

**COUNCIL RULES FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KINGSTON**

Adopted January 1, 1908

Amended, Revised, and Continued January 6, 2026

RULE I

MEETINGS

1. The Common Council shall hold its regular monthly meeting on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm unless otherwise ordered by the Council President with the consent of the Majority and Minority Leaders. Other meetings may be designated by resolution of the Common Council or called pursuant to C13-2(A) ARTICLE XIII of the City Charter.
 - a. The Council President shall call for a second Common Council meeting in December, at least two weeks after the regularly scheduled December meeting.
2. Virtual Participation is permitted for Council Members, subject to New York State law.
 - a. To virtually participate in a meeting, Council Members must seek permission with at least 24 hours' notice. Permission must be requested by email to the chair of the committee and the Council President. It must include an explanation that complies with state law, which allows virtual participation for extraordinary circumstances such as illness, caregiving responsibilities, or any other significant or unexpected factor or event that precludes the Council Member's physical attendance at the meeting. If permission is not granted, the Council Member cannot participate in any votes unless they are physically present at the meeting.
 - b. Any Council Member participating virtually must remain on camera to ensure they are heard, seen, and identified while the meeting is being conducted, except for executive session or attorney-client sessions.
 - c. The minutes of meetings involving virtual participation must include which, if any, members participated remotely.
3. The latest time for filing all communications to be presented at a regular meeting of the Common Council shall be 11:00 am on the Friday immediately prior to the meeting date.
4. All communications to be presented at a special meeting of the Common Council must be filed by 11:00 am on the business day before the special meeting.
5. The City Clerk, with the consent of the Council President, may waive the deadlines as set forth in paragraphs 3 and 4 of RULE I.
6. The City Clerk, or the Clerk's designee, shall attend all meetings of the Common Council.
7. A quorum must be present for all meetings. A quorum is defined as the majority of the members of the relevant body.

8. In all cases of the absence of a quorum during a meeting of the Common Council, the members present may take such measures as they deem necessary to secure the presence of a quorum, and may inflict such censure of penalty, as they may deem just, on those who, on being called on for that purpose, render no sufficient excuse for their absence.

RULE II

COUNCIL PRESIDENT

1. The Council President shall be addressed as Madam, Mr., or Mx. President.
2. The Council President shall enforce the rules of conduct in chambers and through the city's virtual platform. In case of any disturbance, trespass, or disorderly conduct in the chambers or the virtual platform, the Council President shall have the power to order the expulsion of any person or persons creating such disturbances, trespass, or disorderly conduct. The Council President may exercise the right to mute any participants, whether in-person or virtual, who are not following the rules of conduct.
3. The Common Council may elect a temporary chairperson, who shall take the chair in the absence of the Council President.
4. The Council President may call any Council Member to the chair for a portion of the meeting and may from the Council Member's seat, under any order of business, present any motion, resolution, or report and speak to the merits of any pending questions, but neither the Council President nor any Council Member while presiding, shall speak to the merits of any pending question, nor present any motion, resolution, or report.

RULE III

MAJORITY/MINORITY LEADER

1. The Majority Leader shall be defined as the head of the largest majority party, either by a member's official party registration or if elected representing the majority party, of the Common Council. The Majority Leader is elected by the members of the Common Council of the majority party. The vote shall be held prior to the first Caucus meeting of each year.
2. The Minority Leader shall be defined as the head of the largest non-majority party, either by a member's official party registration or if elected representing a non-majority party, of the Common Council. The Minority Leader is elected by the members of the Common Council of the minority party or parties. The vote shall be held prior to the first Caucus meeting of each year.
3. With the unanimous consent of the majority party, the Majority Leader may deliver a State of the City Address following the Mayor's State of the City address at a regularly scheduled Common Council meeting.
4. With the unanimous consent of the minority party, the Minority Leader may deliver a State of the City address following the Mayor's State of the City address at a regularly scheduled Common Council meeting.

RULE IV
COMMITTEES

1. The Common Council shall maintain the following Standing Committees, each comprised of five (5) Council Members:
 - a. Finance & Audit
 - b. Laws & Rules
 - c. Community Development & Housing
 - d. Public Safety & General Government
2. All legislation requiring the expenditure of money shall be referred to the Finance & Audit Committee to report.
 - a. Each favorable committee expenditure report must set forth an estimate of the total recommended expenditure along with details sufficient to establish a reasonable basis for the estimated costs.
 - b. The total sum appropriated by such legislation may not exceed the Finance & Audit Committee's reported estimate.
3. The Council President assigns all agenda items to a committee that they deem appropriate. No agenda item may be permitted without adhering to the communication process or without receiving the Council President's permission to submit a late communication.
4. The Council President may, with the consent of the appropriate committee chair, require a council sponsor from the Common Council for communications that involve a local law or an expenditure of money outside the city budget.
 - a. Such a sponsor will be tasked with shepherding the proposed legislation prior to its introduction to the respective committee.
5. The Council President may appoint special committees as deemed necessary.
6. Members of the Standing and Special Committees shall serve at the pleasure of the Council President.
 - a. If a Council Member is not fulfilling their duty as a committee member, the Council President may impose an appropriate penalty, such as but not limited to the removal of voting privileges for future meetings.
7. Members of the majority party in the Common Council shall be granted the majority of the committee assignments and shall control all committees.
8. Members of the minority party shall be represented on each committee.
9. Committee Reports/Legislation: All committees shall render proposed legislation to be considered by the full Common Council, in accordance with paragraphs 3 and 4 in RULE I.
 - a. Committee reports, which must reflect the intent of the committee, must be submitted to the City Clerk within 30 days of the date the committee meeting was held.

- b. Committee Reports must receive a motion and a second in order to receive discussion and a vote. If the Committee Report receives a majority vote of the committee, the advisory vote shall proceed to the full Common Council for their consideration at the next scheduled Council meeting.
 - c. Committee reports shall not be read except upon request of a majority of the committee members so stated in the report, in which case, they shall be read after the Communications as provided in the Order of Business as set forth in RULE VII.
 - d. The Office of the City Clerk shall maintain Committee Reports as public records.
10. Council Liaisons for Commissions/Boards: The Council President shall assign a Council Member to serve as liaison to all appropriate City Commissions and Boards. Their responsibility is to serve as a bridge between the two bodies. Each month, the liaison may report any relevant feedback to the full Council at the monthly Caucus meeting.
11. All background materials for committees must be made available to the extent practicable, 48 hours before all committee meetings.
- a. Time-sensitive issues/materials can be excluded from the minimum time frame if deemed necessary by the Council President.
 - b. If all materials are not submitted and the Council President has made no exception, the committee may discuss the materials; however, the committee cannot vote on the agenda item during that meeting.
12. If a typographical or stenographic error is made on a resolution, the City Clerk, with the approval of the Council President, can make this correction without resubmitting it as a communication to the Common Council.

RULE V

TRAINING/RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Council members must participate in an annual anti-harassment and workplace violence prevention training, and when completed, forward the documentation to the Director of Human Rights. Council members can obtain the training by attending a City of Kingston training session, presenting documentation of training completed through their employer, or completing the City of Kingston online course. Training must be completed by the end of the year, and the Council President must be notified upon completion.
2. Council Members must participate in an annual ethics training hosted by the Ethics Board and Corporation Counsel.
3. Council Members must fill out an annual financial disclosure form and, if necessary, submit an updated financial disclosure form with applicable mid-year changes.

RULE VI

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Speakers must register in writing prior to the beginning of the hearing. Individuals arriving after the commencement of the hearing shall be permitted to register upon arrival if the Council President/Council Chair has not closed the hearing.
2. The Council President/Council Chair shall recognize each speaker, in the order registered, when the hearing is commenced. Speakers must provide their name and ward number for the record prior to their remarks. If the speaker is not from the City of Kingston, they must provide the municipality in which they reside.
3. Speakers must limit their remarks to three (3) minutes. Remarks must be addressed only to the hearing issue(s). Speakers may not yield any remaining time they may have to another speaker.
4. Speakers at a public hearing must follow the Rules of Decorum as set forth in RULE IX.
5. The City Clerk shall include in the minutes of the hearing the name and ward/municipality of each speaker, a summary of the remarks, and written statements submitted to the Common Council.

RULE VII

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. The following order of business of a regularly scheduled or a special council meeting shall not be set aside or suspended, except by a majority of all members of the Common Council in office.
 - a. Call to Order
 - b. Pledge of Allegiance
 - c. Moment of Silence
 - d. Roll Call
 - e. The Council President may call for a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the last meeting. If the motion is adopted without objections or corrections, the Council President will declare those minutes approved.
 - f. The Council President may call for a motion to dispense with the reading of the general bills. If the motion is adopted without objections or corrections, the Council President will declare the general bills approved.
 - g. Presentation of the Common Council Community Award
 - h. Public Speaking – The public shall be allowed to speak during this period of the meeting.
 - i. The presentation of bills, claims, and communications shall be filed by the Council President with the City Clerk. Any Council Member may call for a clarification or a reading of a communication if so desired.

- j. The Council President may call for a motion to dispense with the second reading of the general bills. If the motion is adopted without objections or corrections, the Council President will declare the general bills approved.
- k. Committee Reports
- l. Closing Message from the Council President
- m. In Remembrance Dedications from members of the Common Council
- n. Adjournment

RULE VIII

PUBLIC SPEAKING

1. The public shall be allowed to speak during the public speaking portion of Common Council meetings.
 - a. Speakers must address the Council President, and Council Members must not engage in debate during this period.
 - b. The public comment period shall be limited to thirty (30) minutes unless, upon motion of a Council Member, the time shall be extended by a majority vote of the Council Members present for an additional thirty (30) minutes.
 - c. Speakers will be allotted three (3) minutes to address the Common Council and will be advised by the Council President when their time has expired. Speakers must conclude their remarks at that time.
 - d. Speakers will not be permitted to yield any remaining time to another speaker.
 - e. Speakers may sign up by signing their name on the podium in Council Chambers.
 - f. If a speaker wishes to speak through the virtual platform, they may sign up by emailing the City Clerk by 12:00 pm on the day of the meeting.
 - g. Throughout the entirety of their testimony, virtual speakers must have their cameras on in a manner that allows the Council to view them as they speak.
 - h. Speakers must provide their name and ward number, or the name of their municipality if they do not reside in the City of Kingston, for the record before addressing the Council.
 - i. Speakers must follow the rules of decorum as set forth in RULE IX.
 - j. In lieu of oral testimony, members of the public may submit written testimony, which will be distributed to the Council by the City Clerk.

RULE IX

RULES OF DECORUM

1. All persons attending a meeting, in-person or virtual, must follow the rules of decorum:
 - a. To ensure that meetings of the Common Council are conducted in a way that allows the business of the City to be effectively undertaken.
 - b. To ensure that members of the public who attend meetings of the

Common Council can be heard in a fair, impartial manner.

- c. To ensure that meetings of the Common Council are conducted in a way that is open to all viewpoints and which is protective of the content of each speaker's speech and expression, yet is free from hateful, abusive, obstructive, or intimidating behavior.
 - d. To ban egregious, inappropriate, and obstructive behavior at meetings of the Common Council.
2. A member or members of the Police Department, as the Police Chief may designate, shall be Sergeant-at-Arms of the Common Council and shall carry out all orders given by the Council President for purposes of maintaining order and decorum at the Council meeting. Any member of the Common Council may move to require the Council President to enforce the rules upon an affirmative vote of a majority of the Common Council.
 3. No person shall be permitted inside the railing on the floor of the Common Council Chambers other than members and ex-members of the Common Council, the heads of the several departments of the City government, and the reporters of the press, unless by permission obtained from the Council President, nor shall any such permission extend beyond the day for which it is given.
 4. Rules for members of the Common Council:
 - a. While the Council is in session, the members must preserve order and decorum, and a Council Member shall neither, by conversation or otherwise, delay or interrupt the proceedings or the peace of the Council nor disturb any Council Member while speaking or refuse to obey the orders of the Council or the Council President.
 - b. No members wishing to speak shall proceed until the Council President has recognized them. After such recognition, the Council Member shall confine discussion to the item at hand and to its merits and shall not be interrupted except by a point of order raised by another Council Member.
 - c. Council Members shall address their remarks to the Council President and maintain a courteous tone.
 - d. A Council Member shall not defame, intimidate, make personal affronts, make threats of violence, or use profanity. The Council President may impose an appropriate penalty, such as but not limited to the removal of voting privileges for future meetings.
 5. Rules for public speakers:
 - a. The speaker shall conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner.
 - b. All remarks shall be directed to the Council President, and not members of the council, city staff, or any member of the public in attendance.
 - c. The speaker shall not defame, intimidate, make personal affronts, make threats of violence, or use profanity.

6. Rules for members of the public in the audience:
 - a. Members of the public shall not shout, participate in unruly behavior, or speak out when not recognized by the Council President.
 - b. Members of the public shall not defame, intimidate, make personal affronts, make threats of violence, or use profanity.
 - c. Members of the public shall refrain from behavior that disrupts the orderly conduct of the meeting.
7. No item shall be allowed in Council Chambers that can be deemed a weapon, including, among other things, guns, knives, and sticks.
8. The Council President shall be responsible for the enforcement of the rules of decorum.
 - a. Upon a violation of these rules of decorum, the Council President shall request the person(s) violating a rule(s) to cease the violation and inform the person(s) that if such violation persists, they will be required to leave.
 - b. If the person(s) does not cease the violation(s), the Council President shall declare the person(s) out of order, at which time the Sergeant at Arms shall take steps to remove such person(s) from the meeting room. Said person(s) shall be subject to all civil and criminal penalties that may apply to their conduct.

RULE X

MOTIONS & RESOLUTIONS

1. The following is a list of definitions to consider:
 - a. Question: the subject or motion under consideration.
 - b. Motion: a proposal made by a member for a group to take action.
 - c. Resolution: a more formal type of motion, usually containing introductory clauses beginning with "Whereas" that give reasons for the action, and concluding with the clause "Now, therefore, be it resolved that..." that gives the actions required by the resolution.
 - d. Postpone: a motion to postpone indefinitely kills the motion without actually voting against it; a motion to postpone to a definite time stops the consideration at the meeting underway and takes it up at a future time or meeting.
 - e. Lay on the table, commonly referred to as table: a motion enabling a body to put a motion aside while some other business is conducted.
 - f. Recess: a motion to take a short break.
 - g. Amendment: the content of a motion to change another motion; also, the motion itself.
2. Only the following motions, listed in order of precedence, will be received during Common Council debate on a pending motion:
 - a. 1st – For an adjournment of the Common Council

- b. 2nd – For the previous question
 - c. 3rd – To lay on the table
 - d. 4th – To postpone indefinitely
 - e. 5th – To postpone to a certain time
 - f. 6th – To commit to a standing committee
 - g. 7th – To commit to a select committee
 - h. 8th – To amend
3. All questions shall be put in the order they are moved.
 4. The Common Council may consider questions under the same order of business without debate.
 5. The Common Council may consider a motion to adjourn and to lay on the table without amendment or debate. Any motions to postpone or commit shall end further debate of the main question.
 6. Members of the Common Council may consider a motion to adjourn or to take a recess so long as the previous question has not been ordered, except that once such a motion has been put and lost, it cannot be renewed until after other business, such as the proposal for a new question is addressed.
 7. The Council President, or the City Clerk, shall state the motion or resolution before a vote is taken thereon.
 8. Every motion except the motions to adjourn, to lay on the table, to postpone the previous question, or commit shall be reduced to writing if the Council President or any Council Member desires it.
 9. Each motion stated by the Council President shall remain on the floor of the Common Council, unless withdrawn by the movant at any time prior to amendment or vote.
 10. If any question contains several distinct propositions, they may be divided by the Council President at the request of any member, but a motion to strike out and insert shall be inadvisable.
 11. Any member of the Common Council can request a Point of Order to request clarification or to claim that a mistake has been made.
 12. Resolutions or motions affecting the duties or powers delegated to any Department of City Government by statute shall not be in order.

RULE XI

RECONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS OR RESOLUTIONS

1. A motion to reconsider a vote shall be in order when made during the same meeting as the initial vote or during the next regular Common Council meeting. Only members who voted in the majority on the initial motion may move to reconsider a vote, except that a motion to reconsider, made for the sole purpose of correcting an

error in any ordinance or resolution, shall be considered a privileged motion to any member and shall always be in order.

2. A motion for reconsideration being put and lost shall not be renewed. The Common Council may only reconsider a subject or motion a second time upon unanimous consent.

RULE XII

RELATING TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTIONS

1. The previous question shall be as follows: "Shall the main question be now put?" and until it is decided, shall preclude all amendments or debate.
2. When, on taking the previous question, the Council shall decide that the main question shall be considered and still remaining under debate; the main question shall be on passage of the motion, resolution, or other matter under consideration; but when amendments are pending, the question shall first be taken upon such amendments in the order; and if the previous question has been ordered.

RULE XIII

DECIDING AND RECORDING THE VOTE

1. Unless otherwise provided by law, the number of votes required to pass a resolution of the Common Council is a majority of those members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present.
2. The ayes and nays shall be taken on any question whenever requested by either the Majority or Minority Leader for purposes of explaining the vote upon the final passage of a bill, and when so taken shall be entered on the minutes. Each Council Member shall have two minutes to explain and cast their vote.
3. That each member of the Council shall cast a vote on each item that comes to a vote unless they are excused from voting because of a conflict of interest. The conflict of interest must be stated, and the decision shall be made solely by the Council President. A recusal by a member shall constitute a non-vote upon the issue for which the recusal is requested.
4. The Council President may also call for a rising vote of the members of the Common Council whenever they are unable to decide the result of a vote taken via voice. In all cases where a motion, resolution, or other matter shall be entered on the minutes, the name of the member shall also be entered on the minutes.
5. If a member of the Common Council is casting their vote through a virtual platform, they must remain on camera during the vote. Their vote must be cast as a thumb-up (aye) or a thumb-down (nay).
6. No standing rule or order of the Common Council shall be changed, suspended, or rescinded except by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the

members elected to the Common Council.

RULE XIV

ENFORCEMENT OF RULES

1. If any Council Member in speaking shall transgress the rules of the Common Council, the Council President or any other Council Member may call to order, in which case the Council Member so called to order shall immediately sit down, and shall not rise unless to explain or to proceed in order.
2. Whenever any person shall be brought for breach of its provisions, no debate shall be in order; instead, the Council President shall proceed to execute a penalty that they deem appropriate without delay or debate.
3. Any Council Member who fails to submit their financial disclosure form by the deadline shall not be permitted to vote on any council matters until the form is submitted to the City Clerk's Office with notification to the Council President, or Majority Leader, if the offending party is the Council President.

RULE XV

MANUAL TO DECIDE

1. When any of the provisions of the foregoing rules are in question, it shall be referred to the Clerk's Manual governing the Assembly of the State of New York for final decision. And all questions arising, not herein provided for, shall be so referred and decided.

I, Elisa Tinti, City Clerk of the City of Kingston, New York, do hereby certify that the foregoing Council Rules for Government of the Common Council of the City of Kingston, New York, were duly adopted on the 6th day of January 2026.

Elisa Tinti, City Clerk