for public speakers may be limited in accordance with Section III.E.

B. PUBLIC HEARING AND APPEALS PROCEDURES.

The procedures for Public Hearings and appeals are as follows:

1. Presentation by Staff.
2. Presentation by Proponent or Appellant.
3. Presentation by Opponent.
4. Comments from the Public.
5. Rebuttal by the Proponent or Appellant.
6. The Presiding Officer shall recognize supplemental speakers as required by law or deemed appropriate to gather information relevant to the matter before the City Council. Supplemental speakers shall limit their remarks to presenting new information

not already covered by other speakers, and must limit their presentation to five (5) minutes or the time established for speakers in accordance with Section III.E, if less.

7. Following the public portion of the hearing, the Presiding Officer shall declare the public portion of the hearing closed and the matter is then before the City Council for the Council portion of the hearing. Each Council Member shall be given an opportunity to speak to the subject without interruption. When the Council discussion has been concluded, the Council shall make its decision.

8. Spokespersons for the Proponent/Appellant and Opponent shall each have fifteen (15) minutes to present their case. The spokesperson for the Proponent/Appellant shall have five (5) minutes to present any rebuttal. Organized groups may choose a single spokesperson who may speak for the group. Speakers may not concede any part of their allotted time to another speaker.

V. CREATION OF COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS.

A. CITIZEN COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS.

The Council may create committees, boards, and commissions to assist in the conduct of the operation of the City Government with such duties as the Council may specify, not inconsistent with the City Code. Any committee, board, or commission so created shall cease to exist upon the accomplishment of the special purpose for which it was created, or when abolished by a majority vote of the Council. No committee so appointed shall have powers other than advisory to the Council or to the City Manager, except as otherwise specified by the City Code.

B. MEMBERSHIP SELECTION.

Unless otherwise specified by state law or the City Code, appointments shall be made by the following procedure:

1. A two-member subcommittee appointed by the Mayor, which will rotate among council members with one new appointee each year, shall be appointed to interview applicants for all boards, commissions and committees, unless otherwise provided for by statute, ordinance or resolution. One member of the City Council subcommittee shall be appointed in January of each year and one member appointed in July of each year, each for a one year term.

2. Each term of the subcommittee will be filled by Council Members who did not serve on the committee during the prior term unless the Council Member is unable or unwilling to serve on the subcommittee.

3. The subcommittee shall interview the applicants using standardized questions for all applicants, particularized questions for the particular board or commission, and any other appropriate questions. The subcommittee shall recommend one applicant to the Mayor for each vacancy and the Mayor may make the appointment from the recommended applicant. The subcommittee shall provide comments to the

Mayor on why they recommended the applicant. If the Mayor finds the recommendation acceptable, the comments shall be included in the agenda packet as part of the paperwork for the appointment.

4. If the applicant is not acceptable to the Mayor, the subcommittee shall recommend an additional applicant until an appointment is made by the Mayor, which shall be subject to final approval by the Council. The City Clerk shall call for the vote in the following order: subcommittee members, remaining council members, and the mayor.

5. If, at any point during this process, only one qualified applicant is available, the subcommittee may choose to make a single recommendation.

6. If the subcommittee is unable to recommend applicants due to lack of qualified applicants, then the Mayor may elect to interview the available applicants and/or direct staff to conduct additional outreach efforts to fill the opening.

7. The names of the proposed appointees shall be posted five (5) working days prior to the appointment being made.

8. For appointments to a board or commission where state law provides for appointment by the Council as a whole, any Council member may nominate a person for appointment. The Council shall then vote on the nominee at the following Council meeting.

9. If desired by the member, members of the Council who are not on the subcommittee may interview any or all of the applicants. These members shall use care not to violate the Brown Act by disclosing the information they learn from the interviews prior to the meeting where appointments are scheduled to be made.

C. REMOVAL OF MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS.

The Council may remove any member of any committee, board or commission which it has created by an affirmative vote of at least four (4) members of the Council, if removal is not specified in the City Code.

VI. RULES OF ORDER.

A. QUORUM.

Three Council Members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, except that less than a quorum may adjourn meetings of the Board. If a quorum is not present within one hour after the time noticed for commencement of the meeting and thereafter any Council Member who was present at the end of such hour leaves and

does not return, no meeting shall be held on that date notwithstanding the later presence of three (3) or more Council Members.

B. RIGHT TO THE FLOOR.

A Council Member shall not have the right to the floor without being recognized by the Presiding Officer, except upon a point of order. Council Members, including the Mayor, shall avoid interrupting any Member while speaking.

C. ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND MOTIONS – PRECEDENTS.

When any ordinance, resolution, or motion is properly brought before the Council and seconded by another Council Member, the council may discuss, debate, and offer other motions including a motion to amend or substitute. If a point of order, or a motion to adjourn, to table, to table to a time certain, to close debate, to refer or to amend, is made, no other action shall be considered until that motion or point of order is resolved. Such items shall have precedence in the order stated in the preceding sentence. Points of order shall be ruled upon by the Presiding Officer, provided that such ruling may be overridden by a majority of the Council. All points of order, or motions to adjourn, to table, to table to a time certain, to close debate, and to refer), except motions to amend, shall be put to a vote without debate and decided by a majority. Any of the foregoing motions shall be in order at anytime the speaker is duly recognized, except when repeated without intervening business or discussion, or if made when the motion to close debate has been adopted or while a vote is being taken:

1. MOTION TO ADJOURN.

A motion to adjourn terminates the meeting.

2. MOTION TO TABLE.

If a motion to table (without time certain) passes, consideration of the matter may be resumed only upon the motion of a member who voted with the majority on the motion to table.

3. MOTION TO CLOSE DEBATE.

When a motion to close debate is duly made and seconded, there shall be no further debate. If the question carries, the Presiding Officer shall put pending amendments to a vote, without debate, in the inverse order of their introduction before putting the main question. If the question is decided negatively, the main question and its amendments remain before the Council.

4. MOTION TO REFER.

A motion to refer the matter sends the matter to a committee or staff for investigating or studying the proposal and reporting back. If the motion to refer fails, the main question and its amendments remain before the Council.

5. MOTION TO AMEND.

A motion to amend modifies or changes the motion that was being considered. If the motion to amend passes then the main motions should be voted on as amended.

6. DIVISION OF THE QUESTION.

If a matter properly put before the Council contains two or more separable propositions, the Presiding Officer may, with the consent of one other Council Member, divide the question into its separable parts for consideration in order.

7. RECONSIDERATION.

Providing that no intervening rights shall be prejudiced, any Council Member who voted with the majority on a question may move the reconsideration of that question at the same meeting in which the original decision was made or at the next following meeting. A motion for reconsideration must be made no later than the Thursday before the agenda packet is published. After a motion for reconsideration has been acted upon, no other similar motion shall be made without unanimous consent.

D. VOTING.

Unless otherwise required by applicable law, three affirmative votes are required to enact an ordinance, to adopt a resolution, or to adopt a motion granting a franchise or authorizing the payment or expenditure of money or incurring of a debt. The majority of a quorum is required to adopt other motions, unless otherwise required by applicable law. A "majority" refers to a majority of the quorum present. All matters shall be adopted by a roll call vote.

VII. STAFF SUPPORT.

Staff support for requests from individual council members shall be limited to 15 minutes of staff time. Research, report writing, compilation of materials, etc. in excess of 15 minutes shall not be undertaken unless approved by a majority of the City Council.

VIII. FAILURE TO OBSERVE RULES OR PROCEDURES.

The failure to observe any of the rules or procedures does not serve as an independent source of challenge to any decision or action of the City Council, nor does it serve as evidence of improper conduct in any challenge to any action by a City Council member or by the Council as a whole.

IX. REVIEW OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE.

The City Council shall review these Rules of Procedure not less than annually and make any appropriate changes.

APPENDIX A: COUNCIL MEMBER REQUESTED AGENDA ITEM

Requested by: _____

Desired Initial Council Meeting Date: _____

Desired Date for Second Step or Policy Calendar Review: _____

Deadline for Action, if any: _____

Problem/Issue/Idea Name: _____

Description of Problem/Issue/Idea: _____

COUNCIL DIRECTION

- No Further Action
- Schedule for Second Step on _____
- Schedule for Policy Calendar Review on _____
- Refer to: Staff _____
 Commission _____
 Board _____
 Committee _____

Date Due: _____