

# **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR CITY COUNCIL**

## **ARTICLE I ELECTION OF PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENT PRO-TEM**

**Section 1. Election of Council Officers.** The President and the President Pro Tem shall be chosen by a majority vote of the Council at the first meeting of the Council in January following each odd year General City Election (per City Charter). The election will take place after roll call and the procedure will be the same as paragraph three (3) under "Vacated Elective Positions".

**Section 2. Presiding Officers.**

(a.) The President shall preside over all the meetings of the Council (regular and special Council meetings, public hearings and study sessions).

(b.) The President Pro Tem shall preside over the meetings of the Council in the absence of the President.

(c.) If the President and President Pro Tem are absent from a meeting, the Council Member with the longest continuous tenure in office shall preside accordingly.

## **ARTICLE II VACATED ELECTIVE POSITIONS**

**Section 1. Filling of Vacancies.**

(a.) All vacancies in elective positions shall be filled by appointment no later than the second regular City Council meeting following the effective date of the vacancy, provided a majority number of affirmative votes are cast.

(b.) An agenda item shall be scheduled to receive nominations to a vacant elected position, and an agenda item shall be scheduled to vote appointment to a vacant elected position, no later than the second regular City Council meeting following the effective date of the vacancy.

**Section 2. Procedures for Filling Vacancies.**

(a.) Nomination to a vacant elected position shall occur by the self-nomination of the applicant or nomination by a Council Member.

(b.) All names nominated shall be printed on a piece of rectangular paper of the same size. The paper shall be at or near 3" X 5" in size. The nominations shall not be folded and all names shall be placed into a covered box or receptacle of sufficient size to allow a mixing or randomness to the selection of the nominations. A motion to close nominations must be made and supported. The paper slips shall be withdrawn one piece at a time from the box by the City of Westland Clerk or designee in the Clerk's absence.

(c.) The order in which the names of the nominees were drawn shall be recorded. Upon recording the names of the nominees, the nominees shall be voted on in the same order as their names were drawn. Voting shall take place by a roll call vote.

**Section 3. Vacancy in Presiding Office.** Vacancy in the President and/or President Pro Tem position shall be filled by appointment per vacated elective positions language (above) no later than the second regular meeting following the effective date of the vacancy.

**Section 4. Unfilled Vacancies.** In the event a sufficient number of votes to appoint an individual to a vacancy within an elective position does not occur, this same nomination and appointment procedure shall be utilized at every successive regular City Council meeting until an appointment is approved.

**Section 5. Provisions for Filling Vacancies.** The provisions for filling vacancies in Article II supersede Robert's Rules of Order.

### **ARTICLE III GENERAL POLICY**

**Section 1. Council Mail.** Members of the Council shall be responsible for checking their mailbox provided in the City Clerk's office.

**Section 2. Absences.**

(a.) Members of the Council shall notify the President or Pro Tem, via the City Clerk, if they are unable to attend any meetings and/or study sessions.

(b.) Members of the Council shall notify the President or Pro Tem, in writing, via the City Clerk when they will be on vacation or out-of-town.

**Section 3. Communications.** A Council Member's written communications that are directed to a City official shall be copied to the entire City Council.

**Section 4. Review of Policies and Procedures.** Upon the written request of three or more council members, these policies and procedures shall be reviewed at a study session. Proposed revisions shall be voted upon at a regular Council meeting.

**Section 5. City Provided Laptop Computers.**

(a.) The City will provide laptop computers to all Council Members to use for official City business. Council members shall be responsible for the proper and appropriate use of the city provided laptop computers. Council members shall be expected to utilize paperless electronic systems to download agendas, memos and other communications from the Administration, Clerk's Office, Departmental Directors and Council Members. Council members agree that the paperless communications system is the primary source of these communications.

(b.) The city shall provide the laptop computers and any training that is necessary to assist the Council members in complying with this policy.

**Section 6. Seating of Council.** The President Pro Tem shall be seated to the immediate right of the President. The President shall decide the seating arrangement for all other City Council Members.

## **ARTICLE IV COUNCIL AGENDA**

**Section 1. Agenda Deadline.**

- (a.) The deadline for agenda items will be the Monday, one (1) week, prior to the next Council meeting at 4:00 p.m.
  
- (b.) All information pertaining to an agenda item shall be submitted to the City Clerk by 4:00 p.m. on the Monday, one (1) week, prior to the Council meeting date.
  
- (c.) Electronically generated Council packets will be transmitted, by the Clerk's office, to Council by 4:00 p.m. the Wednesday before each meeting unless extenuating circumstances prevent it.

**Section 2. Number of Copies.** Each director and/or petitioner submitting agenda items shall be responsible for providing the original and eight (8) copies of the proposal and full explanation. Items to be placed on the agenda must be sent to the Clerk's office in electronic form via e-mail or a PDF file. In certain circumstances, items may be scanned in by the Council Secretary in the Clerk's office.

**Section 3. Addition to Agenda by Council.** Any item shall be placed on the agenda by the written request of any three (3) Council Members.

**Section 4. Emergency Items.** Emergency agenda items and/or request for an addendum to the agenda may be approved at the discretion of the President/Pro Tem via the City Clerk.

**Section 5. Order of Business.** The Agenda/Order of Business shall consist of the following:

- Call the meeting to order
- Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
- Roll Call
- Special Presentations & Announcements
- Citizen's Questions or Input on Agenda Items
- Consent Calendar
- Old Business
- New Business
- Payment of Vouchers
- Citizen's Comments and Request
- Comments from the Mayor (or designee)
- Comments from the City Attorney
- Comments from Council Members
- Adjournment

## **ARTICLE V COUNCIL MEETINGS**

### **Section 1. Schedule of Regular Meetings.**

(a.) The Council shall meet not less than twice a month in the Council Chambers at times and dates to be determined by the Council at the first meeting thereof in January following each odd year General City Election. If any time set for the holding of a regular meeting of the Council shall fall on a legal holiday, then such regular meeting shall be held at the same time and place on the next regular day which is not a holiday.

(b.) The Council has determined that all regular Council meetings shall be held on the first and third Monday of each month beginning at 7:00 p.m. unless otherwise designated when the meeting dates for the year are approved or in extreme extenuating circumstances.

**Section 2. Special Meetings.** Special meetings of the Council may be called by the Clerk on the written request of the Mayor, Council President, or any three members of the Council on 24 hour written notice to each member of the Council, designating the purpose of such meeting and served personally or left at his/her usual place of residence by the Clerk or someone designated by him/her; but any special meeting at which all members of the Council are present or have waived notice in writing shall be a legal meeting for all purposes without such notice. (Section 6.5 of City Charter) On weekdays, Special Meetings of the Council shall not commence before 5:30 p.m.

**Section 3. Robert's Rules of Order Adopted.** The rules of parliamentary procedure as contained in Robert's Rules of Order, most recent edition, shall govern the City Council in all cases to which they are applicable, provided they are not in conflict with (1) the, "Policies and Procedures," adopted by the Westland City Council, (2) the Charter of the City of Westland, or (3) State or Federal Law. In certain cases, these Policies and Procedures intentionally supersede Robert's Rules of Order.

**Section 4. Suspension of Rules.** Westland City Council Policies and Procedures may be suspended for good cause pertinent to a specific agenda item by a 2/3 majority vote of City Council, provided no less than five affirmative votes are recorded.

### **Section 5. Open Meetings Act Compliance.**

(a.) All regular and special Council meetings shall be cable televised.

(b.) All regular and special Council meetings shall be open to the public pursuant to Public Act 267 of 1976, as amended by Act. No. 256 of 1978, known as the Michigan's Open Meeting Act.

**Section 6. Recording of Minutes.** Westland City Clerk or Clerk's designee shall take the meeting minutes and provide the keeping of the Council records as per the City Charter.

**Section 7. Duties of City Attorney.**

(a.) The City Attorney or a representative shall be present at Council Meetings. If any Council Member feels the City Attorney should be at any other meeting, that Council Member should contact the President/Pro Tem prior to the Council meeting with specific reasons why the City Attorney should be present.

(b.) In the City Attorney's absence and during a meeting of the Council, all requests for legal opinions, etc. shall be sent to the attorney in writing through the City Clerk's office.

**Section 8. Requests for Information.** Any Council Member's request for information shall be submitted to the Mayor and the appropriate Director. This request shall be placed in writing. If a response is not received within a two-week period of the initial request, the Council Member may then place their request on the Council report list at a public meeting.

**Section 9. Citizens' Comments.**

(a.) Chapter 6, Section 6.7 of the Westland City Charter states, "Citizens shall have a reasonable opportunity to be heard." Section 15.263(5) of the Michigan Open Meetings Act provides that persons shall be permitted to address the meeting of a public body under the rules established by the public body, and also provides that the public body may limit the right to address the public body to prescribed times.

(b.) Council hereby establishes a three (3) minute time limit for speakers under these two (2) categories:

(1) "Citizen's Questions or Input on the Agenda". This section will allow citizens to be recognized only at the beginning of the meeting to address the Council pertaining to items that are specifically on the business agenda at that meeting.

(2) "Citizen's Comments or Requests". This section will allow a citizen to be recognized at the conclusion of the Council's regular business to make general comments that may or may not pertain to the business that was before the Council at that meeting.

(c.) Any citizen may additionally speak once at a public hearing for three (3) minutes.

(d.) The Council President shall have the authority to maintain order during the meeting.

(e.) Persons wishing to make an "announcement or special presentation" during that section of the agenda shall notify the Clerk's office by Friday at 12:00 noon before the Council meeting in which they wish to speak.

(f.) When a citizen is done addressing the Council, or when their time has been exhausted, they must immediately be seated. They may not return to the podium

for any reason – unless requested to do so by the Council President or meeting chairperson.

**Section 10. Suspension of Three Minute Rule.**

(a.) Persons with a voted or appointed position, who are representing a subdivision, condominium, business, community or civic association during one of the above-mentioned sections and wishing to make a special presentation regarding a specific item that may take longer than the allotted three (3) minutes shall notify the City Clerk or Council President prior to the meeting. The Council President shall decide if and when the presentation will be made.

(b.) Any other citizen wishing to make a special presentation regarding a specific item that may take longer than three (3) minutes shall notify the City Clerk no later than 12:00 noon the Friday before the meeting. The Council President will decide if the presentation will be made and at what point during the meeting it will be allowed.

**Section 11. Yielding of Time Prohibited.** Robert’s Rules of Order does not allow a person to yield time to another person. The Westland City Council shall not allow a person to yield time to another person.

**Section 12. Time Keeping.**

(a.) The City Clerk and/or Secretary shall be responsible for keeping track of the Citizen’s allotted time of three (3) minutes and notifying the President/Pro Tem when time has elapsed. A time clock will be kept within view of the timekeeper. The clock will start upon the first words of the speaker and will not stop while the speaker is recognized from the floor. It is the speaker’s option to use up their time if they wish to have questions answered at this time. The clock will not be stopped by request once it is started. The clock will continue to run until the speaker is completed or their speaking time is exhausted.

(b.) If the President/Pro Tem announces the intention to close “Citizen’s Comments and Request” and there are no requests to be recognized by the citizens, then the Chairperson shall close the Citizen’s Request section of the agenda for the remainder of the meeting.

**Section 13. Citizens’ Comments Policies.**

(a.) A public notice of sufficient size and easily readable print shall be posted on the premises during the City Council meetings and/or printed at the top of the Agenda with a brief and understandable explanation of the Council’s procedures for a citizen speaking at Council meetings.

(b.) Any citizen wishing to address the Council shall provide their name and City of residence, and shall address their comments through the Chair when speaking from the podium. Only the citizen recognized by the Chair shall be allowed to speak during the “Citizen’s Comments and Requests” portion of the agenda without Council and/or others commenting, unless a question is directed through the Chair, by that citizen, toward a specific Council Member, the Mayor or other City official. All City officials may elect to respond to questions directed to them through the Chair. Additionally, the Mayor (or designee in the Mayors' absence),

or any Council Member may elect to respond to any comment directed toward them or another City official at any time during a meeting in order to correct an error or misstatement of fact.

(c.) If the Mayor, City Council Member or other City Official interrupts the speaker and it is not in response to a direct question, then the clock will be stopped and then re-started when the citizen is again allowed to speak.

(d.) The Chair shall call to order any person who is being disorderly by speaking when not having been recognized by the chair, or is being disruptive to the proceedings. If any person, after being called to order, continues to be disorderly and disruptive to the meeting, the Chair may order that person removed from the meeting.

#### **Section 14. Motions.**

(a.) A motion shall be made and seconded prior to any discussion on that subject or pending action by Council Members. All discussion shall be confined to the merits of the pending motion. Speakers shall address their remarks through the Chair.

(b.) Members of the Council may speak on all agenda items. The maker and supporter of a motion shall be recognized to provide discussion as first and second speakers if they so desire. No Member of Council shall speak a second time on an item under discussion, until all other members wishing to speak on that item have been heard. The presiding officer of the Council shall be permitted to participate in debate with regard to an agenda item without relinquishing the chair.

**Section 15. Duty to Vote.** Duty to Vote – Whenever a question is put before the Council every member shall vote Yes, No, or Abstain, provided, however, that an Abstention vote shall be cast only if a Conflict of Interest exists or the member lacks sufficient information to cast a vote. An absence from a prior meeting shall not constitute the basis of lacking sufficient information as referenced above. If a Council Member intends to Abstain from the vote, the Council Member shall state for the record their intention to abstain and the reason for doing so. The Council Member shall be prohibited from participating in further discussion or debate on the item under consideration. Whereas a person must be present to abstain from a vote, another option shall be afforded to Council Members when a known Conflict of Interest exists. The Council Member may choose to announce for the record the Conflict of Interest, remove immediately themselves from the proceedings, and cause a vote of Absent to be cast on their behalf.

**Section 16. Recesses.** The President may call a recess of up to ten minutes unless challenged by a Council Member in which event a majority vote would be required.

#### **Section 17. Extension of Time for Meetings.**

(a.) Regular Council meetings shall be adjourned no later than 12:00 a.m. One (1) extension of the adjournment time may be considered for not more than 30 minutes. Extensions shall be offered in the form of a motion and shall be subject to a vote by the City Council.

(b.) If a Council meeting has not been completed, a Council meeting shall be posted and scheduled to commence at 7:00 p.m. the following non-City holiday business day.

**Section 18. Reviving Denied Agenda Items.** Items that are brought before Council and denied, shall be placed onto any subsequent agenda as a New Business item at any meeting succeeding its denial, provided the President or any three Council Members request such action in writing.

## **ARTICLE VI COUNCIL STUDY SESSIONS**

### **Section 1. Calling Study Sessions.**

(a.) Study sessions shall be held when necessary at the call of the President/Pro Tem. Study sessions scheduled for weekdays shall not start earlier than 5:30 p.m.

(b.) The President/Pro Tem shall determine if a study session is needed. The President/Pro Tem shall schedule dates and approximate times of the study sessions. The City Clerk shall notify the petitioner and appropriate people of the scheduled study session.

### **Section 2. Study Session Procedures.**

(a.) Written requests for Study Sessions shall be sent to the City Clerk, addressed to the President/Pro Tem and must state the reasons for the request.

(b.) Minutes of all Study Sessions (Closed and Open) shall be recorded.

**Section 3. Multiple Study Sessions on One Date.** If more than one study session is scheduled for any specific evening, the first session will be determined by President/Pro Tem and other sessions will immediately follow. An effort will be made to give approximate times; however, if the petitioner is not available for their session when Council is ready, they will be moved to the end of the schedule on a time permitted basis.

**Section 4. Agenda.** All study session notices should include the topics of discussion, including a provision for Citizen Comments. Citizen comments will be at the end of the meeting, after all presentations have been made and the Council comments have been concluded.

### **Section 5. Televising Study Sessions.**

(a.) Closed study sessions shall not be taped or cable televised.

(b.) An open study session may be cable televised if a vote is requested by the President/Pro Tem and a majority vote of the Council passes such action.



**ARTICLE VII  
CABLE TELEVISION POLICY**

**Section 1. General Policy.** Council members scheduling programming time with WLND shall inform the City Council President of said programming. All programming shall conform to the policy guidelines of the Westland Cable Department, WLND.

**ARTICLE VIII  
LINE OF SUCCESSION**

**Section 1. Line of Succession.** The line of succession of the City Council shall be President, President Pro Tem and the Council Member with the longest continuous tenure in office.

**Section 2. Ceremonial Events.** In ceremonial events such as parades, the established line of succession is hereby approved and shall prevail.

Revised 2-1-2010