

# Rules of Procedure City Meetings

The "Body" (City Council, Planning Commission, etc.) may adopt any rules it deems necessary to the efficient conduct of its meetings.

## Basic Policies for South Ogden City Meetings

1. For City Council matters, the Mayor, any Council Member, or the City Manager can place an item on the City Council agenda.
2. For other bodies, any member of that Body may place an item on the agenda.
3. An item scheduled for the agenda can be rescheduled for a different date by a majority of the members of the Body.
4. The Chair must recognize Members wishing to make a motion or enter a debate in the order in which they request recognition.
5. The Chair must ask for a motion and a second to the motion on each item on the agenda. Any motion receiving a second will be discussed by the Body.
6. Any Member may call for the question at any time. A vote will then be held on the motion.
7. Any document adopted and passed that requires signatures will be signed at the meeting, prior to adjournment. If the Chair refuses to sign the document(s), any three Members may execute the document on behalf of the Body.
8. Member packets will be distributed before a scheduled meeting.
9. All meetings are open and public meetings unless specifically closed under the provisions of the Utah Open Meetings Act.
10. A public meeting is defined as a meeting at which public business is discussed, decided or policy formulated. Citizens are allowed to attend and observe but not necessarily participate.
11. A public hearing is defined as a meeting which provides citizens the opportunity to express their position on the issue under consideration, both pro and con after due notice. Citizens may observe and comment as provided by the Body's rules but this is not a forum for a debate with the Body.

12. Citizens' comments will be taken at the beginning of the meeting. Any citizen, who wants to make comments will have the opportunity to do so in an orderly manner. This opportunity to make a comment is not to be mistaken for a public hearing nor is it an opportunity to debate with the governing body. Responses to public comments by elected officials and/or staff may be permitted by the Chair, recognizing no decisions or policies may be adopted during public comment time. The Body will not tolerate any interruptions or disruption of meetings. Each citizen may speak once for a period not to exceed three (3) minutes.
13. Any citizen desiring an item be placed on an agenda should submit, in writing, a description of the proposed agenda item, a rationale for placing the item on the agenda, and all background information needed for the Body to make a decision. The City Manager, or his/her designee, will inquire whether any member of the appropriate Body is willing to sponsor the item for the agenda. Sponsored items will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of that Body. Non-sponsored items will not be placed on the agenda. **Items to be placed on the agenda are due by noon at least three working days before regularly scheduled Meeting.**

#### **Rules for Conducting Public Hearings**

1. All members of the public will be allowed to speak once for a period not to exceed five minutes.
2. If a comment or question from a member of the Body interrupts a member of the public speaking during a hearing, the time taken by the comment or question and the response will not be counted as part of that citizen's five minutes.
3. If a member of the Body raises a question about a comment from a member of the public after the person has made his/her comments, the member of the public will be allowed two minutes to respond to each question raised.
4. Members of the public cannot give their five minutes away to another person to speak on their behalf.
5. A member of the public, during the time allotted for that person's comments, may request of the Body that the record be held open for written comment. Any member of that Body may then move to hold the record open for written comments for a specified period. If the motion receives a second and passes by majority vote, the record will be held open for the specified time, otherwise the item will not be received into the record.
6. Participants in public hearings will be expected to conduct themselves with civility. Speakers must be courteous. **Applause is not allowed.** Outbursts from

those attending a public hearing will not be tolerated. When a member of the public has been recognized and is speaking, he/she has the floor. Other members of the public may not speak either to the speaker or members of the Body until they have been given the floor. Spontaneous comments or other outbursts from the public will not be allowed.

### **Disturbing Meetings**

The City Council may fine or expel, and other Bodies meeting on behalf of the city may expel, any of its members for disorderly conduct upon an affirmative “majority plus one” vote of those members present. The Body may also, upon an affirmative majority “majority plus one” vote of those members present, expel any person who is disorderly during any regular, work or special meeting of the Body.

The Chair may expel any person, other than a member of the Body, who is disorderly during any regular, work or special meeting of the body.

### **Notes on Decorum in Discussion/Debate Generally:**

A loose paraphrasing of *Robert's Rules of Order* (Ninth Edition) suggests the following guidelines in helping to maintain civility and fairness during discussion and debate. These guidelines are pertinent when controversial issues arise in discussion.

#### **A. Treat one subject at a time**

Do not speak adversely on a prior action that is no longer pending: In debate, a member cannot reflect adversely on any prior act of the body not then pending, unless a motion to reconsider, rescind, or amend it is pending, or unless s/he intends to conclude his/her remarks by making or giving notice of one of these motions.

#### **B. Alternate between opposite points of view in discussion unless it is clearly apparent there is unanimous support for the question under discussion.**

Fairness, and the appearance of fairness is vitally important to success and effectiveness in the deliberative process.

#### **C. Maintain decorum in discussion and avoid allowing personalities to enter into the debate**

Do not attack a member's motives: When a question is pending, a member can condemn the nature or likely consequences of the proposed measure in

strong terms, but should always avoid discussions of personalities, and under no circumstances should s/he attack or question the motives of another member. The measure, not the member, is the subject of debate.

Avoid personalizing issues. The phrase "attack issues, not people" summarizes the goals of discussing and debating matters brought before a deliberative body. Any personal remark or attack must be ruled out of order by the chair: "Bob is a whiny anarchist and for that reason I cannot support his motion" is a comment that must be stricken and called up short immediately. Remarks must be kept free of personal reference.

The motion being considered is the subject of debate, not the member who proposed it. Offensive language is by definition offensive and all remarks must avoid personal invective.

Address all remarks through the chair: it is best practice if members of a deliberative body do not address one another directly, but address all remarks through the chair. This is an effective tool in keeping away from the likelihood of sliding into personalizing an issue. If, while a member is speaking in discussion or debate, another member wishes to address a question to him/her. . . the member desiring to ask the question should address the chair, proceeding as... [a] Point of Information ...

**D. Confine debate to the merits of the question under discussion.**

Confine remarks to the merits of the pending question. In a discussion and debate a member's remarks must be germane to the question then before the body.

Members should refrain from speaking adversely on or about a prior action that is not pending. In debate, a member cannot reflect adversely on any prior act of the society that is not then pending, unless a motion to reconsider, rescind, or amend it is pending, or unless he intends to conclude his remarks by making or giving notice of one of these motions.

**E. Division of a question – members may be for one part of a question and not for another.**