

**STANDING RULES OF THE WEST HARTFORD**  
**TOWN COUNCIL FOR 2011-2013 TERM**

The following Standing Rules shall govern the West Hartford Town Council for the 2011 through 2013 term.

**MEETINGS**

1. Regular meetings shall be held at 7:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month except during July, August and December, except that when any such Tuesday is a public holiday, the regular meeting shall be held on the next following business day or as established by resolution of the Town Council and except that the second meeting in April shall be exclusively for budget-related resolutions and ordinances. There shall be one regular meeting, set by resolution, to be held during July, August and December.

In addition to the foregoing, the Town Council shall hold one Community Comment meeting in each month except that such meetings shall not be held in July or August or in November during the year of municipal elections. Though this Community Comment meeting may be held prior to a regular Town Council meeting, the date, time and location of such meeting shall be determined by the President based upon the number of items to be considered; the Town Council's schedule of other meetings and public hearings; and the desire to hold the meeting at an alternative location in the interest of better engaging the public regarding issues of concern. Any West Hartford elector or taxpayer may make written request to address the Town Council at such meeting regarding: (1) any subject matter(s) upon which the Council may act within the scope of its authority; or (2) community events of a charitable or nonprofit nature regarding which the signer of the communication wishes to obtain the support or participation of the Council, provided the subject matter of such communication is not otherwise subject to public hearing by the Town Council. Communications shall be placed on the agenda of the next Community Comment meeting which is not less than seven (7) days following actual receipt thereof. The signer of such communications or the spokesperson(s) for any group whose communication is so received, may address the Town Council regarding the subject thereof at the meeting at which said communication is received for up to five (5) minutes in total.

2. In a year of the municipal elections, the Council shall meet only twice in November: for a regular session, the Tuesday after the election and, for the installation meeting of the new Council, the second Tuesday after the election at 8:00 p.m. as required by charter.
3. Special meetings shall be held only upon written order of the President or of any four Councilors. Such notice shall specify the purpose or purposes for which such meeting is called, and the time and the place where the special meeting is to be held, and no other business shall be considered. At least forty-eight hours prior to such meeting, the Clerk shall give notice of such meeting by (1) causing a copy of the call to be left at the

residence of each Councilor and at the office of the Town Manager and (2) posting the notice of such special meetings.

4. All meetings shall be held at the Town Hall unless impracticable or, in specific cases where public interest requires otherwise, when so ordered by the Council, or when such other place shall have been specified in the notice of the meeting by order of the President of the Council.
5. At all regular meetings, the order of business shall be as follows:
  - (1) Pledge of Allegiance
  - (2) Roll Call
  - (3) Approval of Minutes
  - (4) Public Forum
  - (5) Reports of Town Manager
  - (6) Consideration of Consent Calendar
  - (7) Unfinished Business
  - (8) New Business
  - (9) Announcements
  - (10) Reports of Corporation Counsel
  - (11) Appointments
  - (12) Executive Session
  - (13) Reports of Standing or Special Committees
  - (14) Consent Calendar
  - (15) Communications
  - (16) Petitions
  - (17) Adjournment
6. The public forum under the order of business shall be that portion of each regular meeting during which residents or taxpayers of the town may each address the Council for not more than three minutes regarding any other item of the agenda which is not otherwise subject to public hearing.
7. Communications shall be limited to those formal communications from other Town agencies or officials where formal acknowledgement by the Town Council is necessary or appropriate. Petitions shall be limited to those types of petitions contemplated in the Charter of the Town of West Hartford. The signer of a communication received by the Council under the order of business, or the spokesperson(s) for any group whose petition or communication is so received, may address the Council on the subject of the petition or communication for up to five minutes in total; provided the subject matter of such petition or communication is not otherwise subject to public hearing.
8. Except as otherwise provided under these Standing Rules, any item or items upon which final action may be taken at a regular meeting under the order of business, may,

upon a motion duly seconded, be moved to the consent calendar absent objection by any Councilor at any time prior to final action thereon. The consent calendar shall be voted without debate as a single item.

9. All reports to be received by the Council from any board or commission, or similar body, or from any standing committee or special committee, shall be in writing, and, if an ordinance or resolution is recommended therein, a copy of such ordinance or resolution shall be included with the report.
10. Members of the public who participate in meetings of the Council or any committee thereof are expected to observe the same level of decorum which is expected of members themselves pursuant to Robert's Rules of Order. The Chairperson of any such meeting may caution any speaker or rule any indecorous remarks to be out of order and may decline to recognize the maker thereof for the remainder of the meeting.

### **AGENDA**

11. All items for the agenda of a regular meeting shall be submitted in writing and shall be filed with the Clerk not later than 10:00 a.m. on the seventh day preceding the date of such meeting.
12. The President of the Council, upon consultation with the Town Manager, shall instruct the Clerk as to what items are to be included on the agenda for each regular meeting or special meeting. Each ordinance or resolution included on the agenda shall show the name of the sponsor or sponsors.
13. The Clerk shall forthwith send each Councilor a copy of the agenda and a copy of each item included thereon. The Clerk shall make copies of each agenda available to the public on request and, for regular meetings, shall publish the same in a newspaper having general circulation in the Town.

### **HEARINGS**

14. General procedures for the conduct of public hearings (excluding zoning and other ordinances but including budget hearings) and other public forums shall be posted on the bulletin board outside the Clerk's office. Any changes in said general procedures and any procedures applicable to zoning or other ordinance hearings shall be announced at the commencement of each public hearing by the President of the Council. The President may direct that proponents and opponents present testimony in alternate half-hour periods. For good cause, the Council may continue the hearing to another convenient date of which due notice shall be given.

15. A registry shall be provided not later than one-half hour prior to a public hearing and any resident or taxpayer who wishes to speak may enter his or her name and address therein, provided that any such person desiring to speak shall be permitted to do so whether or not he or she has made such entry in the register.
16. In the case of a public hearing on a zoning application pursuant to Charter Chapter XII, Section 5(b), including any application for designation or amendment of a special development district, the applicant shall file with the Clerk on or before the seventh day preceding the commencement of the public hearing at least twelve copies of any written reports or similar written information which the applicant intends to offer for the record at the public hearing. Where the document in question is directly responsive to questions, comments or recommendations from Town staff or town agencies or is responsive to questions from Town Council or public comment elicited during the hearing itself, the applicant is encouraged to tender same as promptly as possible, but shall be entitled to submit such documents at any time prior to the close of the public hearing. The Council may waive the requirements of this section only upon a two-third's vote.

## **ORGANIZATION**

17. Whenever the Council shall organize as a committee of the whole for the purpose of considering a single subject, debate shall be limited to such subject, and no other subject shall be introduced until a motion to resolve into the regular order of business shall prevail and the report of such committee of the whole shall have been received by the Council.
18. The President of the Council shall appoint the following standing committees:
  - (1) An Administration and Technology Committee to be responsible for government organization; claims against the town; central offices and services; and technology strategies.
  - (2) A Finance and Budget Committee to be responsible for overseeing the operational budget; capital improvement programming and overseeing the capital budget; financial and program planning; budgeting and accounting; auditing and financial oversight; and debt and sundry.
  - (3) An Education Liaison Committee to be responsible for joint deliberation with an equivalent committee appointed by the Board of Education to consider matters of mutual interests affecting the public schools.

- (4) A Human Services Committee to be responsible for health and social services, including youth and senior citizen services; housing; historic preservation; libraries; parks and recreation; cemeteries; and federal/state block grant allocation.
  - (5) A Governmental Liaison Committee to be responsible for liaison with the Town commissioners to the Metropolitan District Commission; monitoring federal and state legislation, regulation and funding, for monitoring regional affairs, e.g., CCROG, CCM; and for providing advocacy for such efforts as may be expressly authorized by vote of the Council. Council-appointed liaison to other governmental bodies, quasi-governmental bodies and regional organizations shall report to this Committee.
  - (6) A Community Planning and Physical Services Committee to be responsible for public works; planning and zoning code enforcement; economic and community development; community maintenance, including solid waste alternatives; parking regulation and parking facilities; public transportation; and municipal buildings and grounds planning and maintenance, including energy conservation.
  - (7) A Public Safety Committee to be responsible for fire and police services; emergency medical services; and traffic regulation.
  - (8) A Rules Committee to be responsible for amendments to these Standing Rules.
19. The President of the Council may appoint, or by Council resolution shall appoint, such special committee as may be desirable from time to time, provided that any such committee shall be appointed for an express purpose or purposes and for a set period of time.
  20. Except as otherwise provided in these Standing Rules, each standing committee and special committee shall be composed of three Councilors, not more than two of whom shall be of the same political party, and the President of the Council shall designate one Councilor on each such committee to serve as chairperson.
  21. The President and Vice President of the Council shall serve, *ex officio* and without vote, on all standing committees and special committees, except such committees to which they are otherwise duly appointed in full.
  22. Committee meetings shall be called by the chairperson or by request of two-thirds of the committee members. Except in the case of an emergency, committee meetings shall be called upon written notice, which notice shall be given no less than forty-eight hours prior to the committee meeting. All Councilors and the Town Manager shall be notified of all committee meetings by the Clerk.

23. All regional meetings and agendas shall be posted by the Clerk. Minutes of those meetings shall be kept in binders for the public.
24. Any Councilor may attend the meeting of any committee and, except when a committee member has or desires the floor, any Councilor shall have the privilege of the floor at any committee meeting.
25. Each committee shall keep at least summary minutes of its proceedings, copies of which shall, within seven days following a committee meeting, be filed with the Clerk who shall forthwith send such minutes to all Councilors and the Town Manager and place them in binders for the public.
26. The Clerk shall keep a record of all matters on which the Council has acted by way of a motion to commit or to refer, which shall be updated and distributed periodically to the Council, and posted for the public.

### **EXPENDITURES**

27. No expenditure of funds appropriated to the Town Council shall be made, other than for routine purposes, in excess of two hundred fifty dollars except upon the express prior authorization of the President of the Council, or in excess of five hundred dollars except upon the express prior authorization of the Council.

### **GENERAL PROCEDURES**

28. The President or, in the absence of the President, the Vice President, shall preside at all regular meetings and special meetings, and at all public hearings. In the absence of the President and Vice President, the Council shall choose from among its majority members, a Councilor who shall act as President until the President or Vice President shall appear.
29. Except when a Councilor has or desires the floor, the Town Manager shall have the privilege of the floor for the purpose of providing information on the business and affairs of the Town; and the office of Corporation Counsel shall likewise have the privilege of the floor for the purpose of advising the Council on the introduction of or action on any proposed ordinance, or on any question of law or procedure.
30. No ordinance or resolution without a fiscal note, as required in accordance with the provisions of Sections 18-50 and 18-52, inclusive, of the Code of Ordinances, shall be subject to final action by the Council unless such requirement is dispensed with by vote of at least two-thirds of the Council present and voting.

31. No proposed ordinance shall be subject to final action by the Council without the written opinion by the Corporation Counsel certifying its legal sufficiency and legal correctness of form.
32. A roll call vote shall be required for final action on any ordinance or zoning matter, and otherwise shall be taken when requested by any Councilor.
33. When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received except a motion to adjourn, to limit debate, to table, to withdraw, to call the previous question, to postpone indefinitely, to postpone to a date certain, to commit, or to amend, which several motions shall have precedence in the order stated herein. A motion to adjourn or a motion to limit debate shall always be in order, even when another has the floor.
34. When a motion has been voted, it shall be in order at any time before final adjournment of the meeting at which the motion has been voted, for any Councilor who voted on the prevailing side to move to reconsider the question, and such motion for reconsideration shall take precedence over all other questions except a motion to adjourn or a motion to limit debate.
35. Withdrawal of a matter on the Council agenda may be permitted at a regular or special council meeting in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order. However, prior to the President stating the question, the maker(s) of any such matter who wish to withdraw it from Council consideration may explain briefly the reasons for such withdrawal, but there shall be no debate.

#### **WITHDRAWAL OF ZONING PETITIONS**

36. Prior to Setting Hearing. Prior to the time the Council sets a public hearing on a petition for a proposed zoning amendment, including an application for a special development district, the applicant may withdraw such petition as of right upon notification of the Council.
37. After Hearing Set but Before Beginning of Testimony. Once the Council has set a public hearing on a petition for a proposed zoning amendment, including an application for a special development district, but prior to the taking of any testimony at such hearing, the applicant may withdraw such petition provided that such petition or any other petition relating to the same area or solely to portions of the same area and asking the same changes, shall not be introduced for twelve months next following such withdrawal. The Council may waive such condition only upon a two-third's vote of its entire membership at a regular or special Council meeting.
38. After Beginning Testimony. Once any testimony on the merits at the public hearing has begun, a proposed zoning petition, including an application for a special development

district, may not be withdrawn and any such petition, or any other petition relating to the same area or solely to portions of the same area and asking the same changes, shall not be reheard within the twelve months next following the hearing on such petition, except as may be otherwise permitted in advance by two-third's vote of the entire membership of the Council at the time of final action on the petition at a regular or special Council meeting.

39. When the Council takes final action on any zoning ordinance, the Council shall state upon the record the reasons for its action.

## **RULES**

40. A copy of these Standing Rules shall be posted on the bulletin board outside the Clerk's office.
41. Any of these Standing Rules may be suspended by two-thirds vote of the Council present and voting.
42. Robert's Rules of Order shall be the source authority and shall control all matters of parliamentary procedure not otherwise specified in these Standing Rules.
43. Any proposed amendment to these Standing Rules shall be submitted in accordance with the provisions of Rule 11 hereinabove and shall thereafter be adopted only by two-thirds vote of Councilors present and voting at the subsequent regular meeting. Prior to final action by the Council, each such proposed amendment shall be committed to the Rules Committee for review and comment.

