

**COVENTRY TOWN COUNCIL STANDING RULES OF PROCEDURE**

SECTION 1.00 INTRODUCTION:

In accordance with Section 3-3 of the Town Charter, the Coventry Town Council establishes these rules of procedure which are designed to enable the Council to discharge its duties expeditiously, fairly, and completely in the spirit of open government.

- 1.01 The Council may suspend its rules by 2/3 majority of those present whenever it is deemed necessary.
- 1.02 The Council may revise these rules from time to time by a 2/3 majority.

SECTION 2.00 CONDUCT OF MEETING:

- 2.01 The Council will conduct its meeting according to Roberts Rules of Order. The agenda for all meetings of the Council shall be prepared and issued by the Town Manager. Agenda items shall be determined by the Chair with the assistance of the Manager and the Steering/Liaison Committees if required.
- 2.02 Items may be added to the agenda by individual members by contacting the Chair 5 days in advance of the meeting.
- 2.03 Provisions of the Town Charter and the Standing Rules of Procedure shall govern all meetings of the Council.
- 2.04 Order of regular meetings will normally be as follows:
  - 1. Call to order and roll call
  - 2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
  - 3. Audience of Citizens
  - 4. Approval of Minutes
  - 5. Consent
  - 6. Reports:
    - a) Council Chairman
    - b) Council Members
    - c) Committee
    - d) Town Manager
  - 7. Old Business
  - 8. New Business
  - 9. Correspondence
  - 10. Executive Session (if necessary)

## 11. Adjournment

- 2.05 Reports from the Chair, the Standing Committees and the Town Manager will normally be for the purpose of introducing items to be handled under New Business. Reports should be brief and serve only as a summary of the item for the Council. Normally, items are further discussed and acted upon under Old or New Business. Appointments are routinely made in this section.

Individual Council members have the privilege of introducing items which will be handled like a report.

- 2.06 Correspondence. Any item of correspondence requiring Council action will either be referred to a committee or to an individual with a request for action or recommendation. If requiring direct Council action, items of correspondence may be assigned to either Old Business or New Business at the Chair's direction or Council action.

- 2.07 Old Business. Items on the Council calendar will be handled under Old Business in accordance with assigned priority. They will be handled at each Council meeting consistent with the time available at the given Council meeting. Old Business includes Town Manager reports which the Council has requested on specific matters. Items under Old Business should be accompanied by a motion drafted for Council action.

- 2.08 New Business. Action should be taken on items of New Business at the meeting where it is introduced only if it is of an immediate nature and if the Council has had sufficient materials and review time to feel comfortable in rendering a decision. All other New Business items will be discussed and then will appear for decision at a subsequent Council meeting depending on priority assigned to it. Accordingly, Council members will have time to study an item in advance of any action. Those presenting reports on items to be placed under New Business should accompany the introduction of the item with a prepared motion. It is expected that members of the Council will bring items of concern, requests for action, etc. that have not been part of a committee report to the Council from time to time. These will normally come under New Business. It is also important that all members of the Council be fully informed as to the issues involved and action required. In order to ensure responsible and meaningful decisions are made,

without being made "on-the-spot", New Business items raised at one meeting shall normally be carried over to the next regular meeting, unless abnormal circumstances dictate otherwise. This is particularly important for items involving appropriation of funds, so that the intervening time can be used to determine availability of funding, appropriateness of the request, etc. This will also allow for citizens' input as to the need and discussions among the Council members and citizens.

2.09 Adjournment Time. Members of the Town Council give countless hours, both at the Council table and committee meetings and at home, on the Town's affairs. The Council establishes an adjournment time of regular meetings of 11:00 p.m. Members of the Council and the Chair should make efforts to conduct concise debate and avoid lengthy discourses wherever possible. The Chair should use his/her discretion in this regard, not stifling constructive debate, but encouraging brevity. Extension of the adjournment time should be by unanimous consent of the Council members present. The Chair may also defer discussion or action to a later meeting if time is not of the essence.

2.10 Audience of Citizens. The Council encourages citizens to express their views and concerns during the Audience of Citizens. Because the Council's time is limited and its agenda is frequently extensive, the Chair should encourage brevity and conciseness in citizens' statements. By the same token, however, the Council wishes to maximize the limited time available for other citizens of the Town to address the Council. Consequently, Council members are to be discouraged from using the Audience of Citizens to raise their own concerns, and they should limit their remarks during this portion of the agenda to those that will be responsive to other citizens' questions or comments. If it appears that, after a reasonable period of time, such as five (5) minutes, the particular citizen's concerns cannot be resolved, the Chair should appoint a member of the Council to discuss those concerns more fully with that citizen and report back to the Council.

2.11 Date and Location of Meetings. The Town Council will normally meet in regular session on the first and third Mondays of every month at 7:30 p.m. in the Board Room of the town office building. Changes in the date may be made by the Chair to account for holidays, schedule conflicts,

etc. The Council may hold meetings in other locations, if they so desire.

2.12 Quorum. A quorum of the Council is five members. Members should make reasonable effort to inform the Chair in advance if they are unable to attend any warned meeting to ensure that a quorum may be reached.

2.13 Special Meetings of the Council may be called by the Chair, with 24 hours' notice in accordance with the Charter, and upon notification to all Council members and the media.

2.14 Emergency Meetings may be called at any time, if required, upon proper notification to all Council members in accordance with appropriate procedures established by the Freedom of Information Act.

2.15 Notice of Meeting. The time, date, and place of meetings of the Town Council shall be appropriately noticed in accordance with State Statute.

### SECTION 3.00 TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

At each regular meeting the Town Manager shall give a brief oral report to the Council. This report should give a summary of significant activities in general government, possible problems and recommendations for Council action.

### SECTION 4.00 FORM OF MOTIONS

Motions on agenda items should be available to Council members, if possible, in writing prior to the meeting at which the action will be taken.

Care should be taken when preparing motions to include specific information on the action to be taken. Motions should state if appropriate:

- A. Who is to take action (write letter, transfer funds, etc.)?
- B. What authority is used to justify action?
- C. When is action to be taken?
- D. What costs are involved?
- E. Where will funding come from?
- F. What action is to be taken?

### SECTION 5.00 RELATIONS WITH OFFICIALS AND OTHER BOARDS

5.01 **Town Manager:** The Town Manager is appointed by the Town Council in accordance with the Charter. The Town Manager shall be evaluated annually by the Council no later than the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the fiscal year for prior year's activities according to procedures to be adopted by the Council. The Manager shall be responsible to the Council and shall report to the Council on its request. The Manager shall also keep the Council apprised of significant issues. The Town Manager shall keep a written report of all requests from individual Council members and Council subcommittees, and shall keep the Council informed as to the extent of these requests. The Manager and the Council Chairperson should maintain a close liaison on all issues of town business. Citizens' complaints and requests to Council members shall be channeled through the Manager to the Department Heads. Council members shall not direct the work of town departments. Requests for Council action by individual town employees regarding employment related matters shall be made or coordinated through the Town Manager.

5.02 **Boards and Commissions:** In order to provide for regular discussions between the Council and various boards and commissions of the town, the Council may invite representatives from boards and commissions to discuss matters of mutual interest at regular Council meetings with proper notice on the agenda whenever possible. This discussion should be informal, brief (perhaps 20 to 30 minutes) and constructive. Topics to be discussed can include past, present, and future activities, problem areas, and short and long-range objectives.

#### SECTION 6.00 CORRESPONDENCE BY AND WITH THE COUNCIL

6.01 Correspondence which is under or by instructions of the Council will normally be conducted by the Secretary. Correspondence should be written wherever possible. Correspondence from the Secretary will be as a result of Council action. Other Council members may be requested to conduct correspondence for the Council as required.

6.02 Correspondence from town boards and commissions which request Council action should contain the actual motion adopted by the board or commission, with the numerical vote results.

- 6.03 Written, signed communications officially received by the Secretary, including letters or petitions from citizens or official notices from federal or state agencies or officers that require Council attention and/or action, shall be summarized and placed on the Consent Agenda under "communications."
- 6.04 Such communications as set forth in this paragraph shall be logged for record by the Secretary upon their receipt. The original documents shall be retained on file until the end of the Council's term, at which time s/he shall recommend for Council consent the elimination and destruction of any such documents as then may no longer be necessary to retain for Council purposes.
- 6.05 The Secretary is not required to record, acknowledge, retain, or report on the receipt of routine agenda, minutes or reports sent to the Council for informational purposes from other boards, offices, agencies, commissions or committees of the town of Coventry.
- 6.06 Members of the Council and the Town Manager should refrain from distributing any last-minute, "action" communications to the Council immediately prior to the start of any Council session, except those that clearly pertain to emergency or urgent matters requiring prompt action by the Council at that session. All such items, otherwise, shall be turned over to the Secretary and handled at the next regular Council session as set forth in the above paragraph.
- 6.07 Any Council member may request immediate action to dispose of any item following the Secretary's report thereon. Otherwise, action shall be held and taken up under "New Business."
- 6.08 All items requiring action by the Council, when acted upon by the Council, shall be appropriately acknowledged, in writing, by the Secretary or the Town Manager, as the Council may direct, and a copy of all such acknowledgements shall be kept on file by the sender. Copies of outgoing Council correspondence shall include informational copies to the Town Manager.

#### SECTION 7.00 TOWN COUNCIL FILES

The Town Manager's Office shall keep and maintain all Council materials which are under jurisdiction of FOI. The Town Clerk's Office shall maintain agendas and minutes.

#### SECTION 8.00 REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS

The Council desires to receive reports from Department Heads in the general government of the town. Reports should be submitted regularly to the Town Manager with a copy to the Town Council members, at a minimum of quarterly, and should highlight the activities of that department. Some statistics could be used, i.e. the number of inspections made, citizens served, etc. The report should be brief and concise, discussing past, present and future activities. Particular emphasis should be given to budgetary matters, year-end projections, resolutions of citizens' complaints and problems, etc. The Town Manager may establish a standard format for monthly reports if desired. The Council should request the Manager to ensure these reports are submitted.

#### SECTION 9.00 STANDING COMMITTEES

Standing Committees shall be composed of members of the Town Council who are appointed by the Chair. The Chair shall ensure minority representation on each committee whenever possible.

9.01 The Steering/Liaison Committee shall function as an advisory committee to the Town Council and shall:

- A. Consider and recommend to the Council nominees for appointment to the various town committees, boards, and commissions which have been submitted by a political party Town Committee, or by the agency in which the vacancy has occurred, or by a resident elector of the Town of Coventry or by a committee members.
- B. Develop recommendations subject to Council approval for meetings of various kinds between the Council Members and members of the various boards and commissions for the purpose of improving communication and cooperation.
- C. Serve as a ready and receptive channel which members of boards and commissions can use to convey pressing concerns and interests.
- D. Review and make recommendations to the Council on all issues, other than those that have been referred to the

Finance Committee, which have been referred to it by the Council or the Chair.

E. Assist the Chair and the Council in determining what matters arranged in priority shall be placed on the agenda.

F. Initiate and develop proposals for consideration by the Council.

9.02 The Finance Committee shall function as an advisory committee to the Town Council and shall:

A. Monitor the Town budget and make recommendations to the Town Council.

B. Provide advice to the Council on matters relating to financial stewardship.

C. Serve as the selection and supervising committee for the Town's external audit.

#### SECTION 10.00 VACANCIES ON BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

10.01 The Council desires to establish a system which will: ensure a consistent, appropriate and democratic method of filling vacancies; provide the greatest opportunity of appointing the most interested and capable board members; and fill vacancies as soon as possible, after adequate notice, in order to maintain continuity of all town agencies.

10.02 All vacancies shall be filled by the Council in accordance with Section 2.2 Minority Representation, Section 2.5 Vacancies, Section 2.6 Eligibility, Section 5.3 Vacancies, and other portions of the Coventry Town Charter for the remainder of the term of that position.

10.03 Formal announcement of a vacancy should be made by the Town Clerk after receipt of written statement of resignation or other formal acknowledgement of a vacancy (a confirmed email is acceptable as a recognized form of communication).

10.04 Recommendations may be submitted to the Council for filling a vacancy from:

A. A political party Town Committee;

B. The agency in which the vacancy occurred;

C. A resident elector of the Town of Coventry.

- 10.05 All recommendations or applications should be accompanied by an indication that the recommended person desires to serve.
- 10.06 Nominations for filling a vacancy should be made to the Council by the Steering/Liaison Committee after allowing a reasonable amount of time from the announcement of the vacancy and with due consideration to the needs of a board or commission lacking a quorum of active members or when required by State Statutes.
- 10.07 After the appointment is made by the Town Council, the Town Manager should notify the Town Clerk.
- 10.08 A written communication should be sent to each new appointee by the Town Clerk within 10 days supplying information as to:
- A. Appointment
  - B. Need to be sworn in
  - C. Next regular meeting of the agency (if applicable)
  - D. Term of appointment
  - E. Code of Conduct for Appointed/Elected Officials

SECTION 11.00 PLANNING DELEGATION OF ACTION

- 11.01 The Council believes that many of the requests for action or information can be delegated by the Town Manager. Although the Council may request the Manager to accomplish a certain task, the Manager is encouraged to delegate that task whenever possible. This will assist him/her in accomplishing the many tasks assigned by the Council and will also broaden the experience and capabilities of the town employees to serve the citizens.

SECTION 12.00 MISCELLANEOUS

- 12.01 **Job Description.** The Council should have, or develop, job descriptions or committee charges for all boards, commissions and officials. The Manager shall prepare descriptions of positions in general government including the position of Town Manager and respective boards and commissions shall prepare descriptions and committee charges relating to their responsibilities. Job descriptions shall be submitted to the Council review and adoption.

- 12.02 **Review of Town Properties and Roads.** The Council should make it a practice to visit major town facilities and properties on a regular basis, at least once a year. The Chairperson may schedule regular visits.
- 12.03 The Council encourages all town officials and employees to be alert to conditions along the town roads, particularly hazardous conditions or areas needing repair. Observations should be reported in writing, if possible, to the Town Manager. The Manager should keep the Council advised of reports received and action taken or required.
- 12.04 **Personnel Changes.** The Council desires to be aware of personnel assignments and changes in general government, particularly employee changes. The Manager shall provide the Council with a list of all town employees, their rates of pay or salary, source of funds and other pertinent information. Changes to that list shall be provided to the Council.

#### SECTION 13.00 COUNCIL CHAIR

In addition to the duties and responsibilities contained in Section 3.2 of the Town Charter, the Chair shall have these powers:

- A. Appoint Council members to Standing and Special Committees.
- B. Serve as ex-officio member and as an alternate member with the power to vote and obtain a quorum in the event of absence of a regular member on all Standing and Special Committees.
- C. Determine agenda and assign priorities to items as defined in Section 2.01.
- D. Call special or emergency meetings or change schedule of regular meetings as per Section 2.11 & 2.13 & 2.14.

13.01 In the event of absence or disability of the Chair the Vice Chair shall perform the Chair's duties.

10-18-82  
12-4-89 Revised  
5-6-96 Revised  
11-2-2015 Revised  
12-6-2021 Revised  
12-20-2021 ADOPTED