

Bylaw Amendment Process

August 2015

Bylaw Amendment Process

- The Office of the City Clerk is providing the following to boards and commissions:
 - Draft, red lined bylaw template.
 - Clean copy of bylaw template.
 - Bylaw amendment spreadsheet.

Universal Changes

- The template/spreadsheet provided to your staff liaisons included language amending:
 - Number of members on your board.
 - Terms of 4 years beginning March 1st of the year of appointment.
 - Adding “active military service” to excused absence language.
 - Six members constitutes a quorum.
 - Officer elections occurring in April and the term beginning May 1st and ending April 30th.
 - Four consecutive one year terms.

Universal Changes

- If the board bylaws have only universal changes:
 - A majority of the board must approve the agenda item.
 - The board liaisons will provide to the Office of the City Clerk (OCC).
 - The OCC will submit to the Council Audit & Finance Committee.

Approval of Universal Changes

- The Office of the City Clerk will submit the universal changes to the Council Audit & Finance Committee (CAF).
 - In the past, Council Audit & Finance had the authority to approve changes to bylaws.
 - The new Council Committee structure allows CAF to make a recommendation to Council.
 - Bylaws Amendments will now require a majority vote of the full Council.

Approval of Universal Changes

- Once approved by the full Council, the board or commission will approve (again) the universal changes made to their bylaws.

Additional Bylaw Amendments

- If your board approves an agenda item to amend your bylaws beyond the universal changes, we ask that you submit these amendments to the Clerk's Office through your liaison.
- You may upload as backup and email to OCC, however, we ask that you don't utilize a Council Committee Agenda Request or Board Recommendation template.

Additional Bylaw Amendments

- The OCC will collect all additional bylaw amendments and submit to the Council Audit & Finance Committee (CAF).
- As previously mentioned, the CAF Committee will make a recommendation to the full Council on each board's additional amendments.

Additional Bylaw Amendments

- After the Council Audit & Finance Committee makes recommendation to Council, the Clerk's Office will coordinate with the CAF liaison to add to Council agenda.

Two Step Process

- Why are we doing this as a two step process?
 - The universal changes reflect the Austin City Code.
 - Additional changes are not a part of the code and will require an ordinance to amend.

- Questions?

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TEMPLATE FOR STANDARD CITY BOARD BYLAWS

BYLAWS OF THE

(Board Name)

ARTICLE 1. NAME.

The name of the board is _____ (board name as it appears in the
Municipal Code).

ARTICLE 2. PURPOSE AND DUTIES.

The purpose of the board is _____. (Insert the information directly from the
City Code.)

ARTICLE 3. MEMBERSHIP.

- (A) The board is composed of eleven members appointed by the city council.
- (B) A member serves at the pleasure of the city council.
- (C) Board members serve for a term of four years beginning March 1st on the year of appointment.
- (D) An individual board member may not act in an official capacity except through the action of the board.
- (E) A board member who is absent for three consecutive regular meetings or one-third of all regular meetings in a "rolling" twelve month timeframe automatically vacates the member's position subject to the holdover provisions in Section 2-1-27 of the City Code. This does not apply to an absence due to illness or injury of the board member, an illness or injury of a board member's immediate family member, active military service, or the birth or adoption of the board member's child for 90 days after the event. The board member must notify the staff liaison of the reason for the absence not later than the date of the next regular meeting of the board. Failure to notify the liaison before the next regular meeting of the board will result in an unexcused absence.
- (F) At each meeting, each board member shall sign an attendance sheet which indicates that the member does not have a conflict of interest with any item on that agenda, or identifies each agenda item on which the member has a conflict of interest. Failure to sign the sheet results in the member being counted as absent and his/her votes are not counted.
- (G) A member who seeks to resign from the board shall submit a written resignation to the chair of the board, the staff liaison, or the city clerk's office. If possible, the resignation should allow for a thirty day notice so the city council can appoint a replacement.

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ARTICLE 4. OFFICERS.

- (A) The officers of the board shall consist of a chair and a vice-chair.
- (B) Officers shall be elected annually by a majority vote of the board at the first regular meeting after April 1st. In the event a current officer becomes ineligible to serve as an officer, the board may hold an emergency election as needed.
- (C) The term of office shall be one year, beginning May 1st and ending April 30th. An officer may continue to serve until a successor is elected. A person may not serve as an officer in a designated position of a board for more than four consecutive one-year terms. A person who has served as an officer in a designated position of a board for four consecutive terms is not eligible for re-election to that designated office until the expiration of two years after the last date of the person's service in that office. The board may override the term limit provision for an officer by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the authorized board members.
- (D) A member may not hold more than one office at a time.

ARTICLE 5. DUTIES OF OFFICERS.

- (A) The chair shall preside at board meetings, appoint all committees, represent the board at ceremonial functions and approve each final meeting agenda.
- (B) In the absence of the chair, the vice-chair shall perform all duties of the chair.

ARTICLE 6. AGENDAS.

- (A) Two or more board members may place an item on the agenda by oral or written request to the staff liaison at least five days before the meeting. After first consulting with and receiving input from the staff liaison, the chair shall approve each final meeting agenda.
- (B) The board liaison shall submit the meeting agenda through the online agenda posting system for each meeting not less than 72 hours before the meeting.

(C) Posting of the agenda must comply with Texas Government Code Chapter 551 (Texas Open Meetings Act).

ARTICLE 7. MEETINGS.

- (A) The board meetings shall comply with Texas Government Code Chapter 551 (Texas Open Meetings Act).
- (B) Board meetings shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order.

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- (C) The board may not conduct a closed meeting without the approval of the city attorney.
 - (D) The board shall meet (select one of the following: monthly, quarterly, or when the board is legally required to meet in order to comply with a legal deadline.) In November of each year, the board shall adopt a schedule of the meetings for the upcoming year, including makeup meeting dates for the holidays and cancelled meetings.
 - (E) The chair may call a special meeting, and the chair shall call a special meeting if requested by three or more members. The call shall state the purpose of the meeting. A board may not call a meeting in addition to its regular scheduled meetings as identified in its adopted meeting schedule, more often than once a quarter, unless the meeting is required to comply with a statutory deadline or a deadline established by Council.
 - (F) Six members constitute a quorum.
 - (G) If a quorum for a meeting does not convene within one-half hour of the posted time for the meeting, then the meeting may not be held.
 - (H) To be effective, a board action must be adopted by an affirmative vote of the number of members necessary to provide a quorum.
(For boards with 13 members (Early Childhood Council and Sustainable Food Policy Board} or 15 members {Community Development Commission and Downtown Commission}, the following language applies to an affirmative vote.)
 - (H) If only a quorum is present at a meeting, a board action is adopted by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the quorum (13 member board = 5 votes; 15 member board = 6 votes). If more than a quorum is present at a meeting, a board action must be adopted by an affirmative vote of the number of members necessary to provide a quorum (13 member board = 7 votes; 15 member board = 8 votes).
 - (I) The chair has the same voting privilege as any other member.
 - (J) The board shall allow citizens to address the board on agenda items and during a period of time set aside for citizen communications. The chair may limit a speaker to three minutes.
 - (K) The staff liaison shall prepare the board minutes. The minutes of each board meeting must include the vote of each member on each item before the board and indicate whether a member is absent or failed to vote on an item.
 - (L) The city clerk shall retain agendas, approved minutes, internal review reports and bylaws. The _____ *(liaison's department name)* shall retain all other board documents. The documents are public records under Texas Local Government Code Chapter 552 (Texas Public Information Act).
 - (M) The chair shall adjourn a meeting not later than 10 p.m., unless the board votes to continue the meeting.

1 (N) Each person and board member attending a board meeting should observe decorum pursuant to
2 Section 2-1-48 of the City Code.

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4 (O) A member of the public may not address a board at a meeting on an item posted as a briefing.
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6 **ARTICLE 8. COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS.**

7 **COMMITTEES**

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9 (A) The _____ (Name of the board) shall have the following committees:
10 (Name and describe the duties of each Committee.

11 ***If the board does not have any committees, use the following language:***

12 (A) The _____ (Name of the board) will have no committees.

13 (B) Each committee must be established by an affirmative vote of the board. A committee cannot meet
14 until its creation is approved by the Council Audit and Finance Committee. Each committee shall
15 consist of at least three board members appointed by the chair. A staff member shall be assigned to
16 each committee by the director of the _____ (department name).

17 (C) The board chair shall appoint a board member as the committee chair, with the member's consent.

18 (D) A majority of the total number of appointed committee members constitutes a quorum.

19 (E) Each committee shall meet on a regularly scheduled basis at least quarterly.

20 (F) Each committee shall make an annual report to the board at the January board meeting.

21 (G) Committee meetings must be posted in accordance with Texas Government Code Chapter 551
22 (Texas Open Meetings Act).

23 (H) At each committee meeting, a committee member shall sign in on a sheet provided and shall
24 indicate that the member has no conflict of interest with any item on the committee meeting agenda,
25 or identify each agenda item on which the member has a conflict of interest.
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28 **WORKING GROUPS**

29 (A) The board can determine the size of a working group but the number of board members serving on
30 the working group must be less than a quorum of the board.

31 (B) A working group may designate a chair, with the member's consent, but is not required to do so.

32 (C) Quorum requirements do not apply to working groups.

33 (D) Staff support will not be provided for working groups.
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1 Working groups are not required to post their meetings in accordance with the Texas Government
2 Code Chapter 551 (Texas Open Meetings Act).
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4 **ARTICLE 9. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY.**
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6 The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the board in all
7 cases to which they are applicable, except when inconsistent with these bylaws or with special rules of
8 procedure which the board or city council may adopt.
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10 **ARTICLE 10. AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS.**
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12 A bylaw amendment is not effective unless approved by the Council Audit and Finance Committee.
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14 The bylaws were approved by the _____ (insert - board name) at their
15 meeting held on _____ (insert - month date, year).
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(Signature of Executive or Staff Liaison)

(Insert - Title -- Executive or Staff Liaison)