

## TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

### RULES COMMITTEE

#### Town Hall Council Chambers

March 27, 2017

Present: Arthur Mathews, Chairman  
Kenneth DiFazio, Vice Chairman  
Michael Smart, Councilor  
Ed Harrington, Councilor

Absent: Michael Molisse, Councilor

Also Present: Diane Hachey-Assistant to the Council

Recording Secretary: Diane Hachey

Chairman Mathews called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. He informed the committee that Councilor Molisse has a prior commitment and would be unable to attend.

#### **18 001-Town Council Rules and Regulations for 2018-2020**

Chairman Mathews stated that pursuant to Town Council rule number 55: "The Town Council Rules will be reviewed and adopted within 120 days following the first Council Meeting in every even year" - the deadline for review is May 21<sup>st</sup>.

All Councilors and administration were invited to submit suggested revisions and Councilor Haugh and Diane Hachey were the only ones to submit.

Ms. Hachey explained that she had a few suggested rule additions, and some suggestions for revisions to current rules. These are the suggestions for implementation of new rules:

1-She suggests a **new Rule 50 entitled "Reappointment of Committee Members by the Mayor"**. She noted that reappointments submitted by the Mayor, without any single objection by the Council, would be voted the same evening. This change was done in an effort to streamline the reappointment process and does not apply to appointments, who still must appear before both Budget/Management and Town Council. She suggests placement following Rule 49.

Councilor Smart noted that Solicitor Callanan opined on this and is in agreement.

Councilor Harrington motioned for favorable action on this suggested rule addition, motion seconded by Councilor DiFazio and voted unanimously.

2-Ms. Hachey suggests addition of a **new Rule 57 entitled "Electronic Devices in Chambers"**-she is suggesting that all cellular phones and electronic devices are to be turned to the vibrate position during the course of Town Council and Committee meetings. She explained that cell phones ringing and text

message alerts pose a disturbance to meetings and cause audio problems with meetings that are broadcast. Chairman Mathews suggested posting a sign on the Chambers door. Councilor DiFazio suggests placing a disclaimer on all Town Council agendas. Councilor Smart suggests incorporating all of these suggestions. Ms. Hachey suggests placement following Rule 56.

Councilor Harrington motioned for favorable action on this suggested rule addition, motion seconded by Councilor DiFazio and voted unanimously.

3-Ms. Hachey further suggests a **new Rule 32 entitled “Committee Referrals”**-she recommends no issue/measure to be referred to more than one committee at a time. It was stated that this is in compliance with OML as the total of members in more than one committee who convene, constitutes a quorum of the whole Council. She suggests placement following Rule 32.

Councilor DiFazio agrees with addition of the new rule and suggests that if a measure is referred to one committee then that committee can suggest that a second committee weigh in. Councilor Smart cautions that what if the votes are contradictory; Councilor DiFazio feels comfortable with two different votes.

Councilor Harrington motioned for favorable action on this suggested rule addition, motion seconded by Councilor DiFazio and voted unanimously.

The following are Ms. Hachey’s suggestions for revisions to current Town Council Rules and Regulations:

**1-Rule 28-Order of Business and Agenda**-she suggests adding language under section d) agenda f) that individuals requesting time to address the Council under “Resident and Community Comment” make their requests **“in writing”**. This formalizes the request as in the past requests have been left on voice mail. Councilor Smart confirmed that this has happened and he is in agreement. It was suggested to **add “or email”** as this would be considered “in writing”.

Councilor Harrington motioned for favorable action on this suggested rule, as amended, to add or email” on this suggested rule change, motion seconded by Councilor DiFazio and voted unanimously.

**2-Rule 28-Order of Business and Agenda**-she suggests changing language under section d) agenda g) Resident and Community Comment-Role of Councilors from **“presentation” to “remarks”** (occurs twice in that section) and **“President” to “Town Council”**. Ms. Hachey notes that the word “presentation” is misleading as constituents believe they can show visuals and power points. Also, the President is not allowed to initiate motions, therefore the suggested revision of language from “President” to “Town Council”. Chairman Mathews concurs with these revisions.

Councilor Harrington motioned for favorable action on this suggested rule change, motion seconded by Councilor DiFazio and voted unanimously.

Councilor DiFazio steps away at this time (7:00 PM) to attend another meeting.

**3-Rule 29-Presentation of Papers**-she suggests striking the word “addition” as it is not necessary.

Councilor Harrington motioned for favorable action on this suggested rule change, motion seconded by Councilor Smart and voted unanimously.

**4-Rule 31-Standing Committees**-Ms. Hachey notes that the actual reference should not be “Seniors Committee” but “Senior Citizen’s Committee”.

Councilor DiFazio returns here at 7:09 PM.

**5-Rule 42-Town Solicitor**-Ms. Hachey suggests that the Solicitor not only attend Town Council meetings, but Ordinance meetings as well, as the majority of measures are legal in nature and/or apply to the charter and ordinances. To this end, she suggests adding “and Ordinance Committee Meetings” following “Council”.

Councilor Harrington motioned for favorable action on these two suggested rule changes, motion seconded by Councilor Smart and voted unanimously.

Finally, Ms. Hachey requests that in order to not take up the committee’s time, that they allow her to correct all scrivener errors, re-numbering and alignment corrections, for the review of the Chair of Rules.

Chair Mathews asked that Ms. Hachey develop a revised document (indicating suggested revisions which were voted) for distribution to the Town Council.

Councilor Harrington motions for favorable action on the aforementioned, motion seconded by Councilor Smart and voted unanimously.

Chair Mathews notes that Councilor Haugh submitted suggested revisions, but she is unable to attend.

She suggests additional language to **Rule 47 (Council Chambers)-adding section (c) “The Council President shall have ultimate control of all items on display in the Council Chambers. No item may be placed or hung without prior approval by the President or his/her official designee.”** Her reasoning for this revision is due to random pictures/artwork that has been displayed on the Council Chamber wall. Having artwork hung in alignment which complements the room, shows the Council’s respect for the town and its history.

Councilor Smart notes that this typically happens, and cited the window treatments as an example.

Councilor Harrington motioned for favorable action on this suggested rule change, motion seconded by Councilor Smart and voted unanimously.

Councilor Haugh’s next suggestion is to **Rule 24 (b) entitled Council Meetings. She would like to add language to subsection (b) “Councilors may elect to also receive the information through an official town based email address by notifying the Clerk of the Council.” Additionally, she suggests revised language to Rule 28 entitled “Order of Business and Agenda” to be edited as follows: “A copy of said reports and agenda shall be delivered and sent electronically to a town-based email address to the Council not later than Friday preceding the regular Council meeting.”** Her reasoning is that this enables those Councilors who so wish to obtain agendas and information electronically-it is not forcing anyone, but allows them the option to search current and past measures, as well as governing documents while deliberating during meetings, should they chose to bring their device. She further notes that there are no budget implications inherent in this suggestion. It also is not in violation of neither the town charter or ordinances.

Councilor Smart noted the additional workload this would be for the Town Council office staff, especially given that we are entering the busiest time of the year-budget season. It was discussed that budget books, CIP books, and architectural plans from engineering, would be cumbersome to scan-he believes this is too much work in light of the amount of Councilors that would utilize it.

It was discussed that this suggestion be implemented on a “trial basis” and if it is too much work, the committee would revisit the issue.

Ms. Hachey stated that the measures and backup which are typically submitted by administration are available from a select group of people in word format, that she could request be sent to the office, in addition to the necessary hard copies. This would save on the time needed to scan documents. The issue of file size when sent as email attachments (when forwarded to Councilors) also arose. Ms. Hachey offered to include this piece of information in her research.

Chair Mathews suggests that Ms. Hachey determine the amount of additional workload, availability of word documents and computer issues, and advise the Chair accordingly.

Councilor Harrington motioned for NO ACTION to add language to both Rule 24 (b) and 24 (d), motion seconded by Councilor Smart and voted unanimously.

Councilor Haugh’s final recommendation is for a wording change to **Rule 40-Secretary to Committees- to change the word “several” to Town Council”**.

Councilor Harrington motioned for favorable action on this suggested wording change, motion seconded by Councilor Smart and voted unanimously.

Councilor Smart motioned for favorable action to adopt the Rules and Regulations for 2018-2020, as amended, motion seconded by Councilor Harrington, and voted unanimously.

AT 7:51 PM a motion was made by Councilor Smart to adjourn the Rules Committee, motion seconded by Councilor Harrington. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectively submitted by Diane T. Hachey as Recording Secretary

Approved by Arthur Mathews as Chairman of the Rules Committee

Voted unanimously on 18 April 2018