

**City Council Ground Rules
City of Benicia**

The Members of the City Council for the City of Benicia do agree and promise among themselves as follows:

1. The authorized negotiator for the City shall be _____. All negotiations shall be conducted at the negotiation table and any inquires from the Union's bargaining representatives regarding bargaining proposals shall be referred to the City's authorized negotiator.
2. The City's negotiators shall provide updates on the status of negotiation in closed session as needed. Council members shall inform the City Manager of any questions related to negotiations for follow up in between closed sessions, if any.
3. All closed session discussions and votes on negotiation matters are confidential and shall not be disclosed at anytime. Unauthorized disclosure of closed session discussion shall be reported to the City Attorney for follow up.
4. If union bargaining unit members ask Council members about the status of negotiations, they shall be referred to their bargaining representative in all instances.
5. Meetings with Unions
 - a. During negotiations, members of the City Council shall not meet individually with representatives from any union involved in negotiations. If absolutely necessary and after notice to the chief negotiator, Council members may meet with representatives from the Union but shall meet in pairs to ensure that individual Council members avoid being targets of misinterpretations stemming from such meetings.
 - b. During such meetings, Council members may listen to statements and arguments made by the Unions but shall not engage in dialogue or any form of bargaining with the Unions. It is an unfair labor practice for the Union to bypass the authorized City negotiator and negotiation table and engage in direct negotiations with individual Council members.
 - c. Council members shall attempt to keep meetings with Union representatives "on topic," and shall discourage any personal attacks during such meetings. If you feel that you are being asked to discuss individual bargaining proposals you can reply as follows: "I believe that we are now moving from a conversation whereby you can provide me with statements and your view of bargaining to engaging me in specific proposals and counter proposals which is moving into direct dealing. Therefore, I will have to direct you back to the City's chief negotiator to avoid any appearance of direct dealing by either party."

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6. Communications regarding Meetings with Unions

- a. Council members shall report the content of meetings with representatives from any Union to the City Manager via email, who will forward the email to the City's chief negotiator.
- b. To avoid holding a "serial meeting" in violation of the Brown Act, Council members shall not discuss any the contents of these meetings with other Council members and shall not include other Council members in their e-mails to the bargaining team.
- c. Each closed session on negotiations shall include a standing item for reporting the content of meetings and communications from any Union.

7. Communications from the Press

- a. All press inquiries shall be referred to the City Manager for the official City response. The City Manager shall work with the Mayor to develop a response unless the matter is routine. The City Manager shall forward any written press statements to the Council related to any press statement issued regarding negotiations.
- b. If necessary, the City manager and the Mayor shall include a standing item for reporting the content of communications with the press.

I agree to the provisions of these City Council Ground Rules,

Council member: _____ Dated: _____