

# **CITY OF LEAGUE CITY**

## **GOVERNANCE POLICY AND RULES OF PROCEDURE**

*Adopted January 24, 2012*

**CITY OF LEAGUE CITY  
CITY COUNCIL GOVERNANCE POLICY  
AND RULES OF PROCEDURE**

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## **COUNCIL GOVERNANCE POLICY AND RULES OF PROCEDURE**

### **SECTION I – INTRODUCTION**

The League City City Council is the governing body for the City of League City, Texas. Therefore, it must bear the initial responsibility for the integrity of governance. The council shall determine its own rules and order of business. The council is responsible for its own development, its responsibilities, its own discipline, and its own performance. The development of this policy is designed to ensure effective and efficient governance.

This policy addresses mayor and council relations, council and staff relations, council and media relations, roles and meetings. By adopting these guidelines, we, as members of the city council, acknowledge our responsibility to each other, to our professional staff and to the public. This policy will be reviewed and adopted on an annual basis.

## **COUNCIL GOVERNANCE POLICY AND RULES OF PROCEDURE**

### **SECTION II – MISSION**

In order to ensure proper discharge of duties for the improvement of democratic local government, members of the League City City Council will display behavior that demonstrates independent, impartial review of all matters addressed by them, and be duly responsible to the citizens of League City and each other in their relationships.

## **COUNCIL GOVERNANCE POLICY AND RULES OF PROCEDURE**

### **SECTION III – ROLES**

**3.1** The mayor shall preside at meetings of the council, and shall be recognized as head of city government for all ceremonial purposes and by the governor for purpose of emergency management and disaster mitigation purposes, but shall have no regular administrative duties other than as prescribed by state law. The mayor may participate in the discussion of all matters coming before the council. The mayor shall not be entitled to vote as a member thereof on legislative or other matters, except in case of a tie, when the mayor shall have the right to cast the deciding vote.

The council shall, at its first meeting which succeeds the final canvass of election results for officeholders, elect from among the council members a mayor pro tem who shall act as mayor during the absence or inability of the mayor to perform the duties of office, and who shall for such time, be vested with all the powers of the mayor.

**3.2** As head of city government for ceremonial purposes, the mayor may issue and present proclamations and recognitions, and attend other ceremonial functions on behalf of the City of League City. Councilmembers may initiate, through the mayor, similar items of recognition. Major community events sponsored by the City shall be a policy decision of the Council.

**3.3** The mayor shall preserve order and decorum and shall require council members engaged in debate to limit discussion to the question under consideration.

**3.4** The mayor is the spokesperson for the council on all official positions taken unless absent, at which time the mayor pro tem or the mayor's designee will assume the role.

**3.5** The mayor will make every effort to give each member an opportunity to speak before any member can speak again on the same subject.

**3.6** The role of any council-appointed subcommittee is to evaluate policy alternatives and to recommend policy direction to the full council. Subcommittee reports shall be made under the standard item for such reports at worksessions and regular meetings. Council deliberation on the subcommittee recommendations shall occur at regular sessions.

**3.7** The city manager shall organize senior level city staff to conduct an orientation for new council members.

**3.8** Except for those designated powers which may be exercised by the mayor or mayor pro tem, the sole official power of each individual council member exists through the exercise of their singular vote. The power of the Council exists by virtue of the collective action of its voting members.

## **COUNCIL GOVERNANCE POLICY AND RULES OF PROCEDURE**

### **SECTION IV – MEETINGS**

**4.1 Information** – On all council agenda items involving major policy issues, the city manager shall provide briefing material to the council in advance of council consideration of the policy alternatives. Whenever possible, a city manager update report shall be distributed weekly in order to update city council in advance of council policy consideration

**4.2 Regular Meetings** – The council shall meet regularly at such times as prescribed by ordinance, but no less frequently than once each month and the regular meetings will begin as prescribed by ordinance, unless postponed or canceled for valid reason(s).

**4.3 Special Meetings** – Special meetings may be held on any day of the week to consider items that require action prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting and may be called upon the request of the mayor or by three (3) members of city council.

**4.4 Work Sessions** – Worksessions will be held prior to convening in regular meetings to receive supplemental information and briefings from staff and to allow clarification of items on the agenda. Work sessions will be open to the public in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. Council members are encouraged to ask technical questions of staff about all agenda items prior to the regular meeting.

**4.5 Executive Sessions** – The city council may meet in executive session in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. A final action, decision or vote on a matter deliberated in an executive session will be made in an open meeting for which proper notice is provided. All discussions in executive session shall remain confidential.

**4.6 Public Notice** – The agenda for all regular meetings, special meetings, workshops and worksessions, and the notice listing items to be considered shall

be posted on the city's official bulletin board and website in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act.

**4.7 Attendance** – Councilmembers are expected to attend all meetings and stay in attendance during each meeting. No member shall leave a meeting without advising the presiding officer.

**4.8 Punctuality and Recess** – Members of the city council shall arrive at meetings at or before the scheduled time for the meeting to begin. At the beginning of each meeting, the chair shall announce those members absent and shall announce the arrival time of any member arriving after the beginning of any meeting. The chair may call a 10-minute recess at regular intervals of approximately one hour at appropriate points in the meeting agenda. The length of the recess shall be strictly adhered to.

**4.9 Conflict of Interest** – A council member prevented from voting due to a conflict of interest shall not vote on the matter, and shall otherwise comply with the state law and city charter and ordinances concerning conflicts of interest. Any council member filing a conflict of interest affidavit on an Executive Session item shall not confer with staff, the city attorney, council members or mayor.

**4.10 Conduct of Meetings** – a) During city council meetings and worksessions, the mayor shall preserve order and decorum and shall insist that council members, neither by conversation or otherwise, delay or interrupt the proceedings nor refuse to obey the rules of the city council.

b) A council member desiring to speak shall address the chair, and upon recognition by the presiding officer, shall confine discussion to the question under debate, avoid discussion of personalities and refrain from personal attacks and verbal abuse.

c) A council member, once recognized by the chair, shall not be interrupted while speaking except for the following reasons: called to order by the presiding officer; a point of order is raised by another member, or the speaker chooses to yield to questions from another member. If a council member is called to order while speaking, that member shall cease speaking immediately until the question of order is determined. If ruled to be in order, the member shall be



permitted to proceed. If ruled to be not in order, the member shall remain silent or make additional remarks so as to comply with the rules of the city council.

d) The chair shall state all questions submitted for a vote and announce the result. If the vote is not unanimous, the chair shall announce the names of member(s) voting in favor and in opposition to the motion.

e) All persons addressing the city council, including the city manager shall be recognized by the presiding officer and shall limit remarks to the matter under discussion.

f) All remarks and questions addressed to the city council shall be addressed to the city council as a whole and not to any individual member.

**4.11 Administrative Staff** – a) Members of the administrative staff and employees of the City shall observe at all council meetings the same rules and decorum applicable to members of the city council.

b) The city manager shall take such disciplinary action as may be necessary to ensure that decorum is preserved at all times by city employees in meetings.

**4.12 Citizens and Visitors** – a) Citizens and visitors are welcome to attend all public meetings of the city council and will be admitted to the Chamber or meeting room up to the fire safety capacity of the room.

b) Everyone attending the meeting will refrain from private conversations while the city council is in session.

c) Citizens and visitors attending city council meetings and worksessions shall observe the same rules of decorum applicable to members of the city council. Any person making personal, impertinent, profane or slanderous remarks or who becomes boisterous while addressing the city council or while attending the meeting or worksession, shall be removed from the room if so directed by the presiding officer. The person shall be barred from further audience before the city council during that session. If the presiding officer fails to act, any member of the council may move to require enforcement of the rules, and the affirmative vote of a majority of the council shall require the presiding officer to act.

d) Behavior which is disruptive of a meeting shall not be permitted by the presiding officer, who may direct the removal of offenders from the room. In case the presiding officer shall fail to act, any member of the council may move to require enforcement of the rules and the affirmative vote of the majority of the council shall require the presiding officer to act.

e) No placards, banners, or signs which have the effect of disrupting a meeting will be permitted in the city council chamber or in any other room in which the council is meeting. Exhibits, displays and visual aids used in connection with presentations, however, are permitted.

f) The chief of police or his or her designee shall act as sergeant-at-arms for the city council and shall furnish whatever assistance is needed to enforce the rules of the city council.

**4.13 Agenda** – a) The city council shall, by resolution, adopt rules governing the placement of items on any agenda.

b) The “Consent Agenda” consists of operational items and previously discussed items that may not require deliberation by the council.

c) ~~With the approval of a majority of the members of City Council present,~~  
~~Any council member may remove an item from the consent agenda for discussion and separate action during such portion of a meeting.~~

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d) The city manager may delete consent agenda items by providing notice to the city council prior to the convening of the meeting. The chair shall announce the deletions prior to requesting a motion.

**4.14 Speakers** – a) A person wishing to address the city council during the citizen comments section of an agenda must first sign in with the city secretary. The following information must be provided on the sign-up sheet: name, residence address, daytime telephone number, and the subject matter to be addressed, including the agenda item number, if applicable.

b) Speakers must address their comments to the entire council rather than to individual council members or staff.

c) If an addressing a specific agenda item, speakers must keep their remarks specific to the item being considered by the city council.

d) A person who registers to speak on a public hearing item will be called on at that time. The chair may determine the order in which speakers are called. When there is more than one speaker on the same subject, council members shall delay their comments until after all speakers on the subject have been heard.

e) All speakers will have a maximum of three minutes to address the council. Approval of the mayor will be required to extend the time limit. The chair may impose more restrictive time limits if a large number of persons register to speak.

f) For called public hearings, the applicant will be allowed a maximum of 10 minutes to make a presentation.

g) In accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, the city council will not discuss or consider any item addressed during the citizen comment section.

h) Whenever it is necessary for a speaker to use an interpreter to translate comments to the city council, the time required for the translation will not be counted against the designated time allotted for the speaker to address the city council.

**4.15 Rules of Procedure** – The rules of procedure laid down in Robert’s Rules of Order shall govern the proceedings of the city council.

**4.16 Amendment of Rules** – These rules may be amended, or new rules adopted, by a majority vote of the members of the city council.

**4.17 Failure to Comply** - A failure to comply with these rules does not invalidate any otherwise lawful act of the Council.

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### **SECTION V – PUBLIC CONTACT / MEDIA RELATIONS**

**5.1** Representative government is only successful when the citizens are kept informed and educated about the issues facing their municipality; consequently, it is imperative that the media play an important role in the council-manager-media relations. It is through an informed public that progress is ensured and good government remains sensitive to its constituents.

**5.2** During the conduct of official business, the city shall designate adequate space for the news media.

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### **SECTION VI – PLANNING**

The mayor and council are responsible for establishing a vision for the city of League City and planning for its future.

**6.1** On an annual basis, the mayor and city council shall hold a minimum of one strategic planning session wherein they set priorities, goals and objectives. The goals and objectives shall address short term and long term needs of the city.

**6.2** Policy direction should be consistent with the strategic goals and objectives. Sufficient time and consideration should be given to policy alternatives to ensure that decisions are made consistent with the long-term vision.

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### **SECTION VII – COUNCIL / STAFF RELATIONS**

**7.1** The role of the city manager and the relationship of staff with council shall be consistent with Art. II, Sections 20 and 21 of the City Charter and Section 2-6 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of League City.

**7.2** The city council shall direct comments, correspondence and concerns about city services to the city manager's office. Citizens concerns, comments and correspondence regarding city services received by council members shall be forwarded to the city manager for appropriate staff action and a timely response.

**7.3** The city council may inquire of the city manager about the conduct of any office, department or agency of the city and make investigations as to municipal affairs in accordance with Art. II, Section 14 of the City Charter.

**7.4** Documents provided to one council member shall also be distributed to all other members of the elected body. The city manager shall prepare and submit to the council as of the end of the fiscal year a complete report on the finances and administrative activities of the city for the preceding year. The city manager shall keep the council advised of the financial condition and future needs of the city and make such recommendations that may seem desirable.

**7.5** In order to ensure proper presentation of agenda items by staff, questions arising from council members after receiving their information packet should be, whenever possible, presented to the city manager or the manager's designated assistants for staff consideration prior to the council meeting. This allows staff time to address the council members' concerns and provide all council members with the additional information.

**7.6** Council shall direct requests for basic, routine information regarding City functions and/or services to the city manager, an assistant city manager, or a director. More complex requests, or those likely to require more than eight hours of staff time to fulfill, should be directed to the city manager.

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### **SECTION VIII – COUNCIL RELATIONS WITH BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES**

**8.1** The role of the city's Boards, Commissions and Committees is to perform the specific functions established in state statutes, city ordinances, resolutions, or minute orders as applicable and to advise the City Council about the topics assigned.

**8.2** All instructions to Boards, Commissions and Committees by the City Council shall be in writing.