



City Council Rules Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, June 17, 2024
Second Floor Conference Room
41 Green Street
3:00 PM

1. Call to Order

Councilor Kretovic, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 3:05 PM.

2. Roll Call

Present: Councilor Jennifer Kretovic, Councilor Karen McNamara, Councilor Amanda Grady Sexton, Councilor Brent Todd

Excused: Councilor Paula McLaughlin

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Councilor McNamara moved approval of the February 7, 2023 Meeting Minutes. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Todd and passed with no dissenting votes.

4. Meeting Overview

Councilor Kretovic, Chairperson, reviewed the work completed and considered by the committee in 2023.

5. Review of proposed Financial Disclosure Form

A copy of the State of New Hampshire's Statement of Financial Interests form was provided as an example. This is the form used by elected State officials. The City of Manchester's form was also provided as an example.

Discussion followed regarding whether disclosures would be voluntary and that the goal of a financial disclosure form is to help with transparency for the public.

The committee discussed whether a voluntary disclosure form is to be used by all City boards and commissions.

Consensus was that non-elected volunteers should have optional participation and that a report be submitted to Council conveying that: the Zoning Board, Planning Board, Heritage Commission, Historic District, Board of Assessors, Conservation Commission, and City Council voluntarily complete a financial disclosure form.

City Solicitor Pacik will draft a financial disclosure form.

6. Review of Procedures Regarding Suspense Items

Discussion followed regarding whether Council should consider items in the moment or have items reduced to writing in advance but retain the option to suspend the rules should Council prefer.

Discussion followed that consideration of suspense items is at the discretion of the Mayor and members of City Council.

Rule 15 with proposed changes in italics reads as follows: “All matters to be presented at meetings of the Council shall be filed with the City Clerk on or before 5 p.m. on the Monday preceding the meeting. *The Council may act upon an item if it was not filed in advance by suspending Council Rules in accordance with Section 19. If feasible, Councilors shall make the request to act upon a new item in writing to the City Clerk by noon on the day of the City Council meeting.*”

Councilor McNamara discussed how due to employment, some members may not be able to review items pulled or considered for suspense until the end of their workday, but felt the noon deadline is appropriate.

Consensus of the committee is that this proposed change allows for discussion of suspense items by vote of City Council members while providing direction for members of City Council.

Discussion followed about how the proposed procedure would unfold during a meeting, and committee consensus was that the proposed procedure is similar to the consent agenda pulling process.

Consensus of the committee was that a report be submitted to Council conveying the proposed change to Rule 15.

7. Review of New Hampshire Municipal Association Article, *I Recuse Myself*

The committee discussed the ability of members of City Council to voluntarily recuse and the ability to challenge the Mayor’s ruling to recuse.

Councilor Kretovic expressed that there is some confusion on the process.

City Solicitor Pacik explained that although the article states that a board member cannot be forced to recuse, that limitation only applies to land use boards. 673:14 states that a member may request a vote as to whether a member should be disqualified from an item,

and the vote is advisory and non-binding. City Solicitor Pacik explained that Council Rules can specify that a vote will be binding.

Committee consensus was for a refresher to be provided by City Solicitor Pacik to City Council regarding conflicts of interest and challenges to rulings. A future date will be determined.

Councilor Grady Sexton expressed her desire for consideration of Board of Ethics rules to include a means for confidential complaints as there is currently a potential for abusive complaints to be filed which are then available to the public. General discussion followed of the current procedure for submitting a complaint to the Board of Ethics. The committee will review rules in regards to adding confidential protections further at its next meeting. Committee members also discussed potential additional rule changes.

8. Adjournment

Minute taker left at 4:17 PM.

At 4:45 PM, there being no additional business to discuss, Councilor Amanda Grady Sexton moved to adjourn. The motion was duly seconded and passed with no dissenting votes.

A true copy; I attest:

*Elisabeth Harrington
Deputy City Clerk*