



# BOARDS & COMMISSIONS HANDBOOK



» **A guide to serving on a Board or Commission in Bloomfield**

Town of Bloomfield  
800 Bloomfield Avenue  
Bloomfield, CT 06002

[www.bloomfieldct.gov/Boards-Commissions](http://www.bloomfieldct.gov/Boards-Commissions)

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# INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on being appointed as a Town of Bloomfield Board or Commission member! The goal of this handbook is to help prepare you in serving as a member of a Board or Commission. If you have further questions after reading the handbook, please contact your Board or Commission Chair, your Board or Commission Staff Liaison, or the Bloomfield Town Clerk's office at (860) 769-3507.

## ABOUT BLOOMFIELD

Originally part of Windsor, the town of Bloomfield is rooted in a 1640 settlement known as Messenger Farms, located at the eastern end of what is now Park Avenue. By the time it was formally incorporated in 1835, the settlement had grown to over 900 residents. As of the 2020 census, Bloomfield's population is just over 21,000 people.

Bloomfield follows a Town Manager-Town Council form of government. The Council is the Town's elected legislative body, consisting of nine councilors responsible for setting local policy. The Town Manager acts as the Town's "chief executive officer," implementing the policies set forth by the Council and overseeing day-to-day operations of the Town government.

Along with the Town Council and Town Manager, several boards, commissions, and elected and appointed officials administer Town policies and procedures.





# ABOUT BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

There are a number of different types of Boards and Commissions in Bloomfield, including:

## **Town Council Subcommittees**

These subcommittees are chaired by Town Council members. If a member of the community has expertise in the area of the subcommittee they may apply to be ad-hoc members. Ad-hoc members participate in all aspects of the subcommittee, but do not have voting power.

### **Town Council Subcommittees:**

- **Governance, Policy & Economic Development** - This subcommittee is responsible for government relations, central offices and services.
- **Education Workforce, Youth Development & Community Services** - This subcommittee is responsible for review and updates of social services, including youth development and programming, workforce development and senior citizen services, housing, historic preservation, libraries, parks and recreation and cemeteries.
- **Finance, Budget, Audit & Bonding** - The role of this subcommittee is to provide an opportunity for detailed discussion and consideration of financial matters, with regular reporting to the full Town Council.
- **Public Health, Safety & Environment** - The role of this subcommittee is to improve the safety, well-being and quality of life for the citizens of Bloomfield by examining and reporting on management practices, methods and programs used by The Police Department, Bloomfield Fire, Blue Hills Fire, Bloomfield Volunteer Ambulance, West Hartford Bloomfield Health District and Bloomfield Emergency Operations. This subcommittee may also initiate discussion and provide guidance on the town's efforts to improve the natural environment.



## **Appointed Boards & Commissions (by Town Council or Town Manager)**

This group is comprised of volunteers from the community who have applied and been appointed to the position after filling out a Boards & Commissions interest form and submitting it to the Town Clerk's office online or in-person. The majority of these Boards & Commissions are recommended via the Board Chair and/or the town Republican & Democratic Town Committees, and then approved and appointed by the full Town Council. One Commission is appointed by the Town Manager (noted below). All appointees follow the same application process.

### **Appointed Boards & Commissions:**

- **Beautification Committee (BBC)** - This committee promotes and facilitates activities that improve the appearance of the public gardens in town with the support of the Department of Public Works.
- **Bloomfield Charter Revision Committee** - The Commission is charged with undertaking a thorough review of the current Town Charter and all aspects of the structure of Town Government, being mindful of adhering to, among others, principles of sustainability and that it is equitable for and inclusive of all our citizens, and further, shall draft any Charter amendments relative to the operation of the Town and effective representation of the people of this Town.
- **Bloomfield Housing Authority (BHA)** - BHA manages 17 housing units for low- and moderate-income residents at various locations scattered throughout Bloomfield.
- **Board of Assessment Appeals (BAA)** - This Board hears taxpayer appeals of their tax assessments for real estate, business personal property, and supplemental motor vehicle assessments.
- **Commission on Aging** - The mission of this Commission is to honor the dignity and diversity of Bloomfield residents who are age 55 or older through health, nutrition, transportation, and social programs that support and enhance their quality of life.
- **Conservation, Energy & Environment Committee (CEEC)** - This committee advises the Town Council on a variety of conservation, renewable energy, and energy usage in town. They may also investigate factors detrimental to the physical environment of Bloomfield, and investigate laws, regulations, and programs pertaining to pollution control and abatement.
- **Economic Development Commission/Development Agency** - This Commission was established by town ordinance to assist in redeveloping areas for economic development and to assist in project planning. It makes related recommendations to the Town Council. **Appointed by the Town Manager.**
- **Emergency Medical Systems Committee** - This committee provides the Town Council with a periodic summary of Bloomfield EMS Systems, and creates and implements activities to foster support and interest in current Bloomfield EMS programs.
- **Fair Rent Commission** - This Commission exists to maintain reasonable rental rates and facilitate fair rental increases on residential properties in town. The Commission investigates and acts on complaints and inquires, and makes referrals as appropriate.
- **Filley Park Committee** - This committee oversees fundraising efforts for the renovation, upkeep, and/or replacement of park environs at Filley Park.



- **Golf Advisory Committee** - The Golf Advisory Committee is to provide a mechanism for ongoing citizen input to the Director of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Leisure Services, who is the Town Manager's designee for the operation of the Town's municipal golf course.
- **Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission (IWWC)** - This Commission is responsible for the preservation and protection of the inland wetland and watercourse resources in Bloomfield as authorized by the State of Connecticut Inland Wetlands Act. The Commission is responsible for and enforces the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Regulations of the Town.
- **Juvenile Review Board** - This Board provides a community-based alternative and diversionary program for juvenile offenders from Bloomfield who are at-risk of being referred to local courts or the Department of Children and Families.
- **Parks & Recreation Committee** - This committee works with the Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Services department concerning policies, programs, and fees.
- **Public Art Commission** - This Commission aims to enrich Bloomfield's visual landscape with works of art and to support quality artistic opportunities for residents, workers and visitors to experience and enjoy.
- **Town Center Economic Development Commission (TCEDC)** - is charged with the revitalization of Town Center and guiding economic growth in the Town, focusing on encouraging new business investment through responsible growth while nurturing the existing business base. **Appointed by the Town Manager.**
- **Youth Adult Council** - This Council works with the Youth Services Coordinator to establish programs and resources to benefit Bloomfield's youth.
- **West Hartford/Bloomfield Health District Board** - This Board may make and promulgate reasonable rules and regulations for the promotion of general health within the Health District not to conflict with law or with the Public Health Code. The Board functions as the general policy making body for the Health District and has overall budget adoption authority.

### **Elected Boards**

This group is elected during general elections in the Town of Bloomfield. Candidates generally come from recommendations from the town Republican & Democratic Town Committees, although this is not always the case.

- **Board of Education (BOE)** - This Board represents Bloomfield residents in carrying out the mandates of the General Statutes pertaining to education, and determines all questions of general policy to be employed in the conduct of the schools.
- **Library Board of Trustees** - This Board governs the library by overseeing and recommending financial, administrative, and service objectives, and by strengthening, through advocacy, the library's standing within the town. The Board works closely with the Library Director in helping the library adhere to the values in its mission statement and achieve the goals outlined in its strategic plan.
- **Town Plan and Zoning Commission (TPZ)** - This Commission guides residential and commercial development in Bloomfield through zoning and subdivision regulations.
- **Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)** - This Board listens to and decides on appeals made by residents or commercial developers regarding the enforcement of the town's Zoning Regulations.

## **Mayoral Ad-hoc Committees**

These committees are appointed by the Mayor of Bloomfield generally for a short-term, task-oriented purpose limited in scope. Interested applicants fill out a Boards & Commissions interest form and submit it to the Town Clerk's office, who then passes them along to the Mayor for appointment.

- **Bloomfield Humanities Committee** - This committee is committed to celebrating the rich diversity of Bloomfield--working to increase cultural awareness, understanding, and positive relationships, all while fostering civic engagement.
- **Design Review Board (BDRB)** - This Board receives and responds to referrals from the Town Plan and Zoning Commission. They may also receive and respond to referrals from the Town Council and Administration for any public or private building projects located in the Town Center, or elsewhere, deemed to benefit from review.
- **Library Building Committee** - This committee is charged with seeking a new facility for Prosser Public Library, either by renovating and expanding the current building or another alternative. The overriding objective of the project is to effectively, economically and responsibly maximize library space, to provide the most benefit, from a library services perspective, to the community of Bloomfield.
- **Rockwell Park Study Design Planning Team** - This team advises and supports the scope and budget of the Rockwell Park project in order to provide an efficient and effective regional community sports park/complex capable of addressing the needs of the community.
- **Trails Committee** - This committee serves as the voice of the community regarding trails and works to capture recommendations for improvement and/or maintenance.

## **As-Needed**

These committees are activated as-needed when specific needs or issues arise in the community.

More information and links to each Board and Commission page at [bloomfieldct.gov/Boards-Commissions](http://bloomfieldct.gov/Boards-Commissions)



# BOARDS ROLES & STAFF SUPPORT

There are a number of roles within Boards and Commissions, including:

- **Chair**

- The Chair presides over meetings, sets the meeting agenda, provides leadership and direction, and communicates with the Staff Liaison.

- **Vice-Chair**

- The Vice-Chair takes the role of Chair when the Chair is absent.

- **Staff Liaison**

- Each Board & Commission will have a Town of Bloomfield Staff liaison. This person will interface between the Board & Commission and the Town, and is often the person who will provide administrative support.

- **Recording Secretary**

- Some Boards & Commissions have a Recording Secretary, who provides administrative support. This person takes meeting minutes, sets up Zoom and YouTube links, posts agendas, updates the Board or Commission website, and other administrative tasks.



# PUBLIC MEETING LAWS

There are regulations governing public meetings. Some of the primary requirements are around notification of meetings and notifications of meeting agendas.

**NOTIFICATION OF MEETING:** Notice of a meeting has to occur 48 hours in advance of the meeting, including the location of the meeting. If the meeting is being held virtually or in hybrid format the virtual connection link (i.e. Zoom link) needs to be included. The meeting notice has to be filed in the Town Clerk's Office, posted on the Town website, and sent to the Board & Commission members.

**NOTIFICATION OF AGENDA:** Notice of the agenda has to occur 24 hours in advance of the meeting. In addition to agenda items, the agenda must include the location/s of the meeting, including the virtual location (i.e. Zoom link) if there is a virtual option. The agenda has to be filed in the Town Clerks Office, posted on the Town website, and sent to the Board & Commission members.

**NOTIFICATION OF SPECIAL MEETING:** Any meeting held by a Board or Commission that is not on the meeting schedule filed with the Town Clerk at least 30 days prior is considered a special meeting, and should be labeled as such. Notice of the meeting with the agenda (including time, date, and location, including virtual information) has to occur 24 hours in advance of the meeting. This information must be filed in the Town Clerks Office, posted on the Town website, and sent to the Board & Commission members 24 hours in advance. Nothing other than what is listed on the agenda can be discussed at a special meeting.

Further information on public meeting laws is found in the appendix of this handbook. For additional questions or clarification, please contact the Town Clerk's office at (860) 769-3507.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**I'm interested in learning more about each Board & Commission. Where can I find more information?**

- Visit [www.bloomfieldct.gov/Boards-Commissions](http://www.bloomfieldct.gov/Boards-Commissions). This page will give you a brief introduction of each Board & Commission, and link you to their full page where you can learn more.

**I'd like to receive notice of Board & Commission meetings, agendas, and minutes to my email.**

**How do I do that?**

- Visit [bloomfieldct.gov/stayconnected](http://bloomfieldct.gov/stayconnected). Here you can subscribe to news/announcements, agendas, and minutes for whichever Boards & Commissions you choose. When the items you selected are posted to the town website, you will receive an email with a link to the full information (agenda, minutes, etc).

**I'm not on a Board or Commission, but am interested in applying. What are the next steps?**

- A great first step is to attend the meetings of the Board or Commission that you are interested in. You are also welcome to schedule a meeting with the Board or Commission Chair to express your interest and learn more about the workings of the Board or Commission.
- Apply to the Board or Commission via the webform at [bloomfieldct.gov/Boards-Commissions-Interest-Form](http://bloomfieldct.gov/Boards-Commissions-Interest-Form) or print out a paper copy to submit at the Town Clerk's office at Town Hall (800 Bloomfield Ave). All applications are processed by the Town Clerk's office and then passed on to the Town Council for appointment. You will be notified of the outcome of the selection process.

**I'm on a Board or Commission and need to resign before my term is up. How do I do this?**

- Notify the Chair of your Board or Commission, and submit your resignation in writing to the Town Clerk's office.

**I'm on a Board or Commission. What happens when my term ends?**

- If you are interested in continuing to serve on the Board or Commission, fill out a reappointment request via the webform at [bloomfieldct.gov/Boards-Commissions-Reappointment-Request](http://bloomfieldct.gov/Boards-Commissions-Reappointment-Request) or print out a paper copy to submit at the Town Clerk's office at Town Hall. All applications are processed by the Town Clerk's office and then passed on to the Town Council for appointment. You will be notified of the outcome of the selection process.
- If you are not interested in continuing to serve on the Board or Commission, notify the Chair of your Board or Commission.

# MEETING PROCEDURE

Board and Commission meetings are structured using Robert's Rules of Order. Bloomfield Town Council has adapted rules of procedure for Town Council meetings, included in the appendix of this handbook.

## Robert's Rules Basics from [BoardEffect.com](http://BoardEffect.com)

### THE 6 TYPES OF MOTIONS

- Main Motion: Introduce a new item
- Subsidiary Motion: Change or affect how to handle a main motion (vote on this before main motion)
- Privileged Motion: Urgent or important matter unrelated to pending business
- Incidental Motion: Questions procedure of other motions (must consider before the other motion)
- Motion to Table: Kills a motion
- Motion to Postpone: Delays a vote (can reopen debate on the main motion)

### ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER MOTION STEPS

- Motion: A member rises or raises a hand to signal the chairperson.
- Second: Another member seconds the motion.
- Restate motion: The chairperson restates the motion.
- Debate: The members debate the motion.
- Vote: The chairperson restates the motion, and then first asks for affirmative votes, and then negative votes.
- Announce the vote: The chairperson announces the result of the vote and any instructions.

### REQUESTING POINTS OF SOMETHING

Certain situations need attention during the meeting, but they don't require a motion, second, debate or voting. It's permissible to state a point during a meeting where the chairperson needs to handle a situation right away. Board members can declare a Point of Order, Point of Information, Point of Inquiry or Point of Personal Privilege.

- Point of Order: Draws attention to a breach of rules, improper procedure, breaching of established practices, etc.
- Point of Information: A member may need to bring up an additional point or additional information (in the form of a nondebatable statement) so that the other members can make fully informed votes.
- Point of Inquiry: A member may use point of inquiry to ask for clarification in a report to make better voting decisions.
- Point of Personal Privilege: A member may use point of personal privilege to address the physical comfort of the setting such as temperature or noise. Members may also use it to address the accuracy of published reports or the accuracy of a member's conduct.

# Robert's Rules Reference Guide

To:	You Say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Adjourn	"I move that we adjourn"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Recess	"I move that we recess until..."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Personal preference--noise, room temperature, distractions	"Point of privilege"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair Decides
Suspend further consideration of something	"I move that we table it"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
End debate	"I move the previous question"	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Postpone consideration of something	"I move that we postpone this matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move that this motion be amended by..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce business	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

# APPENDIX



# **TOWN COUNCIL RULES OF PROCEDURE**

## **TOWN OF BLOOMFIELD**

### **POLICY MEMORANDUM**

SUBJECT: Town Council of Bloomfield Rules of Procedure

NO: 110.05

DATE: 6/21/2016

AMENDED: July 11, 2012

APPROVED: September 12, 2016

AMENDED: April 9, 2018

AMENDED: September 29, 2020

AMENDED: November 27, 2023

AMENDED: July 8, 2024

DISTRIBUTION: Town Council

#### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish a formal Rules of Procedure for Town Council meetings.

#### **II. RESPONSIBILITY**

Town Council Members

Town Manager

Clerk of Council

#### **III. PROCEDURE**

All Town Council meetings shall use the following Rules of Procedure when holding a meeting:

##### **A. ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING:**

The Council shall meet on the call of the Town Manager within two weeks after election. The Council shall elect a Chair whose title designation shall be Mayor, a Vice Chair whose title designation shall be Deputy Mayor, and such other offices as it may determine necessary to serve for the ensuing period until the next local election.

##### **B. REGULAR MEETINGS:**

Regular meetings of the Council shall be held in the Town Hall beginning at 7:00 p.m. on the second Monday of each month unless otherwise determined by the Council. In the event that said Monday falls on a State or Federal holiday, meetings shall be held on the following Tuesdays.

##### **C. SPECIAL MEETINGS:**

Special meetings of the Council may be called by the Mayor or by not less than three members of the Council. Notice of a special meeting shall be given not less than twenty-four hours prior to the time of such meeting, not including Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, by filing a notice of the time and place thereof in the office of the Town Clerk. Any such notice received under this section shall be posted inside the office of the Town Clerk and be posted on the meeting board located outside of the Town Clerk's office, as well as on the Town's Web Site. The requirement that such notice be given not less than twenty-four hours prior to the meeting may be waived, in case of an emergency, by the Mayor or not less than three members of the Council, who shall state in such notice the specific nature of such emergency which would preclude the giving of such twenty-four hours' notice. The notice shall specify the date, time, and place of the special meeting and business to be transacted. No other business shall be considered at such meeting. In addition, at least twenty-four hours prior to the time of such meeting, written notice shall be delivered to the usual place of abode of each member of the Council and the Town Manager so that such is received prior to such special meeting,

unless the twenty-four hour notice is waived as set forth above. This notice may be delivered by either hand-delivery or electronic delivery. If delivered by electronic delivery, telephone calls shall be made to each member of the Council and the Town Manager by the Clerk of the Council that such a special meeting has been set. The requirement of delivery of any such notice may be dispensed with as to any member of the Council who is actually present at the meeting at the time it convenes.

The Clerk of the Council shall certify upon the original copy of the notice filed with the records of the Council by whom the meeting was called and the manner in which the notice was delivered to the members of the Council and the Town Manager.

**D. PUBLIC MEETINGS & HEARINGS:**

No ordinance or resolution shall be adopted, no appointment or removal of members of any permanent board, agency, or committee shall be made, nor commission appointed except in a meeting of the Council open to the public. The same process shall be followed for the creation or dissolution of any such entity itself. Recommendations for appointment or removal of permanent committee members or creation or dissolution of such committees shall come from the approval by the Council. Any mayoral appointment or removal shall be made known publicly at the next meeting of the Council presided over by the Mayor.

At least one public hearing, five days' notice of which shall be given by publication in a daily or weekly newspaper having a circulation in the Town and by posting at the Town Hall and on the Town Website, shall be held by the Council before any ordinance shall be passed.

For items requiring public hearings, Council will not act on that item at the same meeting as the as the public hearing.

**E. QUORUM:**

The presence of a majority of the members of the Council shall constitute a quorum, but no ordinance, resolution or vote, except a vote to adjourn or to fix the time and place of the next meeting of the Council shall be adopted by less than five affirmative votes.

**F. THE MAYOR:**

The Mayor shall preside at all meetings. The Mayor shall preserve order and decorum. The Mayor shall determine the seating arrangement of Town Council members for all regular and special meetings. The Mayor shall decide all questions or orders, without debate except at the Mayor's request. The Mayor may speak and vote on all questions. The Mayor shall be an ex-officio member of all Council sub-committees without the right to vote, except for those sub-committees to which the Mayor is appointed as a member.

In the absence of the Mayor for whatever cause arising, the Deputy Mayor shall act as Mayor and as such, shall have all the powers and duties of the office of the Mayor.

In addition, if neither the Mayor nor the Deputy Mayor are available to preside at a Council meeting, a majority of the Council members present shall elect one of themselves to preside over the meeting. This presiding councilor shall only have the power to preside over that one meeting, shall preserve order and decorum, and shall decide all questions or orders without debate, except as the presiding councilor shall request.

The Mayor shall represent the Town as the titular head of the government at meetings of such officials representing other municipalities, ceremonies, public gatherings and upon such other occasions as the Mayor's presence in such capacity may be beneficial to the Town.

The Mayor shall designate committees of the Council and appoint and/or remove members thereto, subject to being overruled by the Council.

The Mayor shall designate ad hoc committees of the Council and ad hoc public community committees and appoint and/or remove members thereto. An ad hoc committee is defined as one that is created for a limited time and a specific, limited stated purpose. The specific time period need not be stated in the designation of the committee but may be contingent in the accomplishment of its specific objectives.

**G. CLERK OF COUNCIL:**

The Clerk of the Council shall be appointed by the Council and shall keep the minutes of its proceedings which shall be a public record, and perform other duties as may be assigned by action of the Council.

**H. THE TOWN MANAGER:**

The Town Manager shall attend all meetings of the Council with the right to speak but not to vote, and shall perform other such duties as may be assigned by the ordinance or resolution of the Council (Charter, Sec. 502). The Council by simple majority vote may also ask the Town Manager to perform such other duties as it may assign in accordance with his or her contract with the Town.

**I. COMMITTEES:**

The Council may also from time to time appoint permanent, standing committees of the Council. Permanent standing committees of the Council shall be:

- I. Finance, Budget, Audit & Bonding
- II. Governance, Policy & Economic Development
- III. Public Health, Safety & Environment
- IV. Education, Workforce, Youth Development & Community Services

The meeting schedule of regular Council committees shall be established annually, in advance, and in accordance with State law. No special committee meeting shall be called without the prior written consent of the Mayor.

**J. ORDER OF BUSINESS OF COUNCIL MEETINGS:**

At all regular meetings of the Council the order of business shall be as follows:

- I. Pledge of Allegiance
- II. Roll Call
- III. Announcements and Presentations
- IV. Citizen's Statements and Petitions
- V. Report from Council Subcommittees
- VI. Council Business (beginning with Consent Agenda)
- VII. Financial Report
- VIII. Report from the Town Manager
- IX. Report from the Mayor
- X. Approval of Minutes
- XI. Council Comments (2 minutes)
- XII. Executive Session (if needed)
- XIII. Adjournment

**K. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:**

Except when a member of the Council has or desires the floor, the Town Manager shall have the privilege of the floor for the purpose of providing information to the Council concerning the business and affairs of the Town. The Town Attorney shall likewise have the privilege of the floor on the introduction or interpretation of any existing or proposed ordinance or resolution or on any question of legal procedure.

It shall be the policy of this Council to allow members of the public to address the Council during Citizen's Statements and Petitions. Statements by members of the public may be oral or written, shall start with the speaker's name and address, and shall follow the General Procedures for Public Hearings and Public Forums (appended to these Rules of Procedure), unless permitted by the Mayor or councilor presiding. The Mayor or councilor presiding may permit additional statements by the same person during Citizen's Statements and Petitions or at such other times during the agenda of Council meetings as he or she deems appropriate, subject to being overruled by the Council.

**L. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

The rules of procedure shall be:

- (a) An executive session may be convened by affirmative vote of two-thirds of such body present and voting.
- (b) Attendance at the executive session shall be limited to the Council and such other persons as may be required for advice and information as permitted by State law.
- (c) Executive sessions shall be only for those purposes permitted by State law. Any motion for executive session shall so specify the reason. Discussion in executive session shall be limited to the reason specified.

**M. MOTIONS:**

When a motion is made and seconded, it shall be stated by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, or councilor presiding and subject to amendment or withdrawal, except that such withdrawal cannot be made subsequent to a voted amendment, except as provided by Robert's Rules of Order.

When a motion is under debate, no further action shall be received except (1) to adjourn, (2) to recess, (3) to table, (4) for the previous question, (5) to limit or extend debate, (6) to postpone to a time and date certain, (7) to refer to committee, (8) to amend, (9) to postpone indefinitely, which motions shall have precedence in the order indicated.

Motions to table, to postpone to a time and date certain or to postpone indefinitely once having been decided, shall not be reconsidered.

**N. VOTING:**

The ayes, nays or abstentions of each council member on each vote shall be recorded in the minutes. If the vote is unanimous, the vote shall be indicated as unanimous.

**O. CITIZEN'S PETITIONS**

Any petition by a citizen requesting Council action shall be in writing and state the citizen's name and address. If six (6) members of the Council shall so vote, such petition shall lie over to one of the next three succeeding meetings of the Council, to be placed on the Agenda and taken up during item VI of the regular order of business; but in no event shall such petition be acted upon at a meeting at which the petition is presented.

**P. SPECIAL COUNCIL ASSIGNMENTS:**

The Mayor shall assign all members of the Council desiring such, with the approval of the Council, as liaisons with council-appointed Town committees and Town-related Agencies through and with the cooperation of the Town Manager, so as to be particularly informed in the assigned area of concern. Assignments will be made in the areas of Town operation that are deemed appropriate by the Council. Each appointee shall report to the Council upon request or at his or her own discretion as to matters related to his or her respective area.

**Q. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE AND RESOLUTIONS:**

All ordinances and resolutions except those relating to appointment or designation of officers of the Council or its internal procedure shall be introduced in accordance with Sections 307, 308, 309 and 310 of the Town Charter.

**R. PARLIAMENTARY AND CHARTER AUTHORITY:**

The last published edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority for the Council, except as otherwise provided in these rules; and except that should any of these rules be inconsistent with the provisions of the Charter, then the Charter shall prevail, except that there may be discussion after a motion to table has been offered.

**S. MINUTES:**

The Clerk of the Council shall keep the minutes of all Council meetings which shall contain a summary of council discussions and actions. Any statements to be made part of the minutes must be submitted to the Clerk of the Council in writing during such meeting, provided, that any Town Financial reports submitted to the Council shall be appended to the minutes of that meeting.

**T. AGENDA:**

The Town Manager shall cause to be prepared a preliminary agenda containing those items of business to be considered at each Council meeting. The Mayor, or in his/her absence, the Deputy Mayor, shall review this preliminary agenda with the Town Manager, and shall determine the final agenda, taking into consideration any matter suggested by a Council member or the Town Manager. Should any item requested by a Council member not be included for the agenda, the Mayor, or the Deputy Mayor, as the case may be, shall inform the Council member why the matter was not included, and upon such member's request, the matter shall be referred to the appropriate subcommittee for a determination as to whether the matter should be referred to, and placed on the Council agenda.

No item which is not listed on the regular agenda shall be considered as new business by the Council unless this provision is waived by a vote of two-thirds (2/3's) of the total membership of the Council (6) at the beginning of the Council Business portion of the meeting. Council members requesting that an item be included on the agenda shall be responsible for opening discussion on such item, and providing facts necessary for any action requested on such item.

**U. CONSENT AGENDA**

(including, without limitation: approval of minutes; routine ordinances or resolutions; final/second readings of appropriations, ordinances or resolutions; other routine items)

After a motion to adopt a Consent Agenda is made and seconded, the Mayor or Deputy Mayor shall ask for separations. Any agenda item on a Consent Agenda shall be separated at the request of any Councilmember shall have a second followed by a vote (5) . After any separations, there is no debate on approving the Consent Agenda - it shall be voted on or adopted without objection.

**V. MEETING CONDUCT RULE:**

During Council Comments, members shall abstain from revisiting prior agenda items and limit their remarks to a maximum of 2 minutes. Council members are expected to maintain the decorum of Council meetings at all times. Council members must ensure that policy discussions remain grounded in facts and relevance, refraining from appeals to emotion. Council members shall not denigrate or insult other Council members. Should a Council member engage in such behavior, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, or presiding officer shall immediately note that the Council member is out of order and request that they desist from further inappropriate behavior. If the inappropriate behavior persists, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, or presiding officer may revoke council comments from the Council member at future meetings. For any repeated violation of these rules, the Presiding Officer or Chair may order discipline, up to and including censure. Any discipline issued is subject to an appeal process at the meeting of the order discipline.

**W. TELEPHONIC AND ELECTRONIC VOTING:**

Telephonic voting shall only be permitted if the absent member of the Council can be verified through a computer link-up or similar manner so the absent member of the Council can be confirmed by the members of the Council physically present at the meeting. All verbal communication by the absent Council member must be by telephonic communication in a manner that can be heard by not only the rest of the Council but also by the Clerk of the Council and any members of the audience that are present, and, if such Council meeting is televised, by the watching public. This process can only be carried out if all other members of the Council have been notified not less than forty-eight hours in advance of the Council meeting at which this telephonic voting will take place.

**X. SUSPENSION OR AMENDMENT OF RULES:** Any of these rules may be suspended by the affirmative vote of not less than two-thirds of the members of the Council, provided that such action is not inconsistent with any provisions of the Charter.

Any amendment to these rules shall be submitted in writing at any meeting of the Council and may be adopted by the affirmative vote of not less than two-thirds of the members of the Council at a subsequent meeting of the Council.

**GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS AND FORUMS<sup>1</sup>**

These procedures are promulgated in accordance with the Bloomfield Town Council Rules of Procedure and shall be posted on the Town Clerk's bulletin board. The following represents the procedures for public hearings and public forums (including budget hearings), provided that the Mayor<sup>2</sup> may amend these procedures when conditions require or warrant:

- I. A sign-up sheet shall be provided at least fifteen minutes prior to the hearing.
- II. Speakers will be called in order from the sign-up sheet, provided that only those persons who have not yet addressed the Council on the issues subject to hearing shall be called.
- III. The Mayor may permit a presentation by the Administration prior to calling on members of the public.
- IV. Unless the Mayor permits, or the Council waives its rules by a two-thirds vote, only Bloomfield residents or taxpayers may address the Council.
- V. All speakers will begin by stating their full name and address.

- VI. After each person on the sign-up sheet has spoken, the Mayor may call on other persons who have not yet spoken who wish to address the Council.
- VII. All speakers shall be confined to three minutes each, except that persons providing the Council with a recognized group's duly authorized position on an issue may speak for up to five minutes.
- VIII. Speakers may not yield their allotted time to others in order for others to expand their three minutes.
- IX. If a hearing is continued to another date and time, the Council will continue the hearing by:
  - i. Providing an additional sign-up sheet fifteen minutes prior to the continued hearing;
  - ii. First calling speakers from the original sign-up sheet who have not yet spoken;
  - iii. After completing the original sign-up sheet, calling speakers from the new sign-up sheet in the order in which they have signed said sheet, provided that only those persons who have not yet addressed the Council on the issues subject to hearing shall be called;
  - iv. After each person on both sign-up sheets has been given an opportunity to speak, the Mayor shall call on other persons who have not yet spoken at the original or continued hearing who wish to address the Council.
- X. At the conclusion of the hearing or continued hearing, the Council may, by majority vote, permit speakers who have already addressed the Council at the original or continued hearing to address them again for an additional three minutes. The Mayor may set a total time limitation for receiving such additional comments and shall announce such limitation prior to the above-referenced vote by the Council.
- XI. If the number of speakers and the time obligations of the Council permit, the Mayor may announce, at the commencement of the hearing, that each speaker may have an additional specified time to address the Council.

<sup>1</sup>These procedures shall not apply to hearings or matters where procedures are subject to contrary state or federal law or regulation.

<sup>2</sup>Throughout this document, "Mayor" shall mean Mayor or, in the Mayor's absence, the presiding officer of the hearing or meeting.

# FREEDOM OF INFORMATION GUIDELINES FOR MEETINGS USING ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

*The following summary of section 149 of Public Act No. 21-2 (June Special Session), as amended by section 1 of Public Act No. 22-3, was drafted by counsel at the FOIC. It is provided only as a guide. While every effort has been made to ensure an accurate interpretation of their provisions, the public is encouraged to consult an official copy of the public acts.<sup>1</sup>*

## **A Primer Regarding Public Meetings Held Using Electronic Equipment**

Section 149 of Public Act No. 21-2, as amended by section 1 of Public Act No. 22-3, authorizes public agencies to hold public meetings solely or in part using electronic equipment<sup>2</sup>, and establishes requirements and procedures for holding such meetings. Public agencies are not required to hold meetings using electronic equipment.

Agencies that hold a public meeting using electronic equipment must comply with the requirements and procedures set forth in section 149 of Public Act No. 21-2, as amended by section 1 of Public Act No. 22-3, and in accordance with the provisions of section 1-225 of the Freedom of Information (“FOI”) Act.

### **❖ Regular Meetings Held Solely or In Part Using Electronic Equipment<sup>3</sup>**

#### **➤ Notice and Agenda:**

- Not less than 48 hours before a public agency conducts a regular meeting using electronic equipment, the agency must provide:
  - (1) Direct notification in writing or by electronic transmission<sup>4</sup> to each member of the public agency; and
  - (2) Post a notice that the agency intends to conduct the meeting solely or in part using electronic equipment. Such notice must be posted as follows:
    - i) in the agency's regular office or place of business;

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2021/ACT/PA/PDF/2021PA-00002-R00SB-01202SS1-PA.PDF>;  
<https://www.cga.ct.gov/2022/ACT/PA/PDF/2022PA-00003-R00HB-05269-PA.PDF>.

<sup>2</sup> "Electronic equipment" is defined in §1-200(12) of the FOI Act as "any technology that facilitates real-time public access to meetings, including, but not limited to, telephonic, video or other conferencing platforms".

<sup>3</sup> These requirements do not apply to meetings of the General Assembly.

<sup>4</sup> "Electronic transmission" is defined in §1-200(13) as "any form or process of communication not directly involving the physical transfer of paper or another tangible medium, which (A) is capable of being retained, retrieved and reproduced by the recipient, and (B) is retrievable in paper form by the recipient."

- ii) in the office and on the website of the Secretary of the State for any state or quasi-public agency; in the clerk's office for any agency of a political subdivision of the state; or in the clerk's office for each municipal member of any multitown district or agency; and
- iii) on the agency's website, if available.
- Not less than 24 hours before a public agency conducts a regular meeting using electronic equipment, the agency must post a meeting agenda. Such agenda must be posted as follows:
  - i) in the agency's regular office or place of business;
  - ii) in the office and on the website of the Secretary of the State for any state or quasi-public agency; in the clerk's office for any agency of a political subdivision of the state; or in the clerk's office for each municipal member of any multitown district or agency; and
  - iii) on the agency's website, if available.
- The notice and agenda must (1) be posted in accordance with the provisions of section 1-225 of the FOI Act and (2) include instructions for the public to attend and provide comment or otherwise participate in the meeting, if permitted.

➤ **Additional Requirements for Regular Meetings Held Solely Using Electronic Equipment:**

- If a public agency intends to hold a regular meeting solely using electronic equipment, the agency must:
  - (1) Provide any member of the public, upon request, with a physical location and any electronic equipment necessary to attend the meeting in real-time.
    - a. Such request must be submitted in writing and not less than 24-hours prior to the meeting.
  - (2) Allow such individual the same opportunities to provide comment or otherwise participate in the meeting as would be afforded if the meeting was held in person, with the following exception:
    - a. The public agency is not required to adjourn or postpone a meeting if such person loses the ability to participate because of an interruption, failure or degradation of such person's connection to the meeting by electronic equipment.
  - (3) Record or transcribe the meeting, except for any portion of an executive session.

- a. Any recordings or transcriptions must be posted on the agency's website and made available to the public to view, listen to and copy in the agency's office or regular place of business not later than 7 days after the meeting.
- b. Any recordings or transcriptions must be available to the public for at least 45 days after the meeting.

(4) If a quorum of the members of a public agency attend a meeting by means of electronic equipment from the same physical location, permit members of the public to attend the meeting from that physical location.

- If a member of a public agency loses the ability to participate because of an interruption, failure or degradation of that member's connection to the meeting by electronic equipment, the public agency is not required to adjourn or postpone a meeting unless such member's participation is necessary to form a quorum.

❖ **Special Meetings Held Solely or in Part Using Electronic Equipment<sup>5</sup>**

➢ Notice and Agenda:

- The notice and agenda must:
  - (1) Be posted not less than 24 hours prior to the special meeting in accordance with the provisions of section 1-225 of the FOI Act;
  - (2) Include whether the special meeting will be conducted solely or in part using electronic equipment; and
  - (3) Include instructions for the public to attend and provide comment or otherwise participate in the meeting, if permitted.

❖ **Votes Taken By Roll Call at Regular and Special Meetings Held Using Electronic Equipment:**

➢ Any vote taken at a meeting during which any member of the public agency participates using electronic equipment must be taken by roll call, unless the vote is unanimous.

❖ **Minutes for Regular and Special Meetings Held Using Electronic Equipment:**

➢ The minutes for a meeting during which any member of the public agency participates using electronic equipment must list the members who attended the meeting in person and those members who attended the meeting using electronic equipment.

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<sup>5</sup> These requirements do not apply to public meetings of the General Assembly.

- The minutes must also be made available and posted in accordance with the provisions of section 1-225 of the FOI Act.

❖ **Participation at Regular and Special Meetings Held Using Electronic Equipment:**

- Opportunity for Public to Comment or other Otherwise Participate:
  - A public agency is not required to offer members of the public who attend a meeting using electronic equipment the opportunity for public comment or other participation if such opportunity is not required for members of the public who attend a public meeting in person.
- Requirement for Member of Public Agency and Public to Identify Self:
  - Any member of a public agency or the public who participates orally in a meeting held using electronic equipment must make a “good faith effort” to state such person’s name and title, if applicable, at the outset of each occasion that such person participates orally during an uninterrupted dialogue or series of questions and answers.

❖ **Interruption of Regular or Special Meeting Due to the Failure, Disconnection or Degradation of Electronic Equipment - Resumption of Meeting:**

- If a meeting is interrupted due to the failure, disconnection or, in the chairperson’s determination, unacceptable degradation of electronic equipment, or if a member necessary to form a quorum loses the ability to participate due to the failure, disconnection or degradation of the member’s connection, the public agency may resume the meeting in accordance with the following:
  - The meeting may be resumed not less than 30 minutes and not more than 2 hours from the time of interruption or the chairperson’s determination.
  - The meeting may be resumed:
    - (1) in person, if a quorum is present in person, or
    - (2) if a quorum is restored by means of electronic equipment, solely or in part by such equipment.
  - If a meeting is resumed, then the public agency must:
    - (1) Restore electronic access to the public if such capability has been restored; and
    - (2) Post, if practicable, a notification on the agency’s website of the expected time of resumption or of the adjournment or postponement of the meeting.

- At the beginning of any meeting, the public agency may announce what preplanned procedures are in place for resumption of a meeting that is interrupted.

❖ **Interruption of Regular or Special Meeting Held Using Electronic Equipment Due to Disorderly Conduct:**

- If a meeting is interrupted by any person or groups of persons attending such meeting by electronic equipment so as to render the orderly conduct of such meeting unfeasible and order cannot be restored, the public agency may terminate such person's or group of persons' attendance by electronic equipment until such person or persons conforms to order, or, if need be, until such meeting is closed.