

CITY OF CHARLOTTE
COUNCIL POLICY

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to temporarily modify provisions of Council Policies 2016-02 Citizen Comments and 2016-04 Order of Business at City Council Meetings in order to conduct meetings as efficiently as possible during the COVID-19 epidemic while also complying with the provisions of the City Charter and state statute relevant to the conduct of City business.

2. AUTHORITY

This policy is adopted pursuant to the provisions of section 15.264(5) of Public Act 267 of 1976 as amended (Open Meetings Act) and section 4.71(I) of the City Charter.

3. BACKGROUND

On March 10, 2020, Governor Gretchen Witmer declared a state of emergency to maximize efforts to slow the spread of cases of COVID-19 in the state. Subsequent guidance from the Governor's office, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Barry-Eaton District Health Department, among other purposes, offer recommendations to limit public gatherings. Governor Witmer has issued an executive order suspending portions of the Open Meetings Act applicable to state government boards and commissions. No similar actions have been taken to suspend portions of the Act applicable to local governments. Accordingly, it is deemed prudent to conduct meetings in a more efficient manner so as to reduce the potential for exposure to the virus while still conducting public business in accordance with the law and standards of good government.

4. TEMPORARY POLICY CHANGES

Provisions of Council Policies 2016-02 and 2016-04 to the contrary notwithstanding, the following rules and procedures shall be applicable to all regular and special Council meetings that occur through May 31, 2020 or until the rescission of Governor Witmer's emergency declaration, whichever occurs first:

4.1 Citizen comments at public meetings shall be limited to a single occasion during each meeting near the beginning of the meeting. The duration of comments by any citizen shall not exceed three minutes.

4.2 Citizen comments during public hearings shall be limited to three minutes.

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4.3 The action “Approval of the Agenda” shall be replaced with a “Motion for Unanimous Consent” to all business items except for those on which one or more members of the Council desire debate, discussion or additional information. Prior to asking for a motion for unanimous consent, the Mayor shall inquire of Council members if there are any items of business on the agenda on which a member wishes to have debate, discussion or additional information. Items so identified will be noted. The Mayor shall then ask for a motion to approve the remainder of the agenda by unanimous consent. Voting on such motion shall be by roll call.

4.4 The “Communications and Committee Reports” section of the agenda shall be limited to reports on important matters that were not previously provided to Council in writing.

5. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This policy shall become effective with the Council meeting that occurs next following its adoption.