

Corporate Policy

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Section:	Administration	01
Sub-Section:	Committees, Commissions, and Boards	0360
Title:	Council Committee System	2016-01

Related Documents

Number	Title
07-2510-2023-02	Council Code of Conduct

Approvals

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Policy

Pursuant to the *Community Charter (Charter)*, section 141, the Mayor must establish standing committees for matters the Mayor considers would be better dealt with by committee, and pursuant to section 142, the Council of the City of Port Moody may establish and appoint Select Committees to inquire into any matter and to report its findings and opinions to the Council.

Definitions

“Advisory Bodies of Council” means all committees, boards, task forces, commissions, and working groups, established by Council in accordance with their right under the *Community Charter*.

“Legislative Services Coordinator” means the staff member assigned by the Corporate Officer to provide administrative support to a committee.

“Honourary Member” means a member who does not have a vote, is not obliged to attend meetings, and shall not be counted for purposes of forming quorum.

“Select Committee” means a committee established by Council resolution pursuant to section 142 of the *Community Charter*, and to which Council may appoint citizens. At least one member of a Select Committee must be a Council member.

“Staff Liaison” means the staff member assigned by the City Manager to assist a committee in a non-voting advisory and resource capacity.

“Standing Committee” means an advisory body to Council established by the Mayor pursuant to section 141 of the *Community Charter* to which the Mayor shall appoint Council representatives and may appoint citizen members. The *Charter* requires that at least half the members be members of Council.

“Statutory Committee” means a board, commission, or committee established pursuant to a specific enabling statute, including a Library Board established pursuant to the *Library Act*, a Police Board established pursuant to the *Police Act*, a commission established pursuant to section 953 of the *Local Government Act*, a Family Court Committee established pursuant to the *Provincial Court Act*, and any other body established pursuant to enabling legislation which serves in an arms-length capacity on behalf of or in cooperation with the municipality.

“Task Force” and “Working Group” means a short-term Select Committee established to inquire into a specific issue within a bounded time period. After the task force reports its findings and opinions to Council, its work will be concluded, and the task force will be disbanded.

“Youth Seat” means a designated seat on a Select Committee for individuals who are between the ages of 15-25 years old. A Youth Seat member of a Select Committee may also be a member of the Youth Focus Committee, provided they are within the age restrictions of each.

Procedures

1. Membership

1.1 Diversity

- 1.1.1 The City of Port Moody is committed to providing a healthy and accessible workplace that supports one's dignity, self-esteem, and the ability to achieve one's full potential. With this in mind, all appointees will be expected to take steps to promote and maintain a healthy, respectful, inclusive, and harassment-free work environment. Preference may be given to applicants who are members of one or more of the following groups: women, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and members of a visible minority group.
- 1.1.2 Membership of committees will be diverse, and broadly reflective of the community.
- 1.1.3 Membership will also reflect desired experience, knowledge, expertise, and geographic representation in the community.

1.2 Appointments

- 1.2.1 Annually, the opportunities to serve as committee members will be widely advertised so that interested citizens can apply.
- 1.2.2 The Mayor will appoint members to Standing Committees.
- 1.2.3 Upon recommendation of the Mayor, Council will appoint members to Select Committees at a Closed Council meeting, with the appointments announced at an open meeting. The Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Select Committees will be appointed by Council, with the exception of the Youth Focus Committee, where the Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected by the committee members.
- 1.2.4 Appointments to Standing and Select Committees will be made in December, except in an election year when the timing of appointments may be varied by the Mayor, and as vacancies arise for the remainder of the committee's term.
- 1.2.5 Appointments to Statutory Committees will be made in accordance with the relevant committee's enabling statute or establishment bylaw. The Mayor will provide recommendations as required for any appointments to Statutory Committees that are to be made by Council.
- 1.2.6 Appointments to Task Forces will be made by Council as required, upon the Mayor's recommendation.
- 1.2.7 With the exception of Youth Seat members, unless authorized by a majority consensus of Council, a person is limited to serve on one committee at a time.

- 1.2.8 The terms of reference of individual committees will specify the number of members to be appointed to the committee but will generally be 13 voting members (including the Chair and Vice-Chair).
- 1.2.9 Where external agencies are invited to nominate one of their members to a committee and choose not to do so, Council may fill the vacancy with a member of the community.
- 1.2.10 Committee members will serve without pay at the pleasure of Council, unless otherwise provided in the enabling statute or establishment bylaw.
- 1.2.11 Committee members appointed by Council must be Port Moody residents, except as provided in a statutory committee enabling statute or establishment bylaw, and except for the eligibility criteria as specified below:
 - all Port Moody business owners are eligible for the Economic Development and Tourism Committee;
 - all students attending a Port Moody school are eligible for the Youth Focus Committee; and
 - ICBC and HUB nominees to the Transportation Committee are not subject to residency requirements.
- 1.2.12 Should there be no applicants for a Youth Seat member, Council may appoint a non-youth member to serve a one-year member-at-large term on the Committee, and the Youth Seat will vacate during the subsequent recruitment period.

1.3 Applications for Membership are Protected

All applications for membership on committees will be protected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, as amended, when submitted to the City.

1.4 Terms of Appointment for Standing and Select Committees

- 1.4.1 The term of appointment for Standing and Select Committees is two years from January to December.
- 1.4.2 An individual can serve for up to two consecutive two-year terms on any one committee with the exception of the Youth Focus Committee, which will have no limitation on the number of terms a committee member may serve. Council may choose to waive this rule in the event there are no other eligible candidates to fulfil the role.
- 1.4.3 Committee stability and membership continuity will be taken into account when considering re-appointments for a consecutive term.

1.5 Terms of Appointment of Task Forces/Working Groups

The term of appointment of Task Force members is concurrent with the time frame provided to the Task Force to complete its work; after which the members' terms expire unless extended by Council resolution.

1.6 Terms of Appointment of Statutory Committees

The term of appointment of Statutory Committee members is as provided in the enabling statute or establishment bylaw.

1.7 Committee Vacancy Replacement Term

In the event of a vacancy, the person appointed to fill the vacancy shall be a committee member for the remainder of the term.

1.8 Attendance of Members at Meetings

1.8.1 Attendance is required for meeting operations. To ensure quorum, members must RSVP to the Legislative Services Division no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting.

1.8.2 Unless otherwise provided in the enabling statute or establishment bylaw, and except for honorary members, no committee member shall miss more than four meetings per year and any member who is absent from three (3) consecutive regular meetings without leave of absence by resolution from the committee will cease to be a member of the committee, and Council shall be advised by the Legislative Services Division of the vacancy.

1.9 Removal of Member from Committee

At the request of the committee or on its own initiative, Council may remove or request the resignation of any committee member for malfeasance or any other cause.

1.10 Resignation of Member

Any member of a committee wishing to resign from the committee is requested to provide the resignation in writing to the committee Chair with a copy to the Legislative Services Coordinator. The Legislative Services Division will advise Council of the resignation and undertake the appropriate process to fill the vacancy.

2. Council Liaison/Council Membership

2.1 The Mayor will appoint members of Council to serve as Chair and Vice-Chair of Standing Committees.

2.2 The Vice-Chair of a committee is not obligated to attend meetings and is not counted in determining if a quorum is present, except in cases where the Vice-Chair is present and can contribute to establishing quorum.

2.3 Upon recommendation of the Mayor, Council will appoint Council members to Select Committees and designate the Chair and Vice-Chair, with the exception of the Youth Focus Committee, where the Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected by the committee members.

- 2.4** The Chair and Vice-Chair serve to ensure meetings run efficiently and effectively and strive to create an open, safe, and equitable place for discussion by all members.
- 2.5** The Chair and Vice-Chair will remain impartial in their roles so as to not influence or disrupt committee decision-making or voting.
- 2.6** The Chair and Vice-Chair must follow the *Council Code of Conduct* at all times during committee meetings.
- 2.7** Upon recommendation of the Mayor, Council will appoint Council members to Task Forces and designate the Chair and Vice-Chair as needed.
- 2.8** Council Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and representatives serve for a one-year term.
- 2.9** The Council liaison serves as a communication channel to Council.
- 2.10** Any member of Council not appointed to a committee may attend committee meetings as an observer but is not entitled to vote.
- 2.11** If neither the Chair nor Vice-Chair of a committee can attend a meeting, the Chair or Mayor may request that another member of Council act in the place of the Chair at that committee meeting.
- 2.12** The Mayor is an ex-officio member of every Standing Committee, Select Committee, and Task Force, and as such, has the same rights as other committee members, but is not obligated to attend meetings and is not counted in determining if a quorum is present, except in cases where the Mayor is present and can contribute to establishing quorum.

3. Staff Support

- 3.1** Staff liaisons will be appointed to Standing Committees, Select Committees, Statutory Committees, and Task Forces by the City Manager. The staff liaison is not a member of the committee and therefore is not entitled to vote. The responsibilities of the staff liaison include:
 - 3.1.1** Providing information and professional advice.
 - 3.1.2** Supporting the Chair in developing agendas, arranging meetings, and promoting effective committee functioning.
 - 3.1.3** Reviewing draft minutes.
 - 3.1.4** Preparing presentations for the committee that may also be shared with the general public.
 - 3.1.5** Providing an annual orientation to the work of the committee, the structure of the City, and Council's annual goal setting and budgeting processes.

- 3.1.6 Assisting with the annual membership recruitment by providing timely responses to requests for information concerning re-appointment.
 - 3.1.7 Any other projects or tasks approved by the City Manager.
- 3.2** The Corporate Officer may assign a Legislative Services Coordinator or staff member to assist committees and act as committee secretary. The responsibilities of the staff member include:
 - 3.2.1 Preparing and distributing committee agendas and on-table items at the direction of the staff liaisons.
 - 3.2.2 Attending committee meetings to record the minutes and provide procedural advice.
 - 3.2.3 Preparing draft minutes within four business days after the meeting.
 - 3.2.4 Preparing final minutes in prescribed format for appropriate distribution and submission to the Corporate Officer.
 - 3.2.5 Ensuring that appropriate arrangements for committee meetings, including room bookings, are made in accordance with prescribed City procedures.
 - 3.2.6 Maintaining and distributing the schedule of committee meetings.
 - 3.2.7 Preparing reports to Council on matters relating to committee resolutions using the committee report template established by the Legislative Services Division.
 - 3.2.8 Other duties as prescribed by the City Manager or Corporate Officer from time to time.

4. Meeting Schedule

- 4.1** Standing Committees will establish their own meeting schedules in consultation with the Legislative Services Division, holding meetings in accordance with their terms of reference, or at the call of the Chair. Standing Committee meetings will not be scheduled in August.
- 4.2** Select Committee meeting schedules are established by the Legislative Services Division, holding meetings in accordance with their terms of reference, or at the call of the Chair. Select Committee meetings will not be scheduled in August or December.
- 4.3** Statutory committees will meet as provided in their enabling statute or establishment bylaw.
- 4.4** Task Forces will establish their own meeting schedules within the time frame provided to complete their recommendations to Council.
- 4.5** Committee meetings shall have priority over other requests for meeting room bookings at City facilities.

5. Quorum

- 5.1** For Select Committees and Task Forces, a majority of the members constitutes a quorum, provided that one Council member is in attendance. Committees to which Council members are appointed as representatives do not require the attendance of a Council representative to proceed with a meeting.
- 5.2** For Standing Committees, a majority of the members constitutes a quorum, and at least half of the quorum must be made up of members of Council.
- 5.3** For Statutory Committees, quorum is determined in accordance with the committee's enabling statute or establishment bylaw.
- 5.4** In the event of no quorum after 20 minutes past the scheduled start time, or if quorum is lost during a meeting, the committee's official business will cease, the names of those present will be recorded, members will be permitted to leave, and staff will excuse themselves from the meeting.

6. Chair and Vice-Chair

- 6.1** Each committee will, at its first regular meeting, or as provided in its enabling statute or establishment bylaw, elect a Chair and Vice-Chair, if the Mayor or Council has not already appointed a Chair and Vice-Chair, for a period of one year.
- 6.2** The role of the Chair is to carry out the following duties:
 - 6.2.1 Approve the agenda.
 - 6.2.2 Ensure the committee follows the agenda.
 - 6.2.3 Prevent new issues from side-tracking the agenda.
 - 6.2.4 Limit additions to the agenda.
 - 6.2.5 Limit meeting length to two hours and seek a majority resolution to extend the meeting for an additional 30 minutes, and a unanimous resolution to extend the meeting beyond two and a half hours.
 - 6.2.6 Establish and maintain order and decorum.
 - 6.2.7 Respect members' views and be open-minded.
 - 6.2.8 Ensure all members can participate by encouraging those who hold back and preventing others from dominating the discussion.
 - 6.2.9 Seek agreement and build consensus.
 - 6.2.10 Close debate and guide the group to resolution in a timely manner.
 - 6.2.11 Assist members to word motions clearly and succinctly.
 - 6.2.12 Participate in discussion but focus on presiding over the meeting.

- 6.3** The role of the Vice-Chair is to chair meetings as required in the absence of the Chair.

7. Agendas and On-Table Items

- 7.1** The Chair, in consultation with the staff liaison, sets the committee agendas, which are prepared and distributed to committee members and posted on the City website one week in advance of the meeting by the Legislative Services Coordinator.
- 7.2** All materials to be presented on-table must be approved by the Chair in advance of the meeting and submitted to the Legislative Services Coordinator no later than 12:00pm on the day of the meeting. The Legislative Services Coordinator will prepare, distribute to committee members, and upload to the City website only materials that are received by the deadline.

8. Minutes

- 8.1** Committee minutes, setting out the key discussion points and decisions from meetings as prescribed in the Minute Taking Standards policy, will be recorded by the Legislative Service Coordinator.
- 8.2** Following review by the staff liaison and the Chair, the minutes will be presented for adoption at the next meeting.
- 8.3** Following adoption, minutes will be:
- 8.3.1 certified as correct and signed by the Legislative Services Coordinator and the Chair or the presiding member;
 - 8.3.2 provided to the Corporate Officer for circulation to Council on the Regular Council agenda for information; and
 - 8.3.3 posted on the City website.

9. Rules of Procedure

- 9.1** Unless otherwise noted in the Council approved terms of reference, each committee shall follow the guidelines attached as **Appendix A**, providing they are not inconsistent with its enabling statute, establishment bylaw, the *Local Government Act*, *Community Charter*, *Council Committee System* policy, or the Council Procedure Bylaw. The committee may request advice from the Legislative Services Coordinator, staff liaison, or the Corporate Officer.
- 9.2** Questions of procedure which cannot be resolved by the committee upon the advice of the Legislative Services Coordinator will be referred to the Corporate Officer.

10. Voting

All members of a committee, including the Chair and Vice-Chair, will have a vote on any question before it, and in all cases, in the event of a tie vote, the motion will be defeated. Any member who abstains from voting, without having declared a conflict of interest and leaving the meeting, will be deemed to have voted in the affirmative. Proxy votes are not permitted.

11. Conflict of Interest

11.1 Committee members are subject to sections 100 to 104 of the *Community Charter*.

11.2 Committee members will not use the committee member contact list for personal or non-City related business purposes.

12. Subcommittees

12.1 Committees may establish subcommittees by resolution at any time without the approval of Council.

12.2 Subcommittees may include any member of the public but must have at least two members of the parent committee serving as Chair and Vice-Chair.

12.3 Subcommittees receive no staff support and must coordinate meetings and conduct research independently.

12.4 Subcommittees' requests for City information will be made and fulfilled as they are for members of the public.

12.5 Parent committees may, by resolution, request meeting rooms for subcommittee meetings, subject to availability. These requests are to be directed to the Legislative Services Coordinator, who will coordinate with the subcommittee Chair to determine availability.

12.6 All subcommittees must report only to their parent committees and are not recognized as official advisory bodies by Council.

12.7 The membership of a subcommittee will not consist of a number that is the same or higher than quorum of the parent committee (e.g.: Parent committee membership is 13, the subcommittee will not consist of more than six (6) members).

12.8 All subcommittees automatically expire on December 31st each year. A subcommittee that seeks to continue over multiple years or terms must be re-established by its parent committee in January of each year. The requirement of having at least two members of the parent committee serving as Chair and Vice-Chair must be fulfilled.

13. Reporting

13.1 Establishment and Authority

- 13.1.1 Members will not misrepresent themselves as having any authority beyond that delegated by Council.
- 13.1.2 Standing and Select Committees must refer recommendations to Council for authority to act.
- 13.1.3 Task Forces conduct their business within the time prescribed by Council following which they report their findings and opinions to Council for consideration.
- 13.1.4 Statutory Committees conduct their business in accordance with the terms of their enabling statute, establishment bylaw, and the policies of the authority that established the committee.

13.2 Reporting on Issues

- 13.2.1 When responding on an issue referred by Council, Standing and Select Committees, with the assistance of the staff liaison and the Legislative Services Coordinator, will submit reports to Council in accordance with the Council Committee System policy and Council Procedure Bylaw. If deemed appropriate by the City Manager, committee reports will be accompanied by a staff report.
- 13.2.2 Committees shall not reconsider a decision of Council except with a referral from Council.

13.3 Reports and Minutes to Council

- 13.3.1 Reports from committee meetings will be submitted for the agenda of the next Regular Council meeting, at least six business days prior to the Regular Council meeting, or as soon as possible.
- 13.3.2 Approved and signed minutes from committee meetings will be presented as information items for the agenda of a Regular Council meeting. Minutes must be submitted to Legislative Services staff, at least one week prior to the scheduled Regular Council meeting.

13.4 Annual Work Plans

On an annual basis at the beginning of the term, Select and Statutory Committees, with the exception of the Land Use Committee, will receive and carry-out the Council approved workplans as drafted by staff in accordance with Council's Strategic Plan. The Committees may, with approval from Council, add items to the workplan provided that these items are aligned with and support the Council Strategic Plan.

13.5 Annual Reports

13.5.1 On an annual basis, Standing, Select, and Statutory Committees, with the exception of the Land Use Committee, will submit a report to Council that summarizes their activities over the past year and how these activities relate to the Council Strategic Plan and Five-Year Financial Plan. All committees, with the exception of the Youth Focus Committee, will submit their reports no later than the first meeting in January of the following year. Due to the school year, the Youth Focus Committee shall submit their annual report in June.

13.5.2 Task forces will submit a report to Council upon completion of their mandates.

14. Authority

Committees do not have the authority to communicate with other levels of government, pledge the credit of the City, or authorize any expenditures to be charged against the City, except as may be provided in their enabling statutes or establishment bylaws.

15. Budget

15.1 Unless otherwise provided in their enabling statutes or establishment bylaws, committees may request budget funds from Council in accordance with the City budget preparation schedule and procedure.

15.2 Any solicitation of funds from other organizations requires prior approval of Council.

15.3 Committees shall have reasonable use of miscellaneous City services, such as photocopying, paper supplies, and meeting areas, which are primarily provided through the Legislative Services Coordinator.

16. Personal Liability

No member of a committee shall be liable in their personal capacity for any debt or liability of the committee. It is the responsibility of the City to insure the members of committees against all liabilities related to fulfilling their responsibilities as members of committees.

17. Orientation

The first meeting of the year will serve as the orientation session for each committee.

18. New Committees

In considering the formation of a new Select Committee, Standing Committee, Statutory Committee, or Task Force, Council will request staff to prepare a report to Council that includes a terms of reference for consideration by Council prior to establishing the committee.

19. Meetings Open to Public

All meetings of Council committees are open to the public and no person shall be excluded except in cases of improper conduct, or where the committee is considering an item where, in accordance with section 90 of the *Community Charter*, the exclusion of the public is permitted or required.

20. Delegations to Committees

Delegations to committees must be approved by Council. Delegations are limited to 10 minutes unless a longer period is agreed to by unanimous vote of committee members present or in advance by the Chair. Once the delegation has presented their remarks, committee members may ask questions for clarification if permitted to do so by the Chair. Once the delegation presentation is concluded and questions have been addressed, the delegation must not be permitted to participate further in the committee deliberations on the issues raised by the delegation.

Monitoring/Authority

The Legislative Services Division will administer this policy.

APPENDIX A

Committee Meeting Guidelines

The Agenda

- Have an agenda and stick to it.
- The agenda is like a contract between the Chair and the members: “In return for your preparation, time, and participation, we will deal with these issues.”
- The agenda package may have supporting material attached for members to read in advance.

Rule of the Clock

- Start on time and end on time – do not reward latecomers.
- Keep the meeting to 1½ to 2 hours. If the meeting is longer than that, people leave, bodily or otherwise. If the meeting is shorter than that, there is not enough time to develop the team, something that must be redone at every meeting.

Handling the Business of the Meeting

- Agendas may have many items, sometimes seemingly too many items. Some items are for action, while others may be updates or items just for information. Focus on those that are for discussion or decision, are important and urgent, and where the background work has been done. Keep the time spent just informing people to a minimum.
- Most groups do their most effective work at about 2/3 of the way through the meeting. You could plan the most difficult decisions and discussions at that point.

Good decision-making requires:

- background information;
- options and recommendations;
- preparation before the meeting; and
- the participation of committee members.

Role of Chair

The role of the Chair is critical for effective meetings. The Chair should be:

Leader	⇒ willing to give up personal interests, and willing to work with the whole group
Facilitator	⇒ able to encourage people to participate, help people to listen to each other, and to reflect on the common threads of the discussion

The Chair's duties are to:

Corporate Policy Manual

Council Committee System

- check if a quorum is present and open the meeting at the prescribed time;
- announce the business in the proper sequence (as on the agenda);
- recognize members entitled to speak, in the order in which they request to speak;
- state and put the questions (resolutions which have been moved and seconded) to a vote;
- enforce the rules of decorum;
- expedite business;
- decide questions of order and respond to parliamentary enquiries; and
- declare the meeting adjourned when business is complete.

Decision-making

Committees should strive for consensus in their decision-making. However, final decisions are made by resolution adopted by a majority vote.

Voting and Debating Rights

Each member of a committee, including the chair, may make or second motions, may debate motions, and may vote.

Common Terms and Procedures

Unanimous General Consent is an informal method of resolving a routine and non-controversial procedural issue. For example, the presiding member may seek unanimous general consent as follows:

“Is there any objection to moving item 7 forward on the agenda and considering it now? Hearing none, we will proceed now with item 7.”

Friendly Amendment is an informal method of making a minor change to a motion or amendment. For example, during debate, it may be indicated that a minor change to a motion or amendment would better achieve the intent of the mover. The Chair may then ask:

“Is there any objection to adding the words ‘....’? Hearing no objection, the words are added, and the motion now reads: ‘....’ OR “Hearing no objection, the words are added. Would the Legislative Services Coordinator please read the motion? ... Is there any further discussion on the motion?”

****Caution:** Overuse of this method could result in confusion.

Motions and Amendments

A **main motion** is a proposal to take action or give direction. The steps of handling a main motion are:

1. A member makes a motion (*"I move that"*)
2. Another member seconds the motion (*"Second" or "I second the motion"*)
3. The chair states the motion or moves directly to debate (*"It is moved and seconded that" AND/OR "Is there any discussion?"*)
4. Debate, and amendment if any, takes place.
5. The Chair puts the motion to a vote: (*"We are now voting on the motion to Those in favour? [Those voting in the affirmative indicate by raising a hand.] Opposed? [Those voting against indicate by raising a hand]"*)
Members should always clearly indicate their vote by raising their hand at the appropriate time. Those who do not vote by raising a hand are counted as voting in the affirmative.
6. The Chair announces the result (*"Motion passes." "Motion defeated." "Tie Vote - motion defeated."*)

Amending Motions

An amendment is a motion to change the wording of another motion before voting on it. An amendment is always dealt with before the original motion. In effect, the amendment temporarily sets aside the motion which it proposes to modify. A motion to amend a debatable motion is debatable and requires the same steps as a main motion.

Three Methods of Amending a Motion

1. By inserting or adding words
"I move that the motion be amended by inserting the word[s] ... between the word ... and the word" OR... "I move that the motion be amended by adding the word[s] ..."
2. By striking out words
"I move that the motion be amended by deleting the words"
3. By striking out words and inserting replacement words
"I move that the foregoing motion be amended by deleting the words ... and inserting the words ... in their place."

Only two levels of amendment are allowed. A main motion can be amended (primary amendment) and an amendment can be amended only once (secondary amendment). No amendment is permitted to a secondary amendment. If further amendments are desired, the question on the amendment to the amendment must be called before another amendment to the amendment can be made.

The steps in the process are:

1. A motion is made.
2. An amendment to the motion is made.
3. An amendment to the amendment is made.
4. The question on the amendment to the amendment is called. (A further amendment to the amendment could be made here.)
5. The question on the amendment is called. (A further amendment to the main motion could be made here).
6. The question on the main motion is called.

Debate on Motions and Amendments

When an amendment is made, discussion is allowed on the amendment only, not on the main motion. Once the vote on the amendment is taken, discussion proceeds on the motion (as amended if the amendment passed).

Motions Permitted While Matter is Under Debate

During debate on a motion, there are a limited number of other motions which would be considered to be in order. These are: a motion to adjourn or recess the meeting, a motion to withdraw if made by the original mover, to amend, to refer to a subcommittee or to the Staff Liaison for report, or to postpone to a certain day. Questions of Privilege and Points of Order can also interrupt proceedings.

Replacement Motion

A replacement motion is like an amendment in that it sets aside the motion which it proposes to modify. If a replacement motion passes, there is no need to call the question on the original motion – the original motion is in effect gone. (“I move that the foregoing motion be replaced with the following: ...”)

Motion to Withdraw a Motion

A motion which has been duly moved and seconded may only be withdrawn with the consent of the original mover and seconder. Once a motion to withdraw a motion has been carried, there is no record made in the minutes of the original motion having existed. It will not appear in the minutes.

Motion to Refer

A motion to refer is a motion to send a main motion to a subcommittee or to staff for further study and report back. (“I move that the foregoing motion be referred to the committee’s subcommittee for review and report back to the committee by”)

Motion to Postpone Indefinitely

A motion to decline to take a position on an issue or motion. Note: with the limited authority of committees, such an action could require endorsement by Council. The Staff Liaison can assist in this event. ("I move that this item be postponed indefinitely" OR "I move that no action be taken on this issue at this time.")

Motion to Postpone to a Specific Date

A motion to stop debate and amendment and postpone consideration of an issue or motion to a specific future date.

Division of a Question

A motion to divide a main motion into separate motions if each part can stand on its own.

Adjourn

When a motion to adjourn is made, it means the meeting stops and will reconvene at another date and time. A motion to adjourn is not required if the agenda is completed – the Chair simply declares the meeting "closed" or "concluded".

Recess

A motion to take a break in the meeting. A motion or call for a recess should specify the amount of time to be taken for the recess.

Point of Order

A statement that a rule of the committee is being violated. It is ruled on by the Chair whose decision may be appealed to committee and decided by committee resolution.

Question of Privilege

Raising a request or motion relating to the rights or comfort of the committee or an individual. It is decided by the Chair.

Point of Information

A request for information (e.g., from staff during debate).

Reading of Motions

A member may require the motion under consideration to be read. The Legislative Services Coordinator would then read the motion. Sometimes staff will ask to read a motion if they are unsure what it is or if they feel others may not understand the exact motion being considered.

Rules of Decorum and Debate

Corporate Policy Manual

Council Committee System

Committee meetings tend to be more informal than would a City Council meeting. The Chair of the committee has the duty and authority to allow the level of informality they feel would best facilitate the work of the committee.

Here are some meeting rules which may be helpful and may be used by the committee:

- the maker of a motion has a right to speak first to their motion;
- to speak a second time, a member should wait until all those who wish to speak have done so for the first time;
- members must remain courteous and avoid personal attacks on each other and staff;
- remarks must be confined to the motion before the committee;
- remarks are always directed “through the Chair”;
- members should not interrupt another speaker;
- there are no limitations on the number of times a member may speak, or the length of speeches;
- motions should be phrased concisely and to the point; and
- a decision to close debate can be made by unanimous general consent, by resolution, or by the Chair.