

**RULES OF PROCEDURE
TO GOVERN THE TWENTY-SEVENTH TOWN COUNCIL
GROTON, CONNECTICUT**

Rule 1 – Incorporation of Charter Provisions

All requirements of the Charter with respect to the proceedings of the Council are to be strictly followed, and no rules shall ever be adopted by the Council which shall be in conflict with any Charter requirement respecting such proceedings.

Rule 2 – Meetings of the Council

- a) All meetings shall be in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act.
- b) Regular meetings of the Council shall be determined by Resolution adopting a calendar-year schedule for the following year prior to December 31 of the current year. This schedule may be amended by Resolution.
- c) Emergency or Special Meetings of the Council may be called by the Mayor. Emergency or Special Meetings of the Council shall be called by the Clerk of the Council at the request of three (3) Councilors.
- d) When an Executive Session is necessary during a meeting, reasons for such a session and persons to attend shall be publicly stated. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members of Council present and voting taken at a public meeting shall be necessary in order to go into Executive Session. Minutes of the meeting shall be taken in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act.

Rule 3 – Clerk of the Council

- a) The Town Clerk is the Clerk of the Council and shall keep the minutes of the Council proceedings which shall record votes passed by the Council and such further details of the proceeding of the Council as may be approved by majority vote.
- b) In the event the Clerk is not present at the time the Mayor calls a meeting to order, the Mayor shall appoint a Clerk pro tem to keep the minutes of the meeting and to file same in the Office of the Town Clerk.

Rule 4 – Quorum and Vote

- a) In accordance with Section 5.3 of the Charter, six (6) members shall constitute a quorum, but no ordinance, resolution, or vote, except a vote to adjourn or to fix a time and place of the next meeting, shall be adopted by less than five (5) affirmative votes.
- b) In the absence of a quorum, the Mayor shall declare the meeting adjourned to a future date. Prior to adjourning for lack of a quorum, the Mayor may declare a recess for a period not to exceed thirty (30) minutes to obtain a quorum.
- c) In exceptional circumstances, such as the attendance of a large number of citizens, the expectation of the imminent arrival of a Councilor, or the need to address time-sensitive issues, the Mayor or presiding officer may extend the recess period to sixty (60) minutes. In no case shall the recess exceed a total time of sixty (60) minutes.

Rule 5 – Mayoral Duties and Responsibilities and Temporary Vacancy of Position

- a) The Chairman of the Council, having the title of Mayor, shall preside at all meetings of the Council, and, at the stated hour, shall call the meeting to order. The Mayor shall perform all the duties and accept all the responsibilities of a Councilor.
- b) It shall be the duty of the Mayor to preserve order and require procedure in accordance with the rules, to recognize and grant the floor to Councilors wishing to speak, and to declare all votes.
- c) The Mayor shall have the authority to make a motion, may declare any motion duly seconded, except motions made by himself or herself, and may speak from the chair upon any debatable pending question.
- d) The Mayor shall have the authority to appoint himself or herself Chairman or member of any committee of the Council other than the Committee of the Whole. As an ex-officio member of such committees, the Mayor does not have the right to make motions nor to vote.
- e) The Mayor shall be Chairman of the Committee of the Whole, and shall have the right to make motions and to vote as a member of that committee.
- f) Referrals:
 - (1) Council business requiring Committee action shall be referred to a Committee by the Mayor at each regular meeting, and between sessions of Council, if necessary, in which case said referrals shall be announced at the next regular session.
 - (2) Upon the request of three (3) Councilors, the Mayor shall refer matters to a standing committee. Re-referrals shall be by vote of Council.
 - (3) When a referral is granted by the Mayor at a Council Meeting, the requestor shall provide a brief written summary of the referral's intent to the Council and the Town Manager. The referral shall not be listed until such summary is received. The Mayor shall have the discretion to waive the written summary.
- g) In the absence of the Mayor, the Clerk of the Council shall call the meeting to order and call for and declare the election of a Chairman pro tem who shall be Chairman during the absence of the Mayor.
- h) In the absence of the Mayor and a quorum of Councilors, the Clerk of the Council shall declare the meeting adjourned to a future date and make such a record in the minutes of the Council.
- i) The Mayor may appoint a parliamentarian whose duty shall be advising the Mayor upon request.

Rule 6 – Conflict of Interest

Councilors shall declare or make known any financial interest in subject matter under debate as required by the Rules on Conflict of Interest in Section 3.5.3 of the Charter, and it shall be so noted in the minutes.

Rule 7 – Order of Business and Agenda

- a) Unless altered by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Council, the regular order of business shall be as follows:

- I. Roll Call
- II. Salute to Flag
- III. Recognitions, Awards & Memorials
- IV. Receipt of Citizens' Petitions, Comments and Concerns¹
- V. Responses to Citizens' Petitions, Comments and Concerns
- VI. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of Minutes
 - b. Administrative Items²
 - c. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List³
- VII. Communications & Reports (Other than Committee reports)
 - a. Town Councilors⁴
 - b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting
 - c. Clerk of the Council
 - d. Town Manager
 - e. Town Attorney
- VIII. Committee Reports
- IX. Unfinished Business
- X. New Business
- XI. Other Business
- XII. Adjournment

b) Agenda

Only items reported from a Committee with approval recommended by a majority of the committee members present shall appear on the agenda. Action on any other items shall require Suspension of the Rules in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

Rule 8 – Rules of Order

a) Parliamentary Authority

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised as in effect on date of adoption of these rules, shall govern the Council in all cases in which they are applicable, provided they do not conflict with these Rules, the Town Charter, or applicable ordinances or statutes.

b) Questions of Order

The Mayor may speak on and shall decide questions of order.

Any Councilor may appeal a decision by the Mayor on questions of order, such appeal being referred to the Rules Committee which shall make recommendations to the Town Council for decision on the basis of (in order of precedence): Town Charter, the Rules of the Council, and Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised. The Council may be recessed for the purposes of the appeal being discussed by the Rules Committee and no other business shall be in order until the appeal is decided.

c) Motions

¹ If a Public Hearing has been scheduled, it shall precede IV. Receipt of Citizens' Petitions.

² Administrative Items can include Recurring Grants, Tax Refunds, Special Trust Fund Donations....

³ If it is decided during the same meeting that a Deleted Referral item should remain on the Referral List, the vote to delete that particular Referral under the Consent Calendar shall be deemed null.

⁴ Communications from each Councilor shall be limited to ten (10) minutes.

- 1) Motions shall be reduced in writing when requested by the Mayor, any Councilor, or the Clerk of the Council. Any motion may be withdrawn by the mover before amendment or decision, upon request of the mover and consent of the Council.
 - 2) A motion to Suspend the Rules shall be debatable.
- d) Debate
- 1) During discussion or debate, no Councilor shall speak unless recognized by the Mayor.
 - 2) Councilors shall confine their remarks in debate to the pending question.
 - 3) Councilors should address their remarks to the Mayor, maintain a courteous tone, and avoid personalities or accusations of improper motives.
- e) Limits of Debate
- 1) Councilors shall not speak more than once upon any question until other members who wish to speak shall have relinquished the floor.
 - 2) Councilors are limited to five (5) minutes each time they speak on a question.
- f) Yielding the Floor
- Councilors may yield the floor to citizens or other non-Councilors wishing to speak, subject to a time limit of five (5) minutes per such speaker. The provisions of Rule 8(d) shall extend to such non-Councilor speakers.
- A Councilor shall not recognize more than one (1) non-Councilor until all Councilors have had the opportunity to speak or recognize a non-Councilor.
- Yielding the floor to another speaker is in place of the Councilor speaking.
- g) Reconsideration
- After a vote has been taken, whether in a meeting of the Council or in the Committee of the Whole, it shall be in order for any Councilor who was in the prevailing vote to move for a reconsideration during the meeting, or during the next succeeding regular meeting. However, any vote which has caused an action which cannot be reversed shall not be reconsidered.
- Motions to reconsider votes to refer any matter to a Committee shall be in order only during the meeting which agreed to the referral.
- h) Once a matter has been rejected, substantially the same matter may not be the subject of a referral:
- 1) for 12 months, or
 - 2) unless the Council recommends the referral with six (6) votes in favor.

Rule 9 – Standing Committees

- a) There shall be the following standing committees of the Council:
- Community and Cultural Development
 - Economic Development
 - Education/Health and Social Services
 - Environment/Energy
 - Finance
 - Personnel, Appointments, Rules and Legislation
 - Public Safety
 - Public Works/Recreation
 - Committee of the Whole

The above Standing Committees, except Committee of the Whole, shall be arranged in two (2) groups of four (4) each at the discretion of the Mayor.

- b) The Mayor shall appoint members of the Council to such committees and shall designate the Chairman of each. The Mayor may announce adjustments in membership and chairmanship at a regular Council meeting with such changes to be effective at the next regular Council meeting.
- c) All Councilors shall be ex-officio members of the Committees to which they are not assigned, but do not have the right to make motions nor to vote.

Rule 10 – Committee Procedures

- a) All committee meetings shall be in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act.
- b) A majority of committee membership shall constitute a quorum.
- c) Each committee shall consider matters referred to it by the Mayor and shall report to the Council in writing relative to all such matters.
- d) Committee reports shall contain the date and place of meeting, the names of members present and those absent, and the fact that a quorum was or was not present, and a record of any votes taken. A summary of discussion, where appropriate, may also be included.
- e) Only resolutions or ordinances, the substance of which has been voted on favorably by a majority of committee members present, shall be reported to the Council for action. When a committee votes to take no action on a referral, the subject of that referral shall be listed in the Consent Calendar under “Deletions from the Referral List”.
- f) Any subject matter referred to a standing committee which will result in a proposed ordinance shall, after adequate discussion not to exceed sixty (60) days, be referred to the Committee of the Whole.
- g) In the absence of a Committee Chairman, a Chairman pro tem may be designated by the remaining Committee members.
- h) All matters to be deleted from the referral list will be listed in the Consent Calendar. After six (6) months, any non-recurring referral that has not been acted upon shall be placed on the Consent Calendar for deletion.
- i) The Committee of the Whole shall be chaired by the Mayor, or in the Mayor's absence, by a Chairman pro tem, elected by the members for that purpose only.
The Committee of the Whole shall meet to act:
 - On items referred to it by means of tie votes in any other committee.
 - On items which will result in a proposed ordinance.
 - Where there is agreement between committee chairmen and the Mayor on major items and/or items of importance to all Councilors.
- j) At Committee of the Whole Meetings, not later than 10:00 p.m., the Mayor shall entertain a motion to adjourn; such motion to adjourn shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present in order to pass.

Rule 11 – Citizen's Petitions

- a) In accordance with Section 5.3 of the Town Charter, the Order of Business at regular Council Meetings shall provide for Citizens' Petitions. A citizen's comments may be presented orally or in writing. All presentations by citizens under this rule shall be limited to five (5) minutes unless otherwise indicated by a majority vote of the Council.
- b) Citizens' petitions shall be accepted as presented. There shall be no questions or cross-examination by members of the Council, except for questions necessary to clarify the citizen's intent.
- c) Remarks by members of the Council concerning such petition may be addressed under the "Responses to Citizens' Petitions, Comments or Concerns" portion of the agenda.

Rule 12 – The Town Manager

The Town Manager or his delegate shall be present at the Council meeting and report on all matters requiring Council action and attention.

Rule 13 – Amendments to the Rules of the Council

- a) The Rules of the Council, excepting Rule 1, may be altered, extended, or repealed by a vote of at least five (5) Councilors at a regular meeting of the Council, provided descriptive notice of the proposed changes shall have been given in writing at a preceding regular meeting.
- b) Any single rule, except Rule 1, may be suspended for the proceedings of any meeting of the Council upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Councilors present, which vote shall specifically refer to the rule which is to be suspended.

The Rules of Procedure of the Twenty-Sixth Council were adopted at a meeting of the Town Council held on January 15, 2008.

APPENDIX A – ORDER OF PRECEDENCE to be used by the Town Council

A majority vote requires at least five (5) affirmative votes.
Two-thirds requires (#) ____ affirmative votes (of those present and voting).

MOTION	DEBATABLE	AMENDABLE	VOTE
Fix the Time to which to Adjourn	No	Yes	Majority
Adjourn	No	No	Majority
Recess	No	Yes	Majority
Raise a Question of Privilege	No	No	Chair
Call for Orders of the Day	No	No	Upon one request
- Subsidiary Motions			
Lay on the Table	No	No	Majority
Move the Question	No	No	Two-thirds
Limit or Extend Limits of Debate	No	Yes	Majority
Postpone to a Certain Time	Yes	Yes	Majority
Refer to Committee	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend	Yes	Yes	Majority
Postpone Indefinitely	Yes	No	Majority
Main Motion	Yes	Yes	Majority

THESE MOTIONS may be made at any time and deal with procedure – in no order:

INCIDENTAL MOTIONS	DEBATABLE	SECOND	VOTE
Appeal	Yes	Yes	Majority in negative ⁵
Point of Information	No	No	Chair
Point of Order	No	No	Chair
Suspend the Rules	Yes ⁶	Yes	Two-thirds
BRING-BACK MOTIONS			
Reconsider	Yes	Yes	Majority ⁷
Take from the Table	No	Yes	Majority

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RULES

The Committee-of-the-Whole has one Budget Meeting, which consists of several sessions. Each session adjourns to a definite time (*Fix the Time to which to Adjourn*).

Reconsideration

Council Rules allow *Reconsideration* in Committee of the Whole at the same meeting (or at the next succeeding regular meeting).

The Rules for *Reconsideration* also address a meeting comprised of several sessions. In this case, *Reconsideration* can only be moved the same day or on the next succeeding session.

⁵ “Shall the decision of the Chair be sustained?” First referred to Rules Committee which makes recommendation to the Council. For the Council vote, a tie vote sustains the decision and members may only speak once in debate.

⁶ Exception to Robert’s.

⁷ Motion must be made by a member on the prevailing side.

If it is not feasible to Reconsider on that day, or on the next succeeding session – perhaps because staff or others may not be available – then the Motion to *Reconsider* in one of those two sessions can be *Postponed to a Certain Time*.