

# 2026-2027 Rules and Procedures of York City Council

## SECTION I. GOVERNING AUTHORITY AND GENERAL RULES

The City Council is the legislative body of the City, responsible for setting City policy through the adoption of the City’s budget, ordinances, and resolutions.

## SECTION II. AUTHORITY AND APPLICABILITY

- 1) **Source of Authority:** The Council adopts these rules and procedures under the authority granted by the City Charter, the 3rd Class City Code, the Optional Charter, and the City’s Codified Ordinances, allowing it to determine its own rules, order of business, and meeting conduct.
- 2) **Applicable Laws:** Applicable laws serve as a supplementary guideline where not inconsistent with these rules. Applicable laws shall apply where these rules do not specify a procedure.
- 3) **Adoption and Repeal:** Following a municipal election, adoption of Council’s Rules and Procedures shall be approved by Resolution with the affirmative vote of at least three members of Council and shall become effective upon passage. Any rules or parts thereof that are inconsistent with these procedures are repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.
- 4) **Rule Suspension:** These rules or portions thereof may be suspended during a meeting or hearing by the affirmative vote of four members of the Council.

## SECTION III. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
<b>Liaison</b>	A Council member formally appointed as Council’s representative to a specific city department or governmental entity (as defined by Codified Ordinances or resolution). Liaisons are appointed by resolution at the first meeting in February following a municipal election.
<b>Committee Meetings/Work Sessions</b>	Meetings held for informational purposes. They are informal, and no formal legislative vote will be taken. These sessions must be held in public, unless they meet an exception under the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act, allowing them to be closed executive sessions.
<b>Public Comment (General)</b>	A period established by Council for the public to comment on any concern regarding city business not on the legislative Council agenda.
<b>Public Comment (Legislative)</b>	A period established by Council for the public to comment on a legislative agenda item.
<b>A Bill</b>	A draft of a law presented to Council for enactment.
<b>An Ordinance</b>	A law set forth by governmental authority, specifically a municipal regulation set forth by Council.

<b>A Resolution</b>	A formal expression of opinion, will, or intent voted by an official body, such as Council.
<b>Personal Attack</b>	A comment, criticism, or complaint aimed pointedly at the most intimate aspects of a person, especially in a hostile manner. Personal attacks are not tolerated.

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## SECTION IV. COUNCIL ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP

### A. Reorganization and Officer Election

- 1) **Reorganization Meeting:** Held on the first Monday of January following a municipal election (or the first day following if Monday is a holiday). The purposes are swearing in Council members, and electing officers, and handling urgent general business only.
- 2) **Presiding Officer (Temporary):** Until a Council President is appointed, the City Clerk may serve as temporary presiding officer, or a member of Council shall serve as President Pro-Tempore.
- 3) **Election Procedure:** The first order of business after swearing in is the election of the Council President. The person first receiving three votes shall be elected President. The election is formalized by a resolution. The same procedure is followed for the election of the Vice President.
- 4) **Absence of Officers:** If both the President and Vice President are absent, the remaining Council members shall vote by majority vote to select one of their own to serve as president pro-tempore or temporary presiding officer.

### B. Duties of the Presiding Officer

The Council President (or in absence, the Vice-President or President Pro-Tempore) is the presiding officer of the Council.

- 1) **Legislative Duty:** The presiding officer must promptly sign all resolutions and bills that have been passed by Council.
- 2) **Order and Decorum:** The presiding officer preserves order and decorum at all meetings to allow for the orderly conduct of business.
- 3) **Procedural Decisions:** The presiding officer makes decisions on administrative and procedural matters, which are final unless overturned by the majority vote of Council.
- 4) **Unilateral Powers:** The presiding officer has the power and discretion, without a vote of the Council, to:
  - a) Declare the opening of a meeting.
  - b) Enforce all adopted rules and procedures.
  - c) Rule any disruptions as out of order and terminate communication from disorderly persons.
  - d) Keep discussions focused on the agenda item under consideration.
  - e) Declare a recess.
  - f) Call a special or emergency meeting.

### C. Liaison and Communication

- 1) **Liaison Role and Interaction Guidelines:** Council members are assigned as liaisons to at least one department. A liaison functions as the legislative bridge between the executive and legislative

branches tasked with gathering details on proposed legislation. Each liaison must work through the director of the department. Council members shall not interfere with the day-to-day operations of a department or its employees.

- 2) **Reporting:** Liaisons should regularly meet with the department director and update Council as needed.
  - 3) **Intergovernmental Communication:** All Council members have an equal right to request information or hold meetings with the Mayor or department directors.
  - 4) **Department Attendance:** Department heads or their designees must attend Council legislative and committee meetings for items affecting their department to answer questions. Council may table consideration of any item until the necessary department personnel attend and provide the information Council needs to make a decision.
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## SECTION V. MEETINGS AND ORDER OF BUSINESS

### A. Dates and Location

- 1) **Regular Meetings:** Held the first and third Tuesday evenings of each month.
  - a. **Exceptions:**
    1. If a regular Tuesday falls on a legal holiday, or during primary/general elections, the meeting is held on the following day or another day designated by Council.
    2. Council is observing summer recess at which time only one meeting per month is held during the months of June-August.
- 2) **Location:** Meetings are held in Council Chambers at 101 S. George St., York, PA. An exception is made if an emergency requires the meeting to be held at another advertised location.
- 3) **Open Meetings:** All Council meetings must be noticed and conducted in accordance with applicable open meetings statutes.

### B. Order of Business

- 1) The usual order of business at regular meetings is:
  - a) General Public Comment.
  - b) Call Legislative Council meeting to order.
  - c) Pledge of Allegiance.
  - d) Moment of Silence.
  - e) Approval of Minutes.
  - f) Presentations, Proclamations and Awards.
  - g) Meeting(s) Scheduled.
  - h) Reports of Youth Council Committee.
  - i) Agenda items (Action on HARB, Subdivision/Land Development Plans, Final Passage of Bills/Resolutions, New Business).
  - j) Requests for future meetings.
  - k) Council Comment.
  - l) Administration Comment.
  - m) Adjournment.

- 2) **Sequence Modification:** The presiding officer, or a member of Council, may request to consider items out of sequence. If there is disagreement, the majority vote rules.
- 3) **Consideration Procedure:** When considering legislation, the President may call first upon the department head or Council liaison for a report. The presiding officer then asks Council members for comments/questions, followed by the public, before the vote is taken.

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## SECTION VI. LEGISLATION, VOTING, AND VETO

### A. Legislative Requirements

- 1) **Form:** All Bills and Resolutions must be in typewritten form. Minor amendments to Bills or Resolutions may be made from the floor during Council meetings, though written text is preferable.
- 2) **Bills:** Upon introduction, Bills are read by short title only at one meeting and then voted upon at a separate meeting. A copy must be advertised and made available for public inspection.
- 3) **Resolutions:** Resolutions shall be read in their entirety, unless a short title is approved by a majority of Council members. Official acts by the Council (other than Bills) are done by resolution and become effective upon passage, unless stated otherwise.
- 4) **Voting Threshold:** Bills and Resolutions are generally passed by majority vote of Council, unless law requires a vote of four members.

### B. Mayor Review and Veto

- 1) **Submission:** All adopted Bills must be submitted forthwith to the Mayor.
- 2) **Approval/Veto Period:** The Mayor has ten days after submission to either approve the ordinance by signing it or vetoing it by returning it to Council (via the City Clerk) with a statement of objections. Should no action be taken by the mayor, the ordinance is deemed automatically approved.
- 3) **Effectiveness:** A Bill takes effect with the Mayor's approval, or if the Mayor fails to return it within ten days.
- 4) **Veto Override:** Council may override a Mayor's veto by a resolution agreed to by four of its members. This action must take place on or after the third day following the return of the vetoed Bill.

### C. Disclosure and Abstention

- 1) **Conflict of Interest:** A Council member having a personal or pecuniary interest in any measure before the Council must disclose the fact and shall not vote thereon.
- 2) **Abstention Procedure:** Any member who abstains must first disclose the reason for the abstention. The abstention must then be approved or denied by at least three members of Council.
- 3) **Failure to Disclose:** If a vote is cast without disclosure, the matter shall be referred to legal Counsel for opinion and recommendations.

## SECTION VII. AGENDAS AND REVIEW PROCESS

### A. Standard Submission and Deadlines

- 1) **Standard Deadline:** Committee and Legislative agenda items must be emailed to the City Clerk, City Solicitor(s) ("attorney"), and the relevant Council liaison no later than 12 noon on the Wednesday prior to the next scheduled Council meeting.
- 2) **Director's Role in Submission:** The Director of a department determines which items appear on the agenda, compiles the necessary documents, and requests the legislative agenda date on which the item is to appear, all of which shall be submitted to the City Clerk by the standard deadline.
- 3) **Exclusions:** These rules do not apply to Special or Emergency meetings.

### B. Legal Review Requirements

- 1) **Scope of Review:** The city attorney(s) shall review all agenda item submissions for correct form, code/regulation adherence, and legality only, and shall not alter the original intent and/or purpose of the item.
- 2) **Attorney Amendment Deadline:** If the attorney(s) recommends amended language to any agenda item, they must submit the suggested amended language in written form to the City Clerk no later than 10:00 AM on the Friday before the next scheduled Council meeting.
- 3) **Justification for Amendments:** The email submitting amendments must include the suggested changes, an explanation detailing the legal reason(s) for the amendments/revisions, all relevant code and regulation citations, and the citation of at least one past legal precedent or court case (if available). This detailed justification requirement does not apply to corrections for spelling, grammar, or punctuation.

### C. Late Submissions and Supplemental Agendas

- 1) **Department Late Submission:** If a department misses the Wednesday deadline, the Director must provide all members of Council, the attorney, and the City Clerk with a memorandum and proof explaining the missed deadline and why the item needs to appear on the next agenda. At least 3 members of Council must agree to accept the late submission in order for it to be included on the next agenda. The late item must be reviewed by the attorney(s) and submitted to the City Clerk in correct final form no later than 10:00 AM on the Friday prior to the meeting or the item will not be included.
- 2) **Supplemental Agenda (Rule 215):** If items are received later than the Saturday preceding the stated Council meeting, they must first be approved for inclusion on a Supplemental Agenda by a majority of Council. The following shall occur:
  - a) To be considered for inclusion on the agenda, the item must be reviewed and approved by the city attorney(s) and the final document received by the City Clerk no later than 10:00 AM on the Monday before the scheduled Council meeting.
  - b) A **motion to waive Rule 215** shall be required for all Supplemental Agenda items requiring introduction and/or action during the scheduled meeting. In accordance with Resolution 215 of Session 1969, an affirmative vote of all the members present at a meeting shall be necessary in order to consider Supplemental Agenda items.

- 3) **24 Hour Notice:** A minimum of 24 hours' public notice is required to add an item to the agenda. Items submitted without meeting this notice requirement will not be included.

#### D. Post-Submission Changes and Availability

- 1) **In-Meeting Corrections:** Should an item need correction or amendment (not including typographical or grammatical errors) after its final submission, the request must be made during the Council meeting. A Council motion and majority vote is required to make the correction or amendment.
- 2) **Availability:** Agendas are made available on the Friday afternoon preceding the regularly scheduled meeting. A public review copy is available at City Hall and shall be posted on the City's website.
- 3) **Changes:** Agendas are subject to change before and during the meeting.

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### SECTION VIII. COMMITTEE AND LEGISLATIVE FLOW

#### A. Committee of the Whole

- 1) **Committee of the Whole:** Council shall convene and conduct committee business as a Committee of the Whole with individual Council liaisons appointed to the following branches: Public Safety (Police/Fire), Public Works, Economic & Community Development, Business Administration, Rules and Administrative Code, and General (when an item does not fall within the specified branches).
- 2) **Liaison Appointment:** The Council, at its first meeting in February following a municipal election, shall appoint by resolution liaisons to each department, board, and authority, as applicable. The specific role, duties, and interaction guidelines for the Liaison are defined in Section IV.C. Each Council member shall be assigned as a liaison to at least one department, board, and authority.

#### B. Committee Structure and Meetings

- 1) **Membership:** The Committee of the Whole shall include all members of Council.
- 2) **Chairing:** The Council liaison appointed to each branch shall chair its respective items during committee meetings. The General branch shall be chaired by the Council President (or Vice-President in absence of the President).
- 3) **Quorum:** At least three Committee members shall constitute a quorum.
- 4) **Work Sessions:** Committee meetings function as a Committee of the Whole, allowing all Council members to attend and participate. Meetings are open to the public and shall allow for public comment on committee business, consistent with the definition in Section III.

#### C. Exceptions to Committee Referral

The following items shall not go through the Committee process and may be introduced at any legislative session:

- 1) Subdivision/Land Development Plans (SDP/LDP) and Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB) Resolutions.

- 2) Appointments to the various Boards, Authorities, or Commissions of the City.

## D. Committee Action and Reporting

- 1) **Consideration:** The Committee of the Whole considers items referred to it during work sessions.
  - 2) **Release or Hold:** The Committee can recommend that an item be released from committee or held for further discussion. If released, the liaison shall suggest the legislative agenda date, which shall be approved by the majority of the Committee of the Whole.
  - 3) **Director/Designee Attendance:** The Director or designee shall attend committee meetings to answer questions and make all necessary amendments requested during the meeting and submit the amended documents to the City Clerk in accordance with Section VII(A).
  - 4) **Item Flow:** Once an item is placed on the legislative agenda, a Council member may request it be referred back to committee, which requires a majority vote of members in attendance.
  - 5) **Failure to Meet:** If a committee is unable to meet, the item automatically appears on Council's next legislative agenda, but Council may refer it back to committee by a majority vote.
  - 6) **Waiver:** Council may waive the committee requirement of an agenda item and immediately consider it for action by the approval of four of its members.
  - 7) **Expiration:** Any item that remains in committee at the close of the legislative year shall be considered expired and may be reintroduced in the next legislative year.
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## IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

### A. Public Comment Procedures

- 1) **General Comment (Non-Agenda Items):**
  - a) **Sign-Up:** Persons wishing to speak should sign up with the City Clerk prior to the meeting or by completing a public comment form in Council Chambers and submitting it before the session begins.
  - b) **Time Limit:** Each speaker has five minutes, though the presiding officer may reduce this time if the number of speakers exceeds the 30-minute limit scheduled for general public comment.
  - c) **Continuation:** The presiding officer shall not allow general public comment to extend beyond 30 minutes, but they may resume public comment at a future meeting of Council.
- 2) **Legislative Comment (Agenda Items):**
  - a) **Sign-Up:** Speakers on an agenda item need not sign up.
  - b) **Recognition and Identification:** The person must be recognized by the presiding officer, state his or her name, and identify whether they are for, against, or commenting generally on the legislation.
  - c) **Decorum and Focus:** Speakers must keep comments concise and focused on the item under consideration and avoid repetition. The presiding officer may interrupt a speaker if they become redundant, disorderly, or long-winded. Large groups are encouraged to designate a spokesperson.

### 3) **General Requirements:**

- a) **Purpose:** Public comment provides information and the speaker's views for Council consideration.
- b) **Questions:** Questions raised do not necessarily have to be answered during the meeting and may be referred for follow-up.
- c) **Decorum Enforcement:** The presiding officer must maintain proper decorum by requiring speakers/audience to refrain from abusive or profane remarks, disruptive outbursts, protests, or other interfering conduct, consistent with the rule against Personal Attacks defined in Section III.
- d) **Documentation:** Exhibits, letters, and other documentary items presented become part of the record. Copies should be provided to the City Clerk, and exhibits must not be concealed.

### **B. Presentations, Proclamations, and Awards**

- 1) **Request Process:** Requests to make a presentation, read a proclamation, or present an award during a Council meeting must be made to the City Clerk or Council President by the deadline set for agenda item submissions.

### **C. Public Hearings**

- 1) **Purpose:** A public hearing is a formal proceeding distinct from a public meeting, used for fact-finding and gathering information to aid in decision-making. It is not a debate or discussion forum.
- 2) **Testimony:** The public must be given the opportunity to present testimony (oral or written) about the issue, which becomes part of the record. Each person must state their name for the record.
- 3) **Scheduling:** The Council President affirms all hearings with input from the rest of Council. Time, location, and subject of the hearing must be advertised according to law.

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Adopted: [Resolution No. 25 of Session 2026](#)