



Rules of Procedure and Charter Review Task Force – Regular Meeting – Minutes
Tuesday, February 18, 2025 - 3:30 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Lynne Fugate called the meeting to order at 3:30pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Attendance	Attendee Name
Present	Lynne Fugate, Councilmember Debbie Helsley, Councilmember Dr. William Lyons, Task Force Member Amelia Parker, Councilmember Nick Pavlis, Former Vice-Mayor Finbarr Saunders, Former Vice-Mayor Tommy Smith, Vice-Mayor
Absent	None

Other staff in attendance

Will Johnson, City Recorder

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. MINUTES OF JANUARY 21, 2025

Former Vice-Mayor Pavlis moved to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Vice-Mayor Smith. Upon voice-vote, the motion was declared carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 Fugate, Helsley, Lyons, Parker, Pavlis, Saunders, Smith
No: 0 None
Recused: 0 None
Absent: 0 None

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS GERMANE TO AGENDA ITEMS

There were no persons on the list to speak.

5. REPORTS OF OFFICER OR SUBCOMMITTEES

Chairperson Fugate did not give a report.

6. REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

There are no special committees.

7. SPECIAL ORDERS

There were no special orders.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Dr. Lyons reported that the Baker School at the University of Tennessee Knoxville is providing two interns to assist in the Task Force's work. He introduced Julia Dieter, an undergraduate at the Baker School; and Dane Morgan, a graduate student at the Baker School.

9. NEW BUSINESS**a. IDENTIFY AND PRIORITIZE RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR FURTHER STUDY, REVIEW, AND POSSIBLE REVISION**

Chairperson Fugate reviewed the request of Task Force members at the last meeting, which was to review the current City Council rules and identify and prioritize which rules need the Task Force's attention.

Task Force members identified the following rules as needing the group's attention: Rules 2, 3, 7, 9, 13, 18, and 25

Mr. Johnson reported for a Councilmember who does not serve on the task force. This member identified the following rules: Rules 2, 16, and 18.

Mr. Johnson reported on rules that he has found may require the group's attention. He began his report by categorizing the rules based on the nature of what he found or is recommending:

- Noncompliance: Rules 2, 9, 13, and 4

At this time, the Task Force began reviewing the identified rules, taking them one at a time.

Rule 2: Order of Business.

There was discussion about subsection five (5), specifically the items approved on consent, either as enumerated in the prescribed order of business or that City Council is by custom approving on consent.

A conversation ensued concerning subsection eleven (11). A councilmember not on the Task Force suggested splitting resolutions and memorials as well as assign memorials priority earlier in the order of business.

There was dialogue about subsection seven (7), specifically about the intended purpose for this subsection versus how it is used by custom.

It was the consensus of the Task Force that subsection seven (7) be separated by use, i.e. a subsection for community events/announcements and a separate subsection for reports of councilmembers serving on or chairing committees and boards.

Mr. Johnson recommended codifying City Council's custom of approving consent items without amendment and debate. There was a discussion of same.

Mr. Johnson recommended removing the time limits included in subsection thirteen (13). He suggested moving these to another section of the rules.

There was further discussion about subsection five (5), specifically about the consent items.

Mr. Johnson recommended including classes of business that City Council is currently approving on consent in this subsection. These include the following: certificates of compliance, community improvement fund appropriations, and pensions.

It was the consensus of the task force that subsection five (5) c. ordinances: 1. be amended to include ordinances on second reading that were approved unanimously on first reading.

There was a dialogue about an opportunity for electronic voting at City Council meetings.

A conversation ensued about any requirements for voice-votes and roll-call votes.

There was discussion about preserving uncontroversial rezonings on first reading on consent, specifically how a single councilmember could remove these and other consent items by objecting.

It was the consensus of the Task Force that uncontroversial rezonings on first reading be preserved in the prescribed order of business as consent items. It was further the consensus that the rules explicitly state a single councilmember may object to a consent item and the item be heard in the regular order of business.

The Task Force requested that Mr. Johnson propose language that would direct the City Recorder to report at each meeting if there are individuals signed up to speak on consent items.

A conversation ensued about the ability of the public remotely watching meetings, specifically their ability to see the vote outcome on the screens in the meeting room. It was indicated that Knoxville Community Media (KCM) could focus their camera on the screen. Councilmember Parker, who serves as City Council's representative on their board, indicated that she would communicate that request to KCM.

There was dialogue about the placement of public comment in the order of business, specifically there was a conversation about placing a period of public comment on action items closer to the beginning of the order of business and preserving public forum on any topic at the end of the order of business. The Task Force requested the Baker School interns to research how other jurisdictions manage public comment periods.

Chairperson Fugate suggested placing the time for memorials within subsection five (5) before consent items. The Task Force indicated agreement with this approach.

Mr. Johnson recommended modernizing the name of the Metropolitan Planning Commission in subsection ten (10). It was the consensus to do the same throughout the rules to update the name to Planning Commission.

At this time, the Task Force concluded its work on Rule 2. The group turned its attention to Rule 3.

Rule 3: Vice-Mayor.

A conversation ensued concerning the possibility of adding language to define the Vice-Mayor's role in scheduling workshops and retreats.

There was a dialogue about how Rule 13: Agenda (g) addresses a previous practice of City Councils related to workshops.

The discussion continued concerning the potential need to have a rule or section dedicated to workshops.

The Task Force requested the Baker School interns to research how other jurisdictions manage workshops and possibly make a recommendation to the Task Force for a new section to define workshops and their functioning.

The Task force completed discussion of Rule 3, and it began considering Rule 5.

Rule 5: Audit Committee.

Mr. Johnson spoke about how Rule 20's provision for the suspension of rules interacts with Rule 5, specifically how the nature of a rule on a standing committee cannot be suspended. He recommended moving Rule 5 to a new and separate article. He indicated that there are many other rules in Article II that he would recommend moving to a new article, on account of the inability to suspend them.

Mr. Johnson suggested moving Rules 3, 5, 7, and 8 to a new article for this reason.

The Task Force requested that Mr. Johnson make a proposal to implement his recommendations concerning separating rules that cannot be suspended.

Rule 5 having been addressed, the group began discussing Rule 9.

Rule 9: Introduction of proposed ordinances and resolutions.

Mr. Johnson brought to the attention of the Task Force a provision that is not consistently being followed. This concerns the requirement that agendas reflect the councilmanic district particularly affected by any proposed matter.

It was the consensus of the Task Force that this provision be preserved and followed.

The Task Force decided to create a memorandum that will communicate to City Council and the Administration the rules that, over time, are not being followed but that should be followed in the future.

There was a dialogue about the placement of zoning matters on the agenda, specifically whether rezonings on the first reading should be occur in the order of business before resolutions. This discussion included details about the zoning hearing that the Knox County Commission uses to process its business. The task force did not reach a consensus or decision on this question.

Mr. Johnson indicated that Rules 10, 11, and 12 need to be addressed along with other rules that cannot be suspended.

The Task Force requested Mr. Johnson to identify all such rules, produce a list of same, and include that list with the next meeting's agenda.

The Task Force also requested Mr. Johnson to create and maintain a memorandum of rules that are not being followed but that the Task Force recommends preserving and following in the future.

Ending with Rule 12, the Task Force concluded its review of the rules for now.

b. **NEXT STEPS**

Dr. Lyons reviewed the Task Force's requests for the Baker School interns. These include a review of practices in other jurisdictions concerning workshops and public comment or public forum.

Chairperson Fugate indicated that the Task Force will begin at its next meeting by hearing a report from the Baker School interns on their work.

She indicated the Task Force will then resume its review with Rule 13.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Fugate announced that the meeting was adjourned at 4:47PM.

Chair

Recorder