How To Run A Council Meeting

Handouts and presentations are available online at www.iowaleague.org
Preparation is key

– Boy Scout...AND...Customer Service Motto

– Always Be Prepared

– That applies to running a City Council meeting as well
  • Preparation of a complete agenda
  • Preparation of each city staff member
  • Preparation of each member of the Council
  • Preparation of the citizens and media
Things a Mayor or Council can’t control
(some call them mandates
we’ll call them building blocks)

– City Ordinance must set when, where and how often regular meetings are conducted
– State Code requires advance notice of meeting be provided with items to be acted upon
– State Code also requires public access
– State Code requires the actions of the Council be included in the minutes
– State Code requires public hearings prior to some actions
Other things you can build upon

– Each vote must be recorded to show what each Council member voted on each measure
– Council must approve all bills and a list of the payments must be published
– Minutes of the meeting must be published (or posted depending on population size) within 15 days of the meeting
– Iowa Code Section 372.13 provides that the City Council shall determine its own rules of procedure.
Council (Rules) Code of Conduct (should be formally adopted)

• How is the agenda put together and by whom
• Order of the agenda
• Using a “Rules of Order” not necessarily Roberts Rules of Parliamentary Procedures
• Items allowed on a consent agenda and how to pull something off the consent agenda to be discussed
Other items that may be in the Council Code of Conduct

• How to take roll call and by whom
• Does city staff (besides the City Clerk) need to attend each meeting
• Content and distribution of Council Packet
• The Mayor presides over the meeting
• How to request “the floor” for Council and citizens; is there a suggested length for comments?
More items that may be in the Council Code of Conduct

• Criteria for creation of Boards, Commissions and Committees (to include gender balance requirements)
• How to count an abstention on a motion
• Maintaining decorum and respect at all times
• Repeating some of the requirements of Iowa Code (just to have it all in one place)
• This skit assumes that there is a city administrator/clerk in the community of Anywhere with a street superintendent and three or four employees that take care of the water/sewer and streets. There is also a Police Chief, Fire Chief (volunteer fire department) and a librarian.
• Act I – City Hall a few days before the Council meeting
• *Act II. Saturday morning in front of the police station:*
• Act III: The night of the Council meeting in Council Chambers