



# CITY COUNCIL

## ROUNDTABLE/WORKING MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Tuesday, May 24, 2022

6:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

The City Council hold a virtual Roundtable meeting to receive a training on Robert's Rules from parliamentarian Ann G. MacFarlane.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Burhan Azeem	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Dennis J. Carlone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Alanna Mallon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marc C. McGovern	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Patricia Nolan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
E. Denise Simmons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paul F. Toner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Quinton Zondervan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sumbul Siddiqui	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



**CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL**

**ROUNDTABLE/WORKING MEETING**

MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI, CHAIR

ROUNDTABLE/WORKING MEETING

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

MAY 24, 2022

6:00 PM, SULLIVAN CHAMBER

**COUNCILLOR BURHAN AZEEM:** Sorry. Um, I saw Denise post on, uh, about it yesterday.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Mayor Siddiqui, the time of the meeting has arrived and you have a quorum.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Okay. Well, good evening, everyone. Uh, with a quorum being present, I wanted to call, uh, this meeting of the City Council to order. This is a Roundtable meeting for the City Council to receive a training on Robert's Rules and Parliamentary procedure.

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, adopted by the Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation at meetings of the Cambridge City Council.

To watch the meeting today, please tune into Channel 22 or visit the Open Meeting Portal on the city's website. Today's meeting will be conducted in a virtual format. This is a roundtable meeting, so there will be no public comment for our rolls. Clerk, could you please call the roll?

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Councillor Burhan Azeem - Present

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Present

Vice Mayor Alanna Mallon - Present

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Absent

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Absent

Councillor Denise E. Simmons - Absent

Councillor Toner? Councillor Toner?

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Mr. Clerk, it looks like Councillor Toner is, um, as an attendee, look, probably needs to be promoted. He has his hand up.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Yes, I'm trying to him now. One second.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** I'll just wait and move on. I'll come back to Councillor Toner.

Councilor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Present

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Present

Councillor Toner, you're still as an attendee, but I've unmuted you. Can you say the words present so that we know you can audibly participate?

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Councillor Toner?

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Without Councillor Toner, you still have five members present. So you still have a quorum and, uh, you'll be recorded once he, um, is in the right section.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Okay. So with that, I'll now

turn the meeting over to Ann MacFarlane, a professional registered parliamentarian, uh, to lead us through the training.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Thank you so much, Madam Mayor. I'm thrilled to be here in addition, of course, to the honor of working with your illustrious City Council. I have a special feeling for your illustrious city because I took a degree at Cambridge in England after which your city is named. So I feel lots of wonderful historic connections here. I'm sitting in, uh, Seattle and I'm going to be talking with you and I will share a little bit of my - my history as we go through, but I started off as a foreign service officer. I served in Pakistan and on the Soviet desk of the State Department before marrying a fellow foreign service officer, it seemed like a better option. And so then we served several terms in Africa before returning to, uh, Washington, DC. Then I became a Russian translator and I was elected president of the American Translators Association and I found Robert's Rules so perplexing that I started studying it and here we are 20 years later.

So I'm going to share my screen. We-- I sent a, uh,

PDF file that shows these slides for this presentation. You do not need to have a copy of that PDF to take this. But if you're a note-taking type and you like to make physical notes, you certainly are-- are most welcome to do so. So just a moment while I adjust the screen here, the Zoom.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** And while you're setting up, I'm just gonna ask the Councillor Toner, can you confirm that the meeting is audibly available to you?

**COUNCILLOR PAUL F. TONER:** Present and audible. Sorry, I'm just, uh, driving.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Councilor Nolan and Councilor McGovern have both joined.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Present and audible.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Present and audible.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Great. Wonderful. So our topic today is Great City Council Meetings and we're going to cover the following. We'll talk about meeting discussion, point of order and appeal, how to do this, motions and amendments, who's in charge of the meeting, public comment, and the right kind of control. So please feel free to raise your hand if you have a question. Although on occasion, sometimes, uh, questions come up that

are gonna be covered very soon or after. So it might be that I might defer the answer.

So why are we here? My goal tonight is to invigorate you to run effective meetings to serve your community. I know your meetings are effective already, but sometimes we fall into patterns or ruts. And so I hope that this will help invigorate you, give you some new ideas and new tools for your service to the community of Cambridge.

After taking this training, you'll be able to apply the authority of the chair and the group correctly, follow best practices for fair and inclusive discussion, respond to disorder and difficult people, make motions and amendments, and run effective public comment sessions.

I do want to say that this presentation is based on the principles and practices of parliamentary procedure. I'm not an attorney and nothing in this presentation constitutes legal advice. If your attorney tells you something different, listen to your attorney.

So the method is this, we're gonna be in the League of Northwest Dino Cities. It's not entirely realistic. It's a fantasy, but there's some overlap with real life, and you are going to be the members of the Dinopolis City Council.

So here is a map of the Northwest League and you can see Dinopolis down there at the bottom. My late husband and I had a lot of fun creating 70 different cities for this League, each of which has its own important project that it wishes to pursue.

So we're going to be in the city at the regular council meeting and the motto of the city of Dinopolis is, we do our best for all our residents, whether we like them or not. So, um, you begin the meeting obviously by calling the meeting to order, you sit in the chair that's reserved for the person running the meeting. Chair has two meanings. One is the physical object on which you sit and one is your role as chair. And the idea comes from the ancient times when only the king or the emperor or the bishop had a chair, everybody else was either standing or sitting on benches. So you wrap the gavel lightly one time and you announce this meeting of the Dinopolis City Council is called to order, you ask the clerk to take the roll and you announce that a quorum is present or not.

Now a quorum, and I know you know this, is the minimum number of voting members who must be present for business to be done. And usually, it's a majority. That's more than



half of the members in office, the members who are actually serving on the council. So quorum is different from votes cast. Quorum is a passive condition that allows you to take action and the votes cast are the action that you take. And if you lose your quorum, you can't do business. And, of course, for a local government body, business includes listening, talking, and so on. So what is your quorum? Anybody want to tell me?

**COUNCILLOR BURHAN AZEEM:** Five.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Yes. Your quorum is five. So you must have--

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** Is that for committee?

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Pardon? Well, we're not talking committees here, we're talking about the council meeting as such. The committees will be different, indeed. Thank you. Now, local government bodies must not create a walking quorum or a serial meeting when members of the body talk or email with each other outside of meetings, such that a quorum is discussing the body's business. Your Sunshine Act has been violated. And this happened in my own home city here of Shoreline where council members were sending emails one to another and then that person to a

third and that person to fourth, and it ended up that a quorum was talking about the matter. They were fined, they were personally fined for violation of the Sunshine Act. So in most cases, you can talk to other people as long as the total number involved in the discussion is less than a quorum.

I believe in Florida, you can't talk to anybody, you can't talk to one other person, but I'm not aware that that's the case for you. And as I'm no doubt is obvious, I'm not a specialist in your state law. So this is where your attorney is gonna be very important. Your agenda for the meeting is prepared by the leadership, but it's within the control of the council subject to any notice requirements. And Robert's Rules says that if you follow the standard order of business, you don't need to vote to adopt an agenda but many bodies do vote. It takes a majority vote to adopt and a two thirds vote to change later in the meeting. So this is an example of a simplified standard order of business. It's like the skeleton on which you build your actual meeting. Approval of minutes, officers remarks and reports, committee reports, unfinished business. We don't say old business anymore. And then new

business if your city includes this, not all cities use the category new business.

Now suppose it's time for approval of minutes and a member of the body says this, Chair, these minutes have my remarks completely wrong. They say that I said that the staff had done a great job arranging community relations day. But what I actually said was that the staff had done a lousy job. I demand that this be corrected. So what do you think? Does that council member have the right to demand to force the council to correct the minutes? Yes or no. Anybody want to try?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** No.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** No. That council member does not. The minutes are within the control of the body. The council member can request-- can request that they be corrected but it's up to the council to decide. However, I'd like to make another even more appropo point, which is why are these remarks in the minutes at all? Robert says that the purpose of minutes is to record the actions taken by the body. Minutes record what is done, not what is said, and I'd like you seriously to consider this because an awful lot of staff time goes into preparing

those detailed and very full minutes that you use. And in our view and in the view of Robert, it's not advisable. Under our thinking, there are four different types of minutes. There are action minutes, summary minutes, detailed minutes, and transcript. That's where you get court recorder level where you're just putting everything down into the minutes.

So we recommend action or summary minutes, not detailed minutes, they should record what is done and not what is said. And for certain topics such as conflict of interest, the main points made should be included. But in our view, including he said, and she said, is a waste of time and effort and makes the minutes less useful. These are why detailed minutes are a bad idea. It violates the fundamental purpose of minutes. It can create liability for the organization or individuals in case of a lawsuit, it tends to personalize and politicize the discussion. It can inti-- intimidate participants, preventing them from speaking freely. It absorbs too much staff time and takes the group's time sometimes to make corrections and it makes it harder to find the actions taken. Now in Massachusetts, you must include the time date and place of the meeting,

the members present or absent, the decisions made and actions taken including a record of all votes, a summary of the discussions on each subject, a list of all documents and exhibits and the name of any member who participated in the meeting remotely.

So Robert goes into a little more detail and wants these various items, which I'm not going to read through to you, but you can certainly look at that list separately if you wish to. So in your case, I think you might look at the possibility of using summary minutes. Summary minutes record the points that were made during discussion but not who said them, not who said what. And I'll send you a sample of them. You can add time stamps to your minutes and some systems do this automatically. So anybody can find the points that are of interest. If anybody wants to know who said what to whom, they can check it out on the video. So this is just a bit of our suggestion and I'm going to send you after this session, our paper guidelines for meeting minutes in local government that goes into detail about what we recommend and why and so on and so forth. All right. So let's gallop on to meeting discussion point of order and appeal. So in order to do this, we're going to

read a script and I would like you as we read this script to watch for the following. Watch for rules for discussion, inappropriate remarks, point of order and appeal and the chair being out of line. I'm going to be the chair and I can promise you she's going to be out of line.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Pardon me.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Yes.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** I apologize for interrupting. But I believe you have a hand raised by one of the councillors.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** I didn't see it, but great. Whoever-- who-- speak, speak, speak. Councillor Nolan.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yes. I-- I just want to know if you wanted questions during this because I-- I have a perspective on minutes that is very different from what you just presented. Or are we just hearing your perspective and moving forward?

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** No, no, please go ahead. The only concern I have is I just want to make sure we make our time but, uh, brief questions are great. Please help out.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Well, I-- I understand there's different types of minutes, but there's a really key element of minutes that is incredible really helpful. If I can't make a meeting for me to read minutes, which are detailed minutes, means that I have the benefit of actually what transpired in the meeting. And I think it is a far, far better and more transparent and more open and inclusive way for us to ensure that the minutes, whether it's a committee meeting or a council meeting, are available to people who would not have had the time to attend the meeting. So I-- I-- I-- I-- I know there's-- there's different thoughts on this and-- and I appreciate we now have a-- a translation service that it doesn't take as much time as it did before and it's moving towards openness and transparency that I think is really important for us to consider.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Thank you for that comment. Thank you. And of course, obviously, it's gonna be your call. Anybody else want to throw-- throw in a word on minutes?

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** Yeah, very-- uh, this is Councillor Simmons. Um, when you said the minutes, um,

belong to the body. So let's just say you said in that earlier illustration, it spoke to, um, I Councilor Simmons can't demand that the minutes are changed. So let's just say for the purpose of discussions because we do have-- our-- our minutes are they're-- they're-- they're encyclopedia Britannica in terms of the volume of information that's in them. And I-- I-- I actually was quite keen on seeing that in the, um, report, uh your slides that you-- you could be opening yourself up to litigation. So in order-- excuse me, the-- the council could-- the council as a body would vote to decide how the minute should be rendered as opposed to, say, I want something that's quite worthy and someone else wants something that's more lean. Is it best to make sure you have one-- one type, one standard? Number one. And number two, is it-- is it done by the vote or by a vote?

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Well, we think it's best to have one standard and it's-- it-- it is indeed the council that will determine that what your standard is and--

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**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** So-- so one member can't ask?



**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Well, they can ask.

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** But they shouldn't?

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** But like they-- they can't demand. So the member would say, you know, I request that this statement be changed to show that I said the staff had done a lousy job. And normally, the mayor would simply say, is there any objection? And if nobody speaks up, then that change would be made or if there's objection, then you'd take a vote on it on whether to amend the draft.

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** Thank you.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Yes. And it's perfectly fine. Suppose a member says, you know, I've got here my three-page text about what a horrible meeting that was. And I want that, uh, included in the minutes of this meeting. It's a request, then you can make a request to have something included in the minutes. But we again, we're against it. We think that it's better to keep the minutes just as a record of the meeting itself.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Well, I-- I think there's some confusion here because I believe we're talking about regular City Council meetings.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Yes, indeed.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** And I think people are conflating that with committee meetings because our regular City Council meetings, in fact, as-- as per your suggestion, only record the actions taken. They don't have a discussion recorded in there. In committee meetings, it's a different story. But-- but right now, we're talking about Regular City Council Meetings.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Okay. Well, our position is the same for both types of meetings. So it's really gonna be up to you. Thank you for these comments. Let's dash on head to our script. And, um, these are the things I would like you to watch for. And I just want to mention that in real life members must be recognized by the chair before speaking. But in this script, the numbers take the place of recognition. We're not gonna be recognized, we're just gonna read through. So I sent it out to you ahead of time and I'm gonna show it also on my screen. And so I need to ask for volunteers. It's just reading. There's no acting involved. Although if you want to put a little body English on your role, that's fine too. So I'm gonna be the chair and is there anyone who would be willing to be the banker? The elderly member? Yes.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Dennis will be the banker.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Okay. Next.

**COUNCILLOR BURHAN AZEEM:** I'll be the elderly member.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay. Well done.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Thank you. And, uh, the environmentalist. That's kind of a feisty role.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** That'll be me.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** And we have-- we have one.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Yeah, we're covered. We're covered.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** And the photographer?

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** I'll do it. I'm Alanna.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Okay. And the teacher.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** I'll be the teacher.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Was that Councillor Nolan?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yes.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Great. Thank you. Okay. So let me stop sharing the PowerPoint and all up the

script. Here we go. Is that visible to everybody?

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** Yes.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Okay. So there's continuing pressure on our parking spaces in the downtown areas of the city of Dinopolis. The staff has reviewed the matter carefully. As you know, our current rate is \$2 per hour. The staff recommends that the new fee be set at \$20 per hour. Does anyone care to make that motion?

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** I move that the parking fee be set at \$20 per hour?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Second.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Very well. It's been moved and seconded that the parking fee be set at \$20 per hour. We will now have discussion on the motion. Environmentalist as the maker of the motion, you have the right to speak first.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Well, I'm a believer in public transportation myself. I think that this increase will lessen congestion and also force more people to take buses or walk. It's a good idea for the environment and for our city.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Further discussion.

The chair recognizes the elderly member.

**COUNCILLOR BURHAN AZEEM:** I think this is a terrible idea. We've just learned that we have a \$10 million surplus. Why would we-- we be increasing parking fees and burden our residents this way?

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Do you know that the parking fees in most cities of the league are \$15 per hour? We are so far below the market. That it's ridiculous.

**COUNCILLOR BURHAN AZEEM:** Well, that's not a reason to go crazy and lay this burden on our residents. Many elderly dinosaurs are feeling the pinch. Our to-- our current tough economic times have hit them hard.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** There's no point being an old softie and begging for sympathy for the down and out. If they had an ounce of gumption, they would have saved up their old age.

**COUNCILLOR BURHAN AZEEM:** What a hardhearted-- what a hardhearted comment. Someday you might be old and wrinkled and poor yourself. Have you no compassion?

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** All I have to say to you about this is nonsense apple sauce and boulder dash.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Point of order.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** State your point.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** These members are monopolizing this discussion. Under Robert's Rules, no one can speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** The point is well taken. Members must speak in turn. Thank you, Banker. Is there further discussion?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** This is likely to put a crimp on the vitality of our downtown. As a business owner, I'm really concerned about this. I speak against the motion.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** I see those arguments but I think we have to be prudent. I guess on balance, I'm in favor of this proposal.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Honestly, I think you dinosaurs are just living in the past. We ought to be preparing to have driverless cars not raising the rates for our parking lots. You're just a bunch of has beens.

**COUNCILLOR BURHAN AZEEM:** Point of order, Chair.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** State your point.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** That is an insulting remark. According to Robert's Rules of Order, all of us are obliged to speak with courtesy and respect, including the chair.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Uh, um, the, uh, the point-- the point is well taken. The chair, uh, the chair apologizes for her remarks. Is there further discussion?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** In my opinion, that this council is clueless. We have our head stuck in the concrete. Given the way the stock market is trending, our surplus could just disappear. I hope everyone will agree to raise those rates.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** You know, I've heard better discussions in my daughter's kindergarten class. It's clear that we don't have the sharpest-- sharpest knives in the kitchen drawer here.

**COUNCILLOR BURHAN AZEEM:** Point of order.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** State your point.

**COUNCILLOR BURHAN AZEEM:** The members are insulting all of us by those remarks.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** The chair will rule that the comments are indeed insulting. Members will kindly

refrain from such improper statements.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** I have to say that I don't think all of these rules are a good idea. They are keeping us from expressing our true opinion. You're an out of date dinosaur yourself, Chair.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** The chair will rule that the words out of date dinosaur are insulting and may not be used.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Appeal.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Back in.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Very well. The ruling of the chair has been appealed and seconded. So the members will decide. The chair has ruled that the words out of date dinosaur are insulting. All those who believe that this ruling should be sustained, please say aye. Aye. All those who believe that the ruling should not be sustained, please say no. No. The eyes have it. The motion passes and the ruling of the chair is sustained. Members may not use this term. Further discussion.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** If we do this, the residents are likely to come and throw eggs at our houses or even worse. I'm dead against it.



**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Thank you. Any further discussion? Hearing none will take the vote. All those in favor of raising the parking fees to \$20 per hour, please say aye. Aye. All those opposed, please say no. No. The ayes have it, the motion passes and we will raise the parking fees to \$20 per hour. So a discussion like that should never happen on your council and I'm sure that it never does, but just in case, just in case, let's look at, uh, a few ideas here and thank you for such a fine reading. So there is a principle in Robert that is very, very easy to describe but not so easy to do. It's called the principle of equality. All members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations. And what this comes down to is that discussion in council and committee meetings is not a conversation, it's not a conversation, it's debate and it has its own rules and here is our first of our four fundamental guidelines.

No one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken on. This is just critical and I'm going to have it for you in red. No one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once. It is a transformative rule for council and committee

meetings and yet we don't do it. You know, councils tend to discuss their affairs in conversational mode and in conversations, dominant people tend to dominate and agreeable people tend to let them. So you must have a structure to make sure that everyone has an equal chance to speak. This is both fair and efficient and it's the best way to ensure that each person has an equal voice.

Robert's Rules gets a lot of flack for being antiquated and out of date and patriarchal and every other bad thing. But in fact-- but paradoxically, the system is formal but inclusive, it ensures that every voice is heard and it will make for robust discussion and advance your equity goals as long as everybody knows about it. Now, when it doesn't happen and the conversation deteriorates into a hockey match, if the chair doesn't speak up, a member can make a point of order. Point of order also sounds esoteric and outdated. But in fact, it is a fabulous and a wonderful motion. So in our system, we-- which I'm gonna tell you more about in section 4, we use a T-Rex to stand for a main motion, raise the parking fees and a point of order is represented by a flying dinosaur. So we're discussing the parking fees. Somebody makes a point of order, it flies

over the head of the motion that we're discussing and the chair just bats it out of the sky. The chair just gets rid of it by issuing a ruling.

So when another member breaks one of the rules, a member may make a point of order and the chair rules on the point. So here's an example. I'm gonna play it for you twice.

**VIDEO PLAYING:**

Point of order. State your point. That comment breaks our rules of decorum. The point is well taken. Members may not use this term. Point of order. State your point. That comment breaks our rules of decorum. The point is well taken. Members may not use this term.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** So it's very simple. The member says, point of order, the chair says state your point. The member explains what it is and then the chair issues a ruling. The point is well taken or the point is not well taken. Now, it's very important for the chair to respond correctly and say state your point. I was working with the council last week where the chair kind of says uh-huh and then the member starts talking. So you got to keep it focused and narrow and the chair must issue a ruling. In

that same council that the mayor said, I agree. Well, that's not it. You've got to say the point is well taken. This is Jargon, but it's not that hard. The point is well taken or the point is not well taken. So these are important points to know about this motion. You can make this at any time except during voting. You don't have to be recognized. You actually may interrupt a speaker if necessary and it must be timely.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** You have to make the point of order at the time of the offense. If you wait an hour or a day, it will be too late. So you notice that I'm using the third person here to keep things neutral and less in conflict. It's like you're the voice of Robert, don't say you're out of order or you made a mistake because that will personalize the discussion. Now, there is a pitfall here. A couple of cities I've taught them this technique and they immediately start throwing points of order at each other like little darts all through the meeting. Don't do that. You may interrupt to make a point of order, but usually it's not necessary to interrupt. And we have found that some councils have done well by agreeing not to interrupt each other. They just wait till the council

member has finished their remarks and then make the point of order. So it's something for you to think about.

You also must use point of order correctly. You make a point of order if a rule has been broken. You don't make a point of order because you think someone has made a factual mistake or because you disagree with what they said. You speak about that when it's your turn to discuss. If someone is confused, the chair can ask what rule has been broken? What rule has been broken? And that will help the person focus their mind. Finally, when in doubt, ask the group, the chair can always ask the group to decide if a point of order is correct if it's well taken or not. So I'll give you a little example. That statement is just a bunch of baloney. Point of order. State your point. The word baloney is insulting. The chair is in doubt and will ask the group to decide. All those who believe that the word baloney is insulting please say aye. All those who believe it is not insulting, please say no. And then the eyes have it. The word baloney is insulting and may not be used or the no's have it. The word baloney is not insulting and may be used. Madam Mayor?

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Yes, sorry on this. You know,

last night, um, Councillor Zondervan made a point of order and I said, state your point and it was around a substance of emotion before us and whether it was a dup-- duplicative or order or not. And I-- when I reflect on what you're saying, I didn't think it was, I was like, I've turned to the clerk, um, because I don't think it's-- is it-- it's not necessarily in our rules. So do you have anything to say about that specific example? Is that a factual thing?

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** No, that sounds like a procedural question.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** It's a procedural question.  
So--

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** So you can make a point of order if the council member was in-- in-- in line to say, you know, I think this duplicates another order because you're not supposed to do that under Robert and you were wise to turn to the clerk to inquire as to whether it duplicated it or not.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Okay. All right. Just making sure. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Don't build up her-- her ego. Be mild.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Well, a good chair will be grateful when people make points of order because it means they're paying attention and in fact, they're helping you run the meeting. So once the chair has ruled on a point of order, the only allowable form of discussion is to appeal the ruling. You can't argue back. An appeal in our view is the most important motion in all of Robert's Rules and the least known, the least known. The chair enforces order and decorum but the group is the final authority. And according to your rules, any member can appeal the ruling of the chair. Now, there is an exception. If the ruling is a matter on which there cannot be two reasonable interpretations, the ruling cannot be appealed. For example, if the rules say that a person may serve only one year as mayor and somebody nominates Anne MacFarlane for a second year, that motion cannot be taken up because it violates the rules and you can't appeal it because it's there in black and white.

So your rules say the mayor shall decide all questions of order subject to an appeal to the City Council. So somebody says, appeal. Somebody says, second, the chair says the chair's ruling has been appealed, the members will

decide and your language is, shall the decision of the chair stand as the judgment of the City Council? All those in favor say aye, members in favor say aye. All those opposed say no, the members opposed say no. The ayes have it and the ruling stands or the noes have it and the ruling does not stand.

Now there are some complications around appeal. For instance, some appeals cannot be debated, appeals pertaining to language cannot be debated, which I think is a wonderful rule. You know, if we could argue about whether Boloney is an insult or not, we'd be there all night. So if you are using appeals, you might want to study up on them a little bit. So point of order and appeal are processed immediately under your rules. They don't need a second. They cannot be made during voting and they do not count against a member's turn to speak in debate. So we believe that point of order and appeal are the heart of democracy. They're just the essence of what allows a group to be the final authority. So any questions on point of order and appeal?

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** On appeals, if I may. I mean, did you say-- the appeal, appeal does not need a



second? Is that what you said?

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Under your rules, yes. Under Robert it does, but not under your rules.

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** And if we change our rules that-- that a second now required as a-- as the way we do things by way of voting, would it then need a second? Right now if a motion comes to the of, um, motions-- right now, when a motion comes to the floor, it doesn't need a second. When we adopt the new rules, one of the provisions we just added was we will start using a second and that was so that we could have continuity with another body, which is the school committee that uses a second. So my question is, um, if there's an appeal, point of order doesn't need-- doesn't need a second. But if someone says I appeal the ruling of the chair, does that need a second if seconds are something that you use?

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** So that's a great question. And, uh, in-- in my view, it's two different issues saying that motions require a second refers to main motions. And so if you want appeals to require a second, you should change the rules to say also appeal will require a second because appeal is not a main motion. A main motion

is when the body takes up a specific topic and it's, uh, for consideration and these others are all derivative. They're all secondary. Does that answer that question, Councillor?

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** Yes, it does. Thank you.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Okay. Other questions, point of order and appeal? Okay. Well, let's look at how to do this. We have six recommendations for you and no doubt you're doing many of these already, but we'll just give you our take on them. We recommend seek recognition before speaking. No one may speak a second time 'till everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once, no interrupting in general, no sidebar conversations, set time limits and courtesy and respect are required. So, seeking recognition, you raise your hand and you wait to speak until the presider, the chair calls your name nods at you or gives some other sign that you have permission to speak. And online, as we know, you can use the raise hand function or raise your physical hand for Zoom. On the telephone, you can press star nine.

And by the way, I-- I'm not seeing all of your faces.

So that's why sometimes if I don't notice that you're seeking recognition and I'm glad that the clerk is helping us out by alerting me in that case. So when you have not been recognized, you have a duty to remain silent. This comes as a big surprise to some people. And the exception is a point of order when it's essential. So this is a wonderful paper that my colleague has written, rights and responsibilities of the member. And it goes into a lot of good detail about all of this. I will be sending it to you in your reference materials. So we had our fundamental guideline that we've talked about. So how are you? That means no cross talk between council members. Council members are not to be talking to each other. If you have a question for your colleague, you address it to the mayor, you address it to the person who's presiding and then that person if they choose to will turn to the other councillor and say, could you answer this for us? So the the presider is serving like a traffic policeman keeping things in order.

So the chair can keep track of who is spoken and who wishes to speak using a chart. The chair can empower the vice chair to do this. It's good training for them. And

here's an example of a speaking chart and you have our full permission to adapt this any way that works for you. When I run our choir board meetings, I've got it on a, uh, a clipboard, you know, and I just check everybody off as they speak. And that way I know exactly who has spoken and who is waiting to speak. It's very, very handy. Another great method is the round robin where the chair goes around the table asking each person in turn for their opinion, people may pass and speak at the end. So it's important to have a pencil in hand to jot down points or questions for when your turn arrives. And the chair must wait their turn also. Sometimes on the round robin, the chair tends to answer everybody back, which gives them, you know, 10 times to speak instead of one. And you can vary the order of speaking. If you do the round robin, you can start from a different position. Or there even are websites where you can generate randomized lists. So you could put your council members names in and get 100 different randomized lists to call if you decide to use this method.

And this rule applies to questions and answers and discussions with staff. I-- sometimes we see one councillor and a staff person going back and forth for 20 minutes on

something and that shouldn't be happening. Don't let any two people hijack the meeting. Sometimes it works well to have one round of the round robin and then simply call on anyone who wishes to speak a second time. That kind of speeds it up because maybe not, everybody will have a second comment. When the member has the floor, they have the right to speak until they've completed their comments. Members may not interrupt each other. The chair may interrupt members if it's necessary to bring them to order and the chair members may interrupt to make a point of order when essential. Although as I'm hammering away at, you know, don't do that lightly.

No sidebar conversations, no whispering, disable the chat, no texting to each other or people outside during meetings, no posting on social media during meetings. All those things are very are either illegal or destructive. We recommend keeping your camera on unless technical considerations prevent it. All council members should keep their camera on while participating online. Otherwise you're lurking, you're observing your colleagues without yourself being observed and this is disturbing and creates an unpleasant, emotional imbalance. Now, structuring

discussion in these ways can be frustrating. And council members sometimes say, I wish we could just hash it out and have a free form discussion. Well, the Sunshine Act and the press of time mean that usually this won't serve your council well. However, sometimes there is benefit in the conversational style or informal discussion. It can be useful at study sessions, committee of the whole or in committee meetings.

The chair must still ensure that no one dominates and I beg of you, please don't make the conversational style your ordinary or default style of discussion. Now it's the duty of the chair to expedite business in every way compatible with the rights of members. So we recommend that councils set estimated times for agenda items. We recommend saying all times approximate. You don't want to get into, you know, a rigid system. But if you say that we expect this will take 20 minutes and this will take 30 and this will take 10, it can help in preparing a realistic agenda. We recommend time limits on individual council member speeches. I think five minutes is good. Three is kind of short. Time limits cannot be debated but they can be suspended or changed by a two thirds vote without debate. I

once worked with a city that spent 15 minutes arguing whether to extend the meeting by 30 minutes and that made it very clear to me why Robert says you can't debate time limits. You just take it as an up or down vote.

Now, how many times can people speak? In large assemblies, each member may speak twice on each motion per day for up to 10 minutes according to Robert, you can see that's 18th-- 19th century rule. Now in small boards, this limit of how many times does not apply. And some councils do adopt a two time limit which again could be suspended by a two thirds vote without debate. So here's our paper, time limits create productive meetings that goes into detail on this, which I will send you and we have another one. Are your meeting seven hours long. So it has some thoughts about how to deal with that. I-- I hope we're getting out of that, but it certainly has happened to some cities and school boards also. So the last of our six is that courtesy and respect towards everyone are required. This is non-negotiable. This is absolutely essential and there are five kinds of remarks that are not allowed in meetings conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order. Personal remarks about other members except for conflict of interest. And

I'm sure you have a policy about that. Discourteous remarks, insulting language or attacks, inflammatory language, criticizing past actions of the group, unless the subject is under discussion or the member is about to propose to amend or rescind the action at the end of their speech and remarks that are not germane that are not relevant to the discussion, that's the kind of big umbrella.

So again, a paper for you inappropriate remarks on local government councils. Now let's have an example of an inappropriate remark.

**VIDEO PLAYING**

That's a flat outright lie.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Robert says the measure not, the member is the subject of debate. The moment the chair hears such words as fraud, liar or lie used about a member in debate, he must act immediately and decisively to correct the matter and prevent its repetition. Your rules say all persons shall confine their remarks to the question under debate and avoid personalities. So that is great for your council meetings. But I want to point out that this phrase avoid



personalities does not apply to the public, it does not apply to the public. So we will discuss this further in section 6 on public comment. Let's have another.

**VIDEO PLAYING**

You're only saying that because you're a banker.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** So that's a personal remark. We're not talking about the issue, we're talking about the individual. Here's another.

**VIDEO PLAYING**

I think we're being kind of hasty here. If you studied the zodiac, you'd know that the sun is in the House of Taurus these days. Here's what my horoscope said this morning, you need to reach a decision organically, there's no way for you to rush it.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** So at least according to my perception, that's irrelevant, that's not germane. And so a member should speak up. Also note that body language and gestures must be respectful. No rolling your eyes, shrugging, making faces, sighing. And a member can raise a point of order. I think this is a very polite point of order. My colleague is failing to display courtesy in body language and expression. So you're not saying you're

being rude as heck when you roll your eyes at me, but you are pointing out that the behavior is not acceptable. Now, what about the deer in the headlights problems? You hear a remark, you know it's off, but how are you quickly going to label it? Identify it in your mind and have the right words to respond. So we have a tool which is available for sale on our website. It's called a Wait-Wait Cheat Sheet. It's laminated A friend of mine calls it my place mat and down the left hand side, you've got the stuff that's wrong and then you have three different columns. So if you're the chair, you can say the remarks in the first column. If you're a member speaking about another member, you can say the remarks in the second column. And if you're a member speaking about the chair, you can say the remarks in the last column.

This is the only source I know for that kind of information for how to speak to the chair. I know one mayor, he told me, Ann, when those orange place mats start to come out, I know I better straighten up and fly right. That's his cue that he's gotten off track and that his council members are about to call him on it. Now, as I said, we're speaking here about discussion within council

meetings. These prohibitions do not apply to the public. And so we'll be discussing that a little bit later. So I'm going to send you our sample discussion guidelines for local governments. You're free to adapt anything in there that you might like, you know, to pull out any language that might be useful for you. And now we have a time where we can discuss this and ask about these ideas and if there's anything in it that you think you might like to apply to your City Council, so I'm gonna stop the share so I can see people and invite you to give your comments. Yes, Councillor Carlone.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, thank you. Um, I have been to town meetings which is obviously a different form of government and, uh, they have, uh, their chair. I think the limit is three minutes and you can ask for additional time, you get another three minutes or something to that effect. So when-- if-- what if we set-- when you present, um a-- a policy that's more complicated than five minutes or three minutes, depending on what, I assume you can request additional time and there's a vote for that. Is that true?

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Well, you can do

whatever you like. You can set whatever policy you want.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Your recommendation of how to handle it. I mean, some of us including me can talk about a subject that only I'm interested in many times. Uh, but each of us have this, uh, have done this because of the complexity of the issue. Um, but it seems to me there needs to be a window in presenting a detailed issue, um, but only then to go further than five minutes. I'm for the five minutes. I want you to understand that I'm not complaining about that.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Well, I think suspend the rules works perfectly fine here. You can, you know, I've had five minutes. I would like to ask my colleagues to suspend the rules so that I may finish making my points. I won't take more than another five or whatever. And so then the chair has two ways to handle that. If the sense of the meeting is that this would probably be acceptable, the chair can say, is there any objection? And if no one speaks up, then you've got your time. Or if someone says objection, which does not mean that you object to the five minutes, it just means to you object to taking it by that--taking the vote by that method of unanimous consent. Then

the chair says very well, we'll take a vote. All those in favor of additional five minutes, please raise your hand. Since it's two thirds, you want to be able to see, you know, you don't do it by voice for a two thirds vote, but I think that would be fine.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** So, uh, Mayor Siddiqui.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** You know, I think we as a council should talk about time limits. Um, five minutes is I think good and I understand there may be moments where people want-- it's an important discussion and, um, but I think I want to-- I want-- I'd like to start doing that, so I just wanted to share that.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Okay, Councillor McGovern.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Uh, thank you. Um Yeah, I-- I-- I like that idea and I-- I wonder about, um, you know, maybe it can be as opposed to having to ask for suspension to speak longer. Um, you know, it-- you could have and I think you mentioned this one on the side. It's, it could be like five minutes or three minutes per round,

right? And so what worries me a little bit about asking for suspension and are a couple of things. One, we're gonna want to be courteous to each other. So, you know, people are gonna say yes, go ahead and then it makes the time limit somewhat useless in the first place if we're gonna constantly extend it for people or, you know, it does-- it could create a situation where there might be a majority of councillors who are sort of more in line with each other and four that may not be and it doesn't create a situation where we'll extend it for some people because we have a majority and we won't extend it for others. So I worry a little bit about that. I think that could be misused, but I do like the idea of time limits and, you know, maybe it's per round and, you know, you get-- you get another five minutes the second round or-- or whatnot. On school, Councillor Nolan, um, we were on school committee together, we allowed-- we-- we had a two-question rule for, um, when we were having a presentation from the-- from the, uh, the administration, uh, where you got to ask two questions in the first round and then it moved on to something else and that actually worked reasonably well and-- and helped prevent one person from asking 10 questions and dominating

the conversation. So we could look at that too.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Well, I'm definitely in favor of per round. I'm not saying five minutes total. I think that, you know, if the council wants to continue discussion, you should be able to. What I wouldn't like-- I saw one poor city where they were gonna have a 10-minute maximum total time for discussion, which could be held in as many as three increments. So, you know, this puts you down with your time, you know, your, uh, your clock, your timekeeper, you know, saying, well, let's see. You spoke two minutes on that time and now you've spoken three minutes and now-- and that-- that seems ridiculous. So I agree with you, Councillor McGovern. I think per round is fine because then the whole body, if everybody-- if you're following the rule that everyone gets an equal chance, then the whole body can say, well, ok, you know, we're fed up here, we've had enough. Councilor Simmons.

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** Uh, thank you. A very interesting conversation. Um, I like the idea and I know that I-- it-- well, let me step back. I think it's a great idea and I think it's important that we as a group decide on what is going to be the rule that we use in the

committee as a whole, the council as a whole and for council subcommittee-- subcommittees. That you have that continuity. That's number 1. I know my practice has always been, um, as the chair only to speak last ask, say the whole two questions per topic and five minutes on the first round, three minutes on the second round.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Well, that's nice.

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** So that, you know, that's-- and then the-- the second thing that I've thought about and have used. Um, and it's something that Marc-- uh, Councillor McGovern, excuse me, uh, has said, um, the idea of having someone take five minutes and then suspended the rules because they want to finish their point, it goes back to an earlier point that you made. Some people are very verbose. They-- they-- they are-- they're very converse and they like to talk and it's it, you know, that's why I like that riot-- that's why I like the riot round robin. You know, and-- and what I-- I have done just because I try to be egalitarian is go around once and like you say, if someone doesn't want to speak, they yield the-- they yield the floor, maybe they come back. But what-- where I think you can get caught if you suspend the rules as opposed to



just say you speak your five minutes, you yield the floor and you want-- you want to speak again, wait, you come back again and then speaking, use your three minutes.

Sometimes you'll be less verbose because you had to wait so long. But, um, that's-- I-- I-- I worry about the whole, uh, thing about suspending the rules because as Marc says, we-- we tend more often than not to be polite to one another. If a person wants to go on, we are-- we are-- we are-- we tend to-- to again be, um, agreeable and-- and so as we work out, what is going to be the standard, what we gonna to codify in-- into our rules, I would hope that we think about maybe the five and then the three just so that people-- I think there's a benefit of hearing other people speak. You know what I may have thought at the time, I may even change my mind by the time it circles back to me.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Well, I-- I love five and three and it's the first time I've ever heard it. Councillor Simmons, I'm gonna steal it from you and suggest it to people in future. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** What about royalties?

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you. This has

been great. Unfortunately, I have to leave in a second to go to my 7:00 o'clock. But, um, I-- I had a question/suggestion, which is that we could say it's five minutes, but that the enforcement is-- is point of order. So in other words, if-- if somebody goes past the five minutes, but we can all sense that they're wrapping up, we just let it go. But if they're, you know, five minutes now there's six minutes, six-and-half minutes, somebody says, point of order, you know, you're only supposed to speak for five minutes.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Well, I'm in favor of the chair enforcing it. I'm in favor of having a rule, whatever it may be. And then the chair says, uh, thank you. Your time is up and moves brightly on to the next person because, uh, you know, points of order, uh, they're-- they're very important for major offenses. But, uh, if you start making them lightly sort of for-- for minor procedural things, it'll kind of gum up the works, I think. So before I call on Councillor Simmons, does anyone who hasn't yet spoken have anything they'd like to add? Anything here? Okay. Councillor Simmons then counselor McGovern.

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** That was a test, Ms. MacFarlane. I wanted to see if you use the wrong Robin-- round Robin method. No. Um, actually I forgot my point but, um, I think I was saying, I-- I agree with you. I think we should-- the-- the rules have to be the rules. I often say the rules are your friend. The rules have to be the rules and when you start modify and slipping all of a sudden, it's a slippery slope that leads you in not a good place. I yield the floor.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** You're speaking to the choir here. Councillor McGovern.

**COUNCILLOR PAUL F. TONER:** Uh, thank you. Um, so, you know, I can understand the certainly the five minutes in-- in terms of if someone is-- if a councillor is, you know, making a speech and, you know, sort of going on and, you know, but when we ask a question, you know, some of our staff can be pretty verbose as well. And so if I ask a question to a staff member who, you know, who, um, and that staff member takes four-and-half minutes to answer that question, is that just kind of, I'm out of luck. I lose my time or is the five minutes-- how does that five minutes actually-- does that-- does their response count towards my

five minutes, I guess? Is-- is-- is-- is what I'm saying.

How does that work?

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Not at all. No, I mean, this-- this is-- in general, these suggestions are for debate, they're for discussion on the merits of the issue. Setting-- what-- how you want to structure your time with staff is a little bit different and people have different rules for-- for questions and answers. One I don't, uh one thing that-- that you want to avoid is having a councillor and a staff member get into a question which sort of slides into a discussion of the issue. And I see that happen a lot in City Councils, you know, a counselor asks a question. The staff member says the answer, the counselor says, well, wouldn't it be better if and woof, you know, you're away into the topic. So I think it's important for people to be vigilant about keeping staff Q&A just informational. And I think it's important that one councillor should not have the right to monopolize a staff member for 15 minutes and counsel, maybe staff members have to learn to be, you know, more concise too. I mean, it's rare, but I do see situations where the staff kind of act like they're councillor or where they are really exceeding

their own authority. So that's where you're gonna talk to your city manager privately about it and see what you think. Does that answer your question?

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Yes, thank you.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Okay. Other questions, other thoughts? All right. So I think it's time for us to have that wonderful phrase in-- in Robert, which I really like called a stand at ease. Stand at ease means that you're not in formal recess, but people can just kind of chat with their neighbor or in this case, go and refresh your water glass. So it will take five minutes and I'll see you back at 7:05. I'll see you back at 7:05. Okay. So I have a 7:0s. I hope everybody's back. Great. Now we will charge ahead to motions and amendments. So a main motion under Robert's Rules is the usual and customary way to start the action of discussion and decision-making. For small boards up to about 12 people, it's okay to have discussion before a motion is moved. But Jurassic Parliament recommends that you don't do this, that you move the motion before discussing it whenever possible. So in our Jurassic Parliament system, we use a T-Rex to stand for the main motion and we recommend this sequence.

The staff presents the proposal in writing and answers any questions, each council member may ask one or two questions, then the next member has a turn, then the motion is moved and seconded. The members discuss the motion and may amend it. That's when amendments come in and then the members vote on the motion. So a main motion should be in writing if at all possible. If you haven't got it in your packet, you could project it on the screen or you can also use these three part forms when we're back in person. They're very handy little forms so that the chair gets one copy, the clerk gets one copy and then the maker of the motion gets a copy. A main motion should be clear and unambiguous. Don't say I move what he just said or so moved. It should be phrased in the grammatical positive. Don't put not into your motion.

I worked with a city that had a motion not to adopt an ordinance. No, no, don't do that. You propose the ordinance and then if you don't like it, you vote it down. A main motion should be complied with the bylaws and the procedural law of the land and you can have only one main motion at a time. This is where you see Robert's military background. So if we have a motion that we're discussing to

raise the parking fees and somebody makes a motion to conduct a survey of all the other cities in the league, that's out of order and that one has to go away and wait until we've disposed of the one that we're dealing with. So this is another of our fundamental guidelines. One thing at a time. One thing at a time. How do you introduce a main motion? It's very simple. It's just three little words. I move that. You say, I move that and then you state what it is you have in mind.

Now, the member has the responsibility of formulating the motion. Don't mix up your ideas about the subject with the motion itself. Save those for debate. Sometimes we hear something like this. I've been noticing that the number of wild cats is increasing in our city and they're getting stomped on by bigger dinosaurs. It's important that the city do something to protect them. So I think allowing catios would be great. This will make the little kitties safer. That's a way to drive your new city clerk crazy. Don't do that. State the exact motion. Clearly, I move that residents be authorized to build catios in their private yards. As if you were dictating. You can request a moment to write it down. May I have a few moments to write this

down? And the chair can also request that the motion be written, then somebody seconds it and online we recommend saying your name. Councillor Member Smith seconds the motion since otherwise, it's hard to know who spoke up.

If the clerk did not hear who seconded the motion, he or she should speak up. Who seconded this motion? And in general, the clerk must do this when lack of clarity prevents doing the job and the council must be patient. Now, you second a motion to show that you would like to talk about it. It used to mean that you approved of the motion, but it doesn't mean that anymore. There's no need to be recognized. You just call out second and it's actually okay to second a motion you disagree with if you want to explain why it's a bad idea. If there's no second, the chair says, there being no second, the motion will not be considered and then moves immediately to the next item of business. Now, under Robert's Rules, the maker of the motion cannot speak against it. If the discussion has changed their mind, they should request permission to withdraw the motion.

The maker can vote against their own motion. It's okay to vote against your motion. Now, if you're out driving and



you come up to an intersection, you don't have to stop and think. Should I step on the brakes or step on the gas? You know immediately what to do because you've internalized the system of traffic signals. And I would like you to internalize the eight steps to process a motion. So if you don't mind, take a pencil and a bit of paper and just jot these down because we know that when something goes from your hand up through your arm to your brain, it stays with you much better than if you're just passively listening. So these are the eight steps. A member makes a motion, another member seconds the motion, the chair states the motion, the members debate and/or amend the motion. That's when amendments come in. The chair restates the motion and calls for the vote, the members vote on the motion, the chair states the results of the vote, whether the motion passes or fails and what happens next is a result of the vote and then the chair states the next item of business.

Those-- those are the eight steps. How many times does the member-- do the members hear the motion? Anybody want to make a guess for me, how many times?

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** Three.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Exactly, three times.

When the member first makes it, when the chair states it before debate and when the chair restates it before the vote. So these eight steps are used to process quite a few different motions. So it's really handy to get to know them. So here's our main motion. Residents will be authorized to build catios in their private yards. Then somebody says, point of information. Chair, I'm confused. What exactly is a catio and the chair replies, a catio is a catio for cats. Here's an example. So the chair shows a photograph. So point of information is a question. It's also called request for information. It cannot be used to give information. Nice people say point of information and then they start, you know, explaining all about how catios were a disaster in our neighboring city or whatever. That's not the correct use of this. It is a question and I just also have to mention there's no such thing as point of clarification.

So, you know, if people say point of clarification, the council ought to know blah, blah, blah, that does not exist no such motion. If you as a council member, think someone made a mistake. You must address that when your turn for debate arrives. Now, if there is a factual mistake

that was made, the mayor or the attorney or the clerk might speak up. But otherwise you as members don't have that right. I want to point out that step three is very important. The presider must repeat the motion or have the clerk repeat it after step three, the motion belongs to the group as a whole, not to the person who made it. And this way, everyone knows what it is that we're actually discussing. So the chair says it's been moved and seconded that residents be authorized to build catios in their private yards. Is there any discussion? And then we're gonna have discussion on the motion.

The general contractor says, I feel that catios will allow our dear feline friends to experience the outdoors without getting hurt or endangering other wildlife. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this motion. The photographer speaks and says, I'm in favor. My cousin has built a catio and her little pet, Fuzzy, is completely at home in it as you can see from this picture. There's Fuzzy enjoying her time in her customized catio. The architect says in turn, I think this is a terrible idea. Catios are intrusive and will ruin the look of our city. Here's an example I saw when I visited Dino Dome last week. We don't

want this kind of ugly building in beautiful Dinopolis. So the architect-- the architect is dead against, uh, the production of catios.

So when it seems that discussion is finished, the chair asks, is there any further discussion or are you ready to vote? And then if no one speaks up, takes the vote. And this is because as we said, you don't have time limits on the number of times people can speak. Now, step 5 is also very important. The chair must repeat the motion before the vote is taken so that everyone knows what we're actually voting on. I actually was once at a meeting where once the vote was taken, somebody says, what did we just approve? And nobody really knew exactly what it was. Now, that won't be happening to you, but you still want to be-- want to be careful there. So the chair repeats the motion. The chair says all those in favor say aye. All those opposed say no. The chair announces the results of the vote, whether the motion passes or fails and what will happen next, and then the chair announces the next item of business. The ayes have it, the motion passes and residents will be authorized to build catios in their private yards or the noes have it. The motion fails and we will not

implement this proposal.

So notice that on a voice vote, the chair must call for the negative vote. Even if you think you hurt everybody, you still have to say all those opposed. This is an ancient tradition that goes back to 1604 when parliament was fighting with King James. King of the King James Bible. There's no debate during voting. Nothing can interrupt the voting process and members are not allowed to explain their vote during the vote or afterwards. Even a point of order must wait until the result of the vote is announced. A member may change their vote up until the time the chair announces the result. After that time, it takes unanimous consent of the body, everyone agreeing for the member to change their vote. And under Robert's Rules, once the chair has moved on to the next item of business, it's too late to change a vote.

Now, under Robert's Rules to abstain is to do nothing. It's not voting, it's doing nothing. Abstentions are not counted and the chair does not call for abstentions. However, you as a public body likely you will count abstentions. Some councils have a rule that an abstention is counted as a yes vote and some have a rule that it's

counted as a no vote. And we recommend against these approaches. We like Robert's guidance of giving the member freedom to abstain at his or her discretion. If you have a conflict of interest, you should recuse yourself from the vote. The recusal is a special form of abstention, but talk to your attorney before the meeting. Don't spring it during the meeting itself because sometimes it can be complicated. Now, suppose we want to change the motion. For that, we have another motion called amendment which we represent by Dimetrodon.

So you amend a motion to improve it unless you're in the US Congress, but we're not gonna go there, and the amendment applies to the main motion. The amendment must be germane. That's a jargon word meaning relevant, and anyone may move to amend even the person who made the motion. You might look a little foolish if you make a motion and five minutes later, you're proposing to change it, but there's no prohibition. So the engineer says, I move that we amend the motion by adding the words provided that the plan for each patio is approved by the design review board. So if it's adopted, it will read, residents will be authorized to build patios in their private yards provided that the plan

for each patio is approved by the Design Review Board.

So there are four different ways to amend. You can add or insert words. Our example is adding. If we have them in the middle, it's inserting, you can strike out words, you can strike out words and insert words in their place and you can substitute, which is kind of tricky. We recommend that people not use substitute motions in general. So the amendment is processed using the same eight steps that we just saw for a main motion. The challenge is and I know you know this, but I just have to emphasize it. We vote on amendments before we vote on the main motion. We vote on amendments before we vote on the main motion in order to make the main motion as good as possible. The Robert's phrase is to perfect the motion. So I'm gonna stop the share so I can demonstrate this to you properly. So here's our main motion authorized patios. Here's our amendment, um, provided that each patio design is approved by the design review board.

So once this amendment has been made and seconded by the state-- by the chair, the main motion kind of retreats and we focus on this and we decide whether we want to add this amendment or not. So if we like it and we vote in

favor, it becomes a part of the main motion and then we have an amended main motion. Someday I'm gonna have Velcro Dinosaurs, but I don't have it yet. So that's our amended main motion. And then we go on discussing that amended main motion. If it fails, if we vote it down, we toss it and we go back to the main motion that we were considering before. And in fact, this is-- here. This is the origin story for Jurassic Parliament. It was when the movie was so popular. And I was trying to think how can I show the board that if you make an amendment, it blocks the main motion and it was just when the movie was so great and I was cleaning my son's bedroom and there he had these toys, these Jurassic Parliament toys.

This is actually-- this is an original Jurassic Parliament dimetrodon. You can see the JP image. So he had all these and I thought, oh, that's it. We'll have the main motion and then we'll show that the amendment blocks the main motion. So I stole the toys. He's forgiven me since. And I owe everything for Jurassic parliament to Steven Spielberg and my son Steve. So that was-- that was how we got started. So the main motion is blocked by the amendment and we have to deal with the amendment and then we can go



on in, uh, with our discussion and people sometimes get confused and they don't realize that after voting on the amendment, the process continues. Once the fate of the amendment has been decided, debate continues on the main motion and more amendments are possible. Once you've had one amendment, you may have others provided that they apply to a different aspect of the main motion, provided that they apply to a different aspect of the main motion.

It takes special actions, reconsideration to go back and change something that we've already amended. And then after all the amendments have been processed, the body still must vote on the amended main motion. Now, I want to say a word about friendly amendments. Do you ever have friendly amendments on your council? Good. Well, um, it's a good thing if you don't because there's a-- a nasty undemocratic habit whereby somebody says, may I offer a friendly amendment? And the chair then turns to the maker of the motion to ask if they'll accept it. That's not right. They don't have any special rights. Once the motion has been made seconded and stated by the chair, it belongs to the whole group. So you want to process it just like a regular motion. And then I just want to mention, call the

question which is a vote to end debate and we use triceratops for that and it's often misused. You can't simply cut off debate by shouting out question. You must be recognized to make this motion. It requires a second. It cannot be debated or amended. Thank goodness, you can't debate whether to stop debate and it takes a two thirds vote to pass. So for a council of your size, if all council members are present and voting, what vote will it take to cut off debate?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Six.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Six, it'll take six votes. All right. So we'll pause there and see if you have any questions or comments about motions and amendments. Councillor Member Azeem.

**COUNCILLOR BURHAN AZEEM:** Uh, yes. Could you repeat, um, like call the question and how exactly it works. I'm not sure I understand.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Absolutely, sure. Let me just go-- go right back to it. So we-- we're in the process of debating something. We're talking about, um, whether to authorize catios and it's gone on a long time. And so somebody's sick and tired of it. So somebody says, I

call the question. So that's a motion. It's not a main motion, but it's a motion and they have to be recognized, they have to take their turn. So the mayor calls on them, they say, I call the question. The mayor says, is there a second? Takes two people and then if there's a second, the mayor says the question has been called. If it passes, we will end debate and vote immediately on the pending motion, which could be having catios or it could be the amendment. If we were discussing the amendment, whichever it is. All those in favor of calling the question and ending debate, please raise your right hand. Thank you, hands down. All those opposed. So you got to have that six. It's a very high bar to cut off debate. And if there are six in favor of stopping debate, then the mayor says, very well, we'll vote immediately on the pending question. All those in favor of adding the amendment or all those in favor of approving the catios, whatever. Does that answer it, Councillor Member Azeem?

**COUNCILLOR BURHAN AZEEM:** Yep. Thank you.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Okay. Vice Mayor Al Mallon.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Hi, thanks. Um, you were

talking about point of order or you were talking about taking the vote. There's no interruptions for the vote. I was wondering sometimes, um, there is a point of order during the vote to have the chair restate the motion. Is that allowed or is there just no-- no interrupting the vote once it starts?

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** You can't interrupt the vote. But as soon as the mayor has finished taking the vote, you could say just a moment, please, Madam Mayor, point of order. I'm confused. Could we please-- could you repeat the vote and we'll take it again?

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Okay. So it has to be after the full-- full vote has been taken, but before the-- the chair has--

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Announced.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Okay, thank you.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Sure. Councillor Member Simmons.

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** Uh, thank you. Uh, I don't think we've done that-- done it in this term, but I know another way I have heard it done, uh, not call the question but they say, uh, move to adopt. In other words,

someone might sho-- shout out, move to adopt. And so I think that's another way that we have used a way to short circuit kind of debate. Uh, um, and-- and I just wanted to raise them. I don't think we do it anymore. Um, I don't remember us in this session, uh, doing that, but it was a, um, method that, um, I'd seen used and it was equal to call the question. So someone just shout- shout out, move to adopt. And move to adopt I think it's sort of similar to this thing called the question?

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Well, I've never heard of move to adopt.

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** Because you haven't worked with us before. See. Well, that's--

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Right. You see, Cambridge is new to me, but I would not recommend that and certainly not shout it out. I mean, that's-- that's, you know, I mean, people get impatient. I understand, but you have to be recognized in the proper way. So thank you for bringing that up. I'll keep it in mind. It's something not to recommend. Councillor Carlone.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Excuse me. Building on that, what Councilor Simmons just told you, I believe it

was after two rounds of questions and it-- I-- I don't think we shouted it out, but Councillor Simmons might be correct. I think it-- when it was my turn to speak, I could say move to adopt. And, uh I-- I only know that because the previous terms it was used and I think, uh, Councilor Simmons is right. We have not used it this term. Uh, but-- but we did have two rounds of conversation. So it wasn't in the middle of a conversation. It was after people had spoken and then it was repetition. People were repeating themselves when that happened.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Well, I didn't see it in your council rules and it doesn't exist in parliamentary procedure. And when you make a motion initially, you're moving to adopt it. So really, it's misleading language because what you really mean is I'd like to vote on this. Let's, uh, let's get on with it. We're saying move to adopt duplicates what was said when it was moved in the initial instance. So I'd recommend not taking that up. Does anyone else have a question before I turn to Councillor Simmons again?

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** Oh, my hands-- I'm sorry.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Oh, okay. Any other questions or comments about motions? All right. Very good. So let's look at our next portion, our next unit which is who's in charge, who's in charge? The famous question. So I just want to mention that Robert has different rules for small boards which you qualify as up to about 12 people. And in a small board, the chair may make motions discuss and vote unless the law, the regulations or the bylaws say otherwise. So in a council manager city, the mayor has the right to speak in debate. Oops, sorry. To speak in debate, to make motion and to vote. But we recommend that the mayor speak and vote last and refrain from making motions. We think it's not a good idea for the mayor to make motions. The mayor can say, would any member care to move that? You know, if the mayor has a motion in mind, they could say that.

Now in all of this, I'm referring to Robert's Rules of Order, newly revised 12th edition, which is abbreviated RONR and it looks like this. So I hope you will not reveal my secret to my fellow parliamentarians. But I think that this is a terrible book. Robert's Rule is a terrible book. Robert was a lieutenant colonel in the US Army Corps of

Engineers. And one of his first assignments was out here in Washington State in 1859 when we were gonna go to war with the British over a pig and he built the redoubt that was gonna protect us against the British fleet. When he published his first book in 1876, it was a pocket manual. It would fit into your coat pocket and somehow it took off. All across the nation, people were thrilled to have a common understanding of how to run meetings. And in fact, it's considered that Robert's Rules is the authority for 90% of the voluntary associations in this country. But I believe that his heirs have followed that very common practice of improving something until you wreck it. You know, anybody who's tried to buy a plain cup of coffee in Starbucks knows what I'm talking about here. They kept on adding and adding and adding. And when I got started, I was very discouraged. But it's-- there is a core that we really need. There is a core that's essential for good and fair meetings. And so that's what I try to share in Jurassic Parliament and the Robert's Rules, people themselves have finally broken down and they have published Robert's Rules in brief.

Now, this is a very good book. You can peruse it in a



weekend, although nobody wants to read it either, but it will give you the best short introduction. I really-- I really highly recommend it to you. And for both of them, I recommend that you get the spiral bound editions which are available only from the National Association of Parliamentarians. They're so much easier to work with than having a hard tight little paperback. So, um, I just want to mention that this is the order of authorities. You see the constitution is at the top, then federal law, then state law, then your charter articles of incorporation or code, whatever it is that allows you to exist as an entity, then your bylaws or council rules, then any special rules of order and then at the very bottom, Robert's Rules of Order. So people are surprised sometimes to find out that Robert's comes at the bottom of the heap, but that's the way that it is and your rules have higher authority.

You may choose the rules that suit the council best and they have higher authority than Robert's Rules. So I want to look here at two different types of organizations. One is shaped like a triangle or a pyramid. It's called an accountability hierarchy. And at the top, you've got the boss who's in charge and the boss hires people to do the

work of the organization, tells them how to do it. And if they do it badly, fires them. One other feature of this kind of structure is that it has rank, it has status or rank and I think that's okay. You need the hierarchy, the status in order to get the accountability. If all of us on this call had the job of building an addition to your city hall and we all had the same status, we would never succeed. So you need to have that. There's a whole different type. So-- so this type here, the accountability hierarchy, it's very common. You know, every corporation has a CEO, every school has a principal, every army has a general. It's so common that we think of it as the ordinary or default type of organization. But there's a whole other kind called a voluntary association where a group of people come together to achieve a common purpose, they select a leader, they set up some rules, but the leader is a peer, the leader is an equal and every one of your City Councils, you know, rotary, club, boards, committees, whatever those are all voluntary associations. And in such an association, each member has an equal right to speak and to try to persuade others to accept their view

During meetings, the chair controls the process so the

group can make the decisions. And during meetings, the chair is the servant of the group and the group is the final authority. Now, that's the most important thing I'm gonna say today, the chair is the servant of the group and the group is the final authority. So you have both types of structure. The council forms a voluntary association and the city manager and staff form an accountability hierarchy. What is each person's individual authority? Well, I know, you know, the answer to this. When you walk out on the street after your meeting, you have no authority whatsoever. Zip, no-- nothing. And I love this quote which expresses it, I think very well. All members of a governing board share in a joint and collective authority which exists and can be exercised only when the group is in session. So your authority is joint and collective. What's your individual power? You know that legislation is the prerogative of the council. The city manager supports the council but does not decide, and administration is the prerogative of the city manager. The council may not interfere.

So your duty is to debate and determine overall strategy, policy, and legislation for your city and leave

the details of operations to the city manager and staff. Discussion on council motions can and should be vigorous, express your views freely and don't hold back. But once the vote has been taken, things change. It's okay to have different opinions, but we tend to identify with our own position. And when we're defeated, sometimes we take it personally and that's a mistake because at the end of the day, the body must unite behind its decision. It's a basic democratic principle that the decision of the majority voting at a properly called meeting is the decision of the body as a whole and the minority must make it their decision as well. Now, it's a terrible system. But I hold with Winston Churchill who famously said, democracy is the worst system of government in all the world. With the exception of those others that have been tried from time to time.

So when serving on a public body, members have a duty to uphold the decision of that body even if they disagree with it. They may express their disagreement in public, but they may not attempt to undermine the decision. Of course, they're free to try to persuade their colleagues during the meeting to change the decision within certain limits. We

all want to be right. It's human nature to be unhappy when you oppose the decision. And our current culture places a strong premium on individuality. I invite you to commit yourself to a bigger principle than your own views. After everyone's voice is heard, including the minority, it is the majority that makes the decision. So we have a paper on this. Lost the vote. Don't sabotage the council's action, which gives some examples of we-- what we consider to be sabotage. And I want to say that as Elias Kennedy said, the ballot box is sacred because the alternative is blood. And we see this, you know, all across the world, we see societies where decisions are being made by blood and iron. And I think with all our failings as a society, we can take pride in the fact that we're committed to the democratic process, we're committed to democracy and we're committed to making decisions in the best way by the will of the people and not by force.

And I commend you all for your service because I know that sometimes the amount of time and effort that counselors and staff put in is not always recognized by the citizens, but you are the bedrock of our democracy. You're really critical to how your community can serve its

members. Now, I'm gonna talk briefly about public comment and I have another disclaimer, Robert's Rules of Order has very little guidance on public comment. So this is mostly from my own experience. I want to point out that a council meeting is not a meeting of the public. It is a meeting of the council that is held in public and the purpose of the public comment period is to allow the council members to become informed about the views of the public. So it should be carefully structured. We are in favor of being consistent. Announce the rules at the beginning of each session, provide a written hand out when we're back in person and you must enforce your rules consistently. The public must address their remarks to the chair, not to individual council members or the audience.

You want to follow time limits, ask the staff to time speakers so the chair is not distracted. Some bodies have a visible timer. So speakers know when their limit is approaching, very easy to do online and speakers may not donate their time to someone else. Don't dialogue, don't get into back and forth with the public. If the chair starts dialoguing with the public, the situation can quickly become confusing. And if you respond to some

speakers but not to others, it can be interpreted as showing bias. One person wrote to me and said, we tell the public, it is a one way communication to the council. Now the public may have different expectations. They may come to the meeting looking for answers to specific questions. So it's good to have a staff person ready to connect with them and take their questions and get back to them. They may want to argue they may want their remarks on the record. They want to raise a point of order, they can't do that. So educating your public is critical.

In our view, only the chair may speak to the audience as a whole. Individual council members may not speak to the public or recognize people in the audience. And you want to discourage demonstrations, whether positive or negative, clapping, booing, whistling. These can chill free speech, both for council members and for the public. The courts have found that local governments may limit the time place and manner of public comment, but all such restrictions must be viewpoint neutral. So we recommend if your laws allow setting a time period for public comment and setting a three-minute limit for individual speakers or two minutes if you have a lot of them. If a speaker runs over the

limit, interrupt and requests that they conclude their remarks or simply inform them, your time is up.

Now, attendees do not have the right to disrupt the meeting, to disrupt the meeting. But the courts have found that mere words do not usually constitute disruption. In general, residents can say whatever they like during public comment. You have this in your rules. All persons shall avoid personalities. The following will not be tolerated, uttering fighting words, slander speeches, invasive of the privacy of individuals. So I-- I think that language is problematic. I think that you might want to talk with your attorney and think about changing that because as I say, the courts have found that mere words are usually not enough to disrupt the meeting. And we have a paper that I'll send you called Danger Will Robinson advising City Councils on enforcement of council rules of decorum that goes into court cases on this and makes it very clear what the judicial branch position is.

We also believe it's best not to include oral comments in the minutes. Sometime capturing these remarks requires a substantial staff effort. Sometimes citizens want corrections to their remarks which wastes time,



organizations can be found liable and the purpose of public comment is fulfilled when the council members have heard their remarks. How do you act on the dais? The chair and the members convey interest and concern by their body language. They should listen to each person speaking as if there were no one else in the room. This is hard. This takes a lot of effort. And we recommend keeping either a warm and pleasant expression or a neutral face if the speaker is not complimentary. The best approach is to thank each speaker, even if negative and move on. The chair may provide brief factual information if appropriate, which must not degenerate into lecturing or criticism. And don't put staff on the spot. Don't call on your staff and ask them to address public comment questions.

At the end of the public comment period, the chair should thank the public for attending and explain again that while this is not a time for dialogue, all comments and questions are taken seriously by the body, sincerity and warmth on the part of the chair will make a big difference to the experience that the public has at your meeting. Of course, it's essential for you to be in touch with your public, to be responsive and to appear

responsive. So given the limitations on the public comment period, we recommend maintaining other channels for dialogue with the public, community forums, personal discussions, coffee with the council, always less than a quorum, a forum on your website, surveys, there are lots of things cities can do to keep in touch. And again, we'll send you our view on this, our guidelines for public comment, which is our best idea of how to run it and a sample public comment announcement again, which you can modify any way you like.

Oh, and finally, this other paper when public pressure is intense, you know, sometimes the public is really on you, they really want something that you don't want to do. And you need to remember, as I'm sure you all know, your job is to serve your council and community with your best judgment, even if public pressure urges you to do something different. So that can be hard sometimes, but your job is your responsibility, not just to be a barometer of what the public says. Now, I'm gonna suggest that we move on to our last section and then take any questions you may have on these last two sections so that I'm sure to cover the material. So I'd like to talk here about the right kind of

control. In order to make all this work, what I'm proposing to you, you have to have three things. You have to have knowledge of how the system works, which you're getting by attending this training. You have to have a majority on your council in favor of civility and this system, one of our cities in Washington State 12 years ago revoked its rules of civility. If you do that, you're not gonna be able to do this. And as an individual, you must have the personal Moxie, the Huts, the energy and the drive to put this all into practice. It's not easy, it takes energy. So the chair must control who speaks when. The chair serves as a benevolent dictator, enforcing the rules the group has chosen and individual members must seek recognition before speaking. So if someone speaks up without being recognized, you stop them. If someone speaks out of turn, you interrupt them. If someone makes insulting remarks, you cut them off. This is the chair's duty. Very contrary to our ideas of polite behavior, but essential. Members have a duty to obey the chair's directions. If they disagree, they can't argue back. What can they do? Anybody want to tell me?

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** Can you say something I dis-- I challenged or disagree with the ruling of the chair

or something to that effect?

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** They can just appeal.

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** Appeal. That's the word. Appeal the ruling of the chair.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Exactly. Thank you. Yeah, they appeal the ruling of the chair and in doing this, you know, we are following our ancient democratic principles whereby we don't bow to princes where it's we the people who are responsible for our own governance. So how should you control? Well, in some ways, the chair, the mayor, the chair of the committee, whoever is like Napoleon crossing the Alps, you know, you're the one who knows what's happening next. You're the one who's leading people. So you want to guide your members by stating the obvious. You as chair know more about the process than anybody else. You must repeat yourself and state the obvious to help bring everyone along. Keep things moving. Be brisk, speak crisply, more crisply than you would in everyday life. I've heard these phrases recently. Well, I guess the agenda is adopted or I'll kind of get a thumbs up from the board next week. Don't do that. Don't do that. Say the agenda is adopted and the next item of business is such and so, or

I'll ask the board to vote on this.

We aim for a tone that is firm, but not harsh, firm, but not harsh. And I will send you this language tips for meeting management, which gives all these archaic and terrible phrases and which is very helpful. You can, you know, tape it to your bathroom mirror and when you're going about your morning routine, you can practice saying these different phrases to be ready. They sound archaic and they work. Both things are true. Finally, don't forget when in doubt, ask the group, here's one more example. But your believes that remarks about UFOs landing at our airfield are not germane and will ask the council to decide whether the council member may continue speaking on this topic. All those who believe that the council member may continue speaking, please say aye. The council member in favor say aye. All those who believe that the council member may not continue, please say no. The council members say no, the ayes have it and the council member may continue speaking or the noes have it and the council member will cease from speaking.

You remember in the famous phrase, if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen. So this is a way that you

as chair or mayor or president can get out of that kitchen. Now, why do we need rules? Richard Rohr says, win lose is the only game most of us understand, we have a constant unspoken need for domination and actually find no enjoyment in win, win situations. Now, I'm sure that's not true of you. I'm sure that everyone on this call is at a higher spiritual level. But as for me, if I'm in a fight, I want to win it. And so the thing to remember is that council meetings are not a fight. And if you feel yourself hardening into a combat position, you want to take a deep breath and step back and reassess. So my vision is, each member expresses their personal views on topics before the council with vigor, energy, commitment and respect. And then once the vote is taken, personal opinions and political views are less important than the majority vote of the council. Members accept the decision and move on without rancor or bitterness. So I'll stop the share now and ask if you have any questions or comments that you'd like to share on our material so far and in particular on public comment and how to control. Councillor Member McGovern.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Um, this is sort of a--

a general question, something we-- we didn't cover. Is that okay for now or do you want just--

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Yeah. Yeah.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Um, can you-- can you talk a little bit about when it is and is not appropriate to vote present on a vote.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Well, um, that's a form of abstaining. When you-- when you say present, you mean I'm not gonna vote for it. I'm not gonna vote against it and I don't think you have any rules. So it's fine to do that. I didn't see anything in--

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Because someone just, someone in the public raised it as-- as a question that because sometimes we, you know, someone votes present because they don't want to vote yes or no and someone raised it as that-- that was not what Robert's Rules calls for and I just didn't know if that was-- if that was true or not.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Well, you know, as I mentioned, uh, Robert-- so we're talking a roll call here. We're-- we're not talking yes and no?

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Yes.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** So, uh, on a roll call, I think it makes sense to make some answer when your name is called. I mean, you could also say abstain, it's the same thing, same present is abstaining and under your rules it's allowed. So Councillor Carlone?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Referring to the term rules of civility, excuse me. Um, it-- it was alluded to earlier, we had a public speaker almost pounding the podium but not quite, but very gruff and loud and-- and I-- I think we all thought the mayor was correct to say that, you know, please, uh, lower your voice or something like that. That is fine to do, correct?

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Absolutely. No, you can encourage civility and you can request civility. What you can't do is you can't have the person escorted out because they're pounding the podium.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay. Thank you.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Yeah, I mean, definitely. And-- and certainly in your-- if you have an announcement or rules for public participation, you can request, you can say members are, you know, residents are requested to speak with courtesy and consideration for



their colleagues. Absolutely.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. I'm not sure we have written-- written rules for public comment.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** It's a good idea.  
It's a good idea.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes. No, it makes sense. Thank you.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Yeah, sure. Did you have a question, Councillor Azeem?

**COUNCILLOR BURHAN AZEEM:** Yeah. One thing that I, uh, I know that we talked about is that we have like the ability to charter right, uh, uh, bills, which essentially means that they get pushed to the next City Council meeting. And one thing that like has been brought up to me a couple times is whether like it would make sense to like, think about public comment differently if it's been charter written. Because usually when a charter written happens, uh, like on bills that are pretty controversial, so you might get like two or three hours of public comment on the bill and then to go through that again the second day can be very, uh, it just takes up a lot of time. Um, and so I don't know if you have any thoughts on like it-- like that

in general.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Well, I-- in general, I believe that you should not have to spend your entire lives at the dais, I mean, I'm in favor of when you get a situation with a lot of public comment to thinking about it and setting up what will work for you. If you want to say we're gonna hear it on the first reading-- public comment on the first reading, but not the second. As far as I'm aware, you can do that. And, uh, you know, I believe in the state of Michigan if you-- you don't have to allow public comment, but if you allow anyone to speak, you must allow everyone to speak. So sometimes everybody gets one minute. Well, you know, I-- it-- it just kind of gets to a point where it's ridiculous. So I'm in favor of common sense and of sparing yourselves meetings that go on too long in consultation with your attorney. I mean, just don't do anything on the basis of what I've told you. Vice Member Mallon.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Oh, thank you. One thing we didn't talk about, um, during this presentation is point of personal privilege. Is that-- um, I've heard-- we've-- a number of people have used it over my time on the

council. I just-- I'm never really quite sure how to use it, when to use it ,when it's appropriate. And it wasn't part of this presentation, so I thought I would ask you.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Oh, sure. So there is something called point of general privilege. That's raising a point that refers to the well-being of the entire assembly. And my favorite example is 1935 Kansas City Garden Club, a member said point of general privilege and the chair said, state your point. And she replied, the furnace is about to explode. So if you have something that affects everybody, that's a point of general privilege. Point of personal privilege is really something that should very rarely be used on City Councils. And it would have to do with if there was some issue that affected you personally, that was not pertaining to the subject under debate and that was time sensitive. And we have a-- a paper on our website called Don't Abuse Point of Personal Privilege. So, uh, I will send the link to that when I send my materials and that will help you see more about when to use it properly. But what it's not for is for somebody to say, point of personal privilege. I want to point out that the, uh, Citizens Fair Committee did a fabulous job when

they were arranging things or point of personal privilege, my, uh, colleague here is making obnoxious remarks. You know, it's-- it's-- it's really-- it's really very limited and it has to do for some issue that pertains to you in a personal capacity.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** So can you just-- is there just an example you might be able to use so that I can take it with me from you?

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** I don't think I have one in my head at the moment. I'm sorry.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** That's okay. All right. Thank you very much.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** So, Councillor Member Simmons.

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** Uh, thank you. Uh, on-- on point of personal privilege, I always thought and you can correct me or debate with me, that it had to also to do with, uh, for some people that can-- someone like myself, they can't sit long periods of time. I might use point of personal privilege to-- to request a recess so I could get up or point of personal privilege because the room was too cold. I sit beside my colleague, uh, uh, Vice Mayor Mallon and I run hot. She runs cold. We go back and forth. So, um

I-- I-- there's some-- there is something in Rob-- Robert's Rules, uh, that says, at least I thought it did, that gets you-- gives you the opportunity to speak to say you're discomfoting. You kind of got to, it just said something's making you uncomfortable. We have a-- a ceiling, flat ceiling fans. And so instead of me going like this to our secretary across the room, I might say, point of personal privilege or that-- that's how I would have thought about it and-- and-- and how someone had said to me, it was to be used to say, could we turn the fans off? Um, as opposed to getting across the room and flick of the switch.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** That's it. That's great. Yeah, thank you for giving me that. In fact, I just checked my-- my-- my website article. It's terrible when you wrote something that goes out of your head. But here's an example, I'm finding it difficult to hear the speakers clearly. Would everyone be good enough to lean into their microphone? So I will know what is being said. So that's a point of personal privilege. So--

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** A way of interjecting,

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Right. Right. When it's--

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** A way of, of  
interjecting a need for an accommodation.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** That's right. That  
would be fine. Yeah. So I think we had somebody else who  
had a hand--

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** One more, ma'am.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Yes. Sure.

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** I have not yield the  
floor. Uh, on the charter right, and I'm just-- just to  
talk to my-- my colleagues, um, on our agenda, and for  
this, colleagues, correct me if I'm wrong. Uh, during  
public comment, a member cannot talk on communications or  
waiting reports. Is that correct, folks? I think it is. Uh,  
so to speak to my colleague, Burhan, um, excuse me,  
Councillor Azeem, perhaps as we're talking about when we're  
going through the rules, we might take charter rights and  
put that under there and say you cannot speak to charter  
rights communications or awaiting reports. And that would--  
and I think that's an excellent idea because that-- that  
way you don't get another bite of the apple, but the  
council does get the opportunity to have more debate on  
something that-- that has already been talked to or on by

the public. So something for us to think about, just taking charter rights and moving that to the-- to the items that the, um, the public cannot speak to. And communications was added to that because what people would do is write a communication and use that as an excuse to talk about something that we didn't want to talk about, but it was a communication. So they said, you know, Communication number 12, you know, this, the-- the-- you should really get feature lighting and then they could whack out for three minutes. So I would just recommend that.

So you'll work out these details, you'll figure it. So, unless anybody has another one, I'll just do my little brief conclusion. Are you ready for that? I think the time is racing on. So I want to invite you to keep in touch. We have a monthly e-newsletter which we try to keep short and interesting. And we also have a blog which has roughly weekly publications. And if you do sign up, you will receive notices for our, uh, online webinars and workshops. We have one on public comment this coming Thursday and you can opt out of those by choosing no marketing communications and you feel free to email me at any time. I love parliamentary questions. So if you have something

that's come up and you want our thoughts on it, be glad to confer with you.

This is our book, Master and Council Meetings. This is the only book of its kind that I'm aware of that was written specifically for you for elected officials and staff in local governments. And it's available on Amazon. You can also, uh, download a free chapter from our website if you'd like to test it out for yourself. So I said you would be able to apply the authority of the chair and the group correctly, follow best practices for fair and inclusive discussion, respond to disorder and difficult people, make motions and amendments and run effective public comment sessions. So just to sort of race through a few-- a few thoughts for you, the purpose of your meetings under Robert's Rules, which we've covered, the fact that the chair is not in charge of your meeting. It's kind of a paradoxical provocative title. But anyway, I'll send this paper, the four fundamental guidelines that we've covered and a paper on that. Another paper, Essential Guidelines for City Councils, the inappropriate remarks, best practices for public comment. And I want to close with a wonderful quote from Samuel Johnson, the British author. He



said kindness is within our power, liking is not. Kindness is within our power, liking is not. You cannot make yourselves like your fellow councillors, but you must be kind to them, you must be kind to them. And the reason another quote, serving on a local government board is like being in a marriage arranged by the citizens. So that's my closing thought for you. And I-- I'm certainly honored to have had this opportunity to speak with you. And I hope that you found it helpful. I hope that you found it useful.

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** Thank you.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Thank you so much for your time.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Very good.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Councillor Carlone.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** I don't want you to go, clearly. Um--

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** I have plenty of time, but I'm conscious of you all.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, you mentioned, I think at the beginning that a PDF was sent to us of the presentation?

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Uh-huh.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, that's great. I just wanted to confirm that.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Absolutely. And then later this week, I will send another PDF, a whacking thick PDF with all those reference articles that I mentioned. So if you want to know specifically more about one of the topics, it'll be there.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Great. Thank you very much.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Thank you, thank you. It's been helpful? You do feel that it's been beneficial?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Oh, yes.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Absolutely.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Good, good.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** A lot to ponder for us. So, uh, if there's no one else, what we'll do is, um, on a roll-- on a-- on a motion to adjourn, I'll entertain a motion.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** May-- may I-- may I mention, Madam Mayor?

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Yes.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** You don't actually

need a motion. If you've come to the end of your scheduled business and there's no further business, the-- the mayor can say, "There being no further business, this meeting is adjourned."

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** Oh, man, there.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Sorry, I-- I need a motion or I don't need a motion?

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** You don't need one. First you-- first you glance around to make sure that nobody is seeking recognition.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Okay.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Then there are no hands up. Yeah? And then you can say, now-- now here's a hand up, so then you take that question and then we'll-- I'll show you.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Councillor Carlone.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** I just want to highlight one of the things we, uh, learned is the chair is not in charge of the meeting. Um, just wanted to highlight that, and go ahead, Madam Chair.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Except for process, except for process.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes.

**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** So-- so then seeing that no one is seeking recognition and we've come to the end of the agenda, the mayor is entitled to say, "There being no further business, this meeting is adjourned."

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** There being no further business, this meeting is adjourned. Yay.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Well done.

**COUNCILLOR DENISE E. SIMMONS:** Goodnight, everyone.  
Great night.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you.

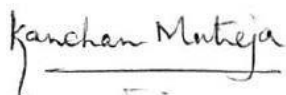
**PARLIAMENTARIAN ANN MACFARLANE:** Thank you. Thank you.

**The Cambridge City Council Roundtable/Working Meeting**  
adjourned at 8:00 p.m. approximately.

# C E R T I F I C A T E

I, **Kanchan Mutreja**, a transcriber for Datagain, do hereby certify: That said proceedings were listened to and transcribed by me and were prepared using standard electronic transcription equipment under my direction and supervision; and I hereby certify that the foregoing transcript of the proceedings is a full, true, and accurate transcript to the best of my ability.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my name this 5th day of May 2023.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kanchan Mutreja". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Signature of Transcriber