

**TOWN COUNCIL RULES OF CONDUCT  
2008 – 2010 TERM**

**RULE 1. REGULAR MEETINGS**

The Town Council shall hold regular meetings in the Town Hall, or other designated locations deemed appropriate by the Town Council, at 7:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Monday of each month, unless another date is designated in advance by the Town Council.

**RULE 2. WORK SESSIONS**

- A. A work session is a meeting of the Town Council that may include other officials, bodies, agencies or groups. The primary purpose of a work session is to obtain information and exchange ideas rather than to take formal action. Consequently, work sessions are open to the public, but public participation is at the discretion of the Town Council.
  
- B. The Town Council shall hold a work session at 6:45 p.m. preceding each regular meeting. In addition, the Town Council may hold work sessions and informational meetings from time to time upon agreement of a majority of its members. Unless an emergency exists, no official vote on any business may be taken at a work session or informational meeting. If such a vote is taken, the same motion shall be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting for ratification.

**RULE 3. SPECIAL MEETINGS**

Special meetings or emergency meetings of the Town Council shall be called by the Town Clerk, or a duly authorized assistant, at the request of the Town Council President or at the request of three members of the Town Council. Notice of a special meeting or emergency meeting shall be personally served on each member as far in advance of the meeting as practicable.

**RULE 4. CONDUCT OF SPECIAL MEETINGS**

At all special meetings or emergency meetings, the first order of business shall be the special or emergency business for which the meeting was convened. Such business shall be exclusively considered until it is finally acted upon or until consideration is concluded and no other business shall be considered or acted upon. Pursuant to RIGL §42-46-6(b). Notice – “Nothing contained herein shall prevent a public body, other than a school committee, from adding additional items to the agenda by majority vote of the members. Such additional items shall be for informational purposes only and may not be voted on except where necessary to address an unexpected occurrence that requires immediate action to protect the public or to refer the matter to an appropriate committee or to another body or official.”

## **RULE 5. OPEN MEETINGS**

All meetings of the Town Council, including regular meetings, work sessions, informational meetings, special meetings and emergency meetings shall comply with the provisions of Title 42, Chapter 46 of the Rhode Island General Laws (the Open Meetings Law) governing notice, open meetings, closed sessions, and preparation and availability of minutes; provided, however, that if it is not possible to post notice of an emergency meeting 48 hours in advance, notice of such a meeting shall be posted immediately upon scheduling of the meeting and shall remain posted at least 48 hours following the meeting. Minutes shall be kept of all meetings of the Town Council. If the Town Clerk is absent from a meeting, the President shall appoint an acting town clerk to record minutes.

## **RULE 6. PRESIDING OFFICER**

The President, or in the President's absence, the Vice President shall preside at all meetings. In the event of the absence of both the President and Vice President, or in the event that both the President and Vice President are unable to discharge the duties of the President, the Town Council, with the senior member in point of service presiding, shall elect another member to perform the duties of the President during the absence or disability of both the President and Vice President.

## **RULE 7. CONDUCT OF MEETINGS**

The President shall take the chair at the hour designated for the meeting of the Town Council, and shall promptly call the members to order. Three members of the Town Council shall constitute a quorum. The start of a meeting may be delayed for a reasonable period of time pending arrival of a third Council person needed to constitute a quorum. The President shall preserve decorum and order, and shall rule on all points of order, subject to an appeal to the Town Council or by any member. No other business shall be in order until such an appeal shall have been decided by a majority of the members present. The President may speak on points of order in preference to other members. The President may speak on general questions, but to do so, the President shall wait until other members have addressed the question at hand. When speaking on general questions, the President, if requested by a majority of Council members present, shall "take the floor" by the symbolic act of surrendering the gavel to the Vice President.

## **RULE 8. ROLL CALL VOTES**

If the vote on any question before the Town Council is not unanimous, the President shall ask the Town Clerk to conduct a roll call vote, and the Town Clerk shall separately record the vote of each member.

## **RULE 9. SPEAKING BY MEMBERS**

A member wishing to speak shall address the President. After being recognized to speak, a member shall not be interrupted except by a call to order, for the correction of a mistake, or to yield to another member. Each member shall confine his/her remarks to the question under debate. No member shall speak more than once on the same question until all other members wishing to speak on the question have done so. Meetings shall be conducted in an orderly manner.

## **RULE 10. SPEAKING BY THE PUBLIC**

- A. Members of the public shall be entitled to speak at regular meetings during any period designated on the agenda for public comment, once, for a period of five minutes, or longer at the discretion of the President, and at other times when invited to do so by the President. The public shall address their comments to the question under debate as indicated on the agenda. Pursuant to RI General Laws §42-46-6(b), public comment regarding subject matter not on the agenda but received during the public participation portion of a meeting shall be for information purposes only and may not be voted on except where necessary to address an unexpected occurrence that requires immediate action to protect the public or to refer the matter to an appropriate committee or to another body or official.
- B. The President shall enforce order and decorum among members of the public in attendance at regular meetings. Any person addressing the Town Council shall, while speaking, be subject to the same rules and shall be entitled to the same privileges of order applicable to members of the Town Council, provided, however, that a member of the Town Council may ask the speaker a question or obtain information.

## **RULE 11. TIME OF ADJOURNMENT**

No item of business other than that of adjournment may be brought before the Town Council at any meeting unless such an item is introduced before 11:00 p.m.; provided, however, that this rule may be suspended by an affirmative vote of a majority of members present.

## **RULE 12. AGENDA**

The Agenda for regular meetings will be finalized on Wednesday before a Monday meeting, and made available for Council members and the general public on Thursday afternoon at 4:30 p.m. Any member of the Town Council may request a New Business item to be placed on the Agenda by Wednesday afternoon at 4:30 p.m. The Office of the Town Manager will work in conjunction with the Office of the Town Clerk in the preparation of the Agenda at the direction of the Town Council. New Agenda items can be added only during the Council meeting by majority agreement of the Council

members present. All items on the Agenda shall be considered moved and seconded for purposes of discussion at all meetings of the Town Council. Pursuant to RIGL §42-46-6 (b). Notice – “Nothing contained herein shall prevent a public body, other than a school committee, from adding additional items to the agenda by majority vote of the members. Such additional items shall be for informational purposes only and may not be voted on except where necessary to address an unexpected occurrence that requires immediate action to protect the public or to refer the matter to an appropriate committee or to another body or official.”

### **RULE 13. CONSENT AGENDA**

All items listed with a (CA) are to be considered routine by the Town Council and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the Council, or a member of the public so requests, in which event the item will be removed from Consent Agenda (CA) consideration and considered in its normal sequence on the agenda.

### **RULE 14. RECUSAL**

Pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws §36-14-6, when a member of the Town Council must refrain from participating in discussion and/or voting on a particular matter because of a conflict of interest, that member shall complete a “Recusal Form” which will be filed as part of the record of the meeting. Said form shall be kept on file in the Office of the Town Clerk, and a copy shall be forwarded to the Rhode Island Ethics Commission.

### **RULE 15. CLERK OF THE COUNCIL**

Pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws §45-5-5, Clerk of council, the Town Clerk shall be the Clerk of the Town Council; but whenever the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk shall not appear at the time and place appointed for the meeting of the Town Council, the Town Council may appoint a clerk pro tempore, who, after being duly engaged, shall do and perform all the duties enjoined by law on the Town Clerk as Clerk of the Town Council.

### **RULE 16. DEPUTY CLERK**

Pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws §45-7-2, Deputy clerk, the Deputy Clerk shall have all the powers and perform all the duties which are incumbent on the Town Clerk.

### **RULE 17. MATTERS NOT ADDRESSED**

Any question of procedure not addressed by these Rules shall be governed by “Robert’s Rules of Order.”