

SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES
September 14, 2020
Rescheduled from September 8, 2020

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT	ELECTED OFFICIALS ATTENDING BY TELECONFERENCE	ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT	STAFF PRESENT
Burghart Hruby Kaven Kilburg Kosirog Maladra Marks McGowan Swanson Burns (Chair)	Bruno Godskesen (Clerk)		Dawkins Sandack

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Burns called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM noting that all aldermen were present or attending by teleconference.

2. NEW BUSINESS / PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

3. Items of Business

a. Discussion Regarding Governance Principles and Practices

Burns opened commenting that sometimes the council gets together to discuss items general in nature such as relationships between staff, council, and other governing bodies. In this case his hopes tonight were to discuss how best to work together. Burns then entertained a motion to waive meeting rules.

Moved by Ald. Swanson seconded by Burghart to waive meeting rules.

Roll Call:

AYES: 10 (Ald. Bruno, Burghart, Hruby, Kaven, Kilburg, Kosirog, Maladra, Marks, McGowan, Swanson)

NAYS: 0 Motion Carried

Burns noted that he was not there this evening to be right, but to learn, and then opened the floor for comment and input.

Hruby opened with questions relating to parliamentary procedure, how to ensure a professional and respectful environment, and hoping to get a better understanding of how the council agenda is set.

Attorney Sandack described three basic ways an item may be brought back before the council including on the night of the vote, at the next meeting (motion to rescind), or if there is a substantive change to the matter to be considered.

There was extensive discussion regarding the actions taken by the City Council and Mayor at two previous meetings in August and September regarding whether the process was handled appropriately and what role the City Attorney is to play during the meetings.

Burghart commented the way the previous meetings were handled was unfortunate, but had the council known the measure would be brought back with substantial changes, that would have lowered temperatures considerably. Burns agreed, commenting that he reacted with emotion after communicating with the applicants immediately following the defeat of the measure.

Swanson expressed that he has seen inconsistency with legal counsel during meetings. Felt that sometimes legal counsel steps in and sometimes not. Burns felt all could do better, and he committed to do better.

Maladra indicated a need to be confident that if the Chair is going down a path that a Council member would be challenged on, that the Chair would also be challenged. Burghart did not understand why the attorney did not intervene in the recent meeting. Sandack stated the attorney only does so at the direction of the chair or a council member. There was additional debate over whether the attorney, or anyone else, should have acted to support or correct that discussion.

Kilburg read from Roberts Rules, regarding the procedure to table a motion, then noted that his motion to table had been recognized, seconded and voted to approval. Kilburg felt, therefore, that it was out of order to continue with the discussion and asked why the attorney had not acted to stop the discussion. Sandack responded it was not his role to do so.

Burns gave his opinion that the council had the responsibility to challenge the chair's actions, not the attorney, but that the council had not done so.

Marks asked, if there were a parliamentarian, would that person have acted on the issue. Sandack replied that the chair is the parliamentarian and each council member has the right to object, raise point of order, to override the chair. Gave examples, noted that members could ask him questions during a meeting. Kaven asked whether role of attorney is to equally and impartially represent all members of the council, staff, and chair. Sandack confirmed that was correct.

Kilburg suggested bringing a parliamentarian on board who could ensure Robert' Rules are followed. Burns noted council would have to change rules to allow such a role. Suggested instead that all depend on the city attorney and that anyone on dais can ask him for direction.

There was discussion regarding who decides the schedule and criteria for special COW meetings. Burns reviewed the approach for scheduling COW, based on such items as input from staff, deadlines, special topics and planned absences.

Various alderman asked for more help and guidance during meetings. Sandack indicated he would provide some information regarding Roberts Rule. Burns suggested bringing back the rotating chair for COW meetings. There was support in doing so.

Maladra discussed his reaction at a previous meeting where he felt frustrated by the fact that aldermen changed their votes from one meeting to the next, after being given the same information at each meeting. He apologized for his reaction, but felt perception counts, so it should be clear why votes were changed.

Discussion continued on the purpose of the COW meetings in regards to whether and why votes may change and whether reasons should be given, the meaning of votes, and how votes get progressed to council meetings. Suggested that an explanation of the meaning of COW votes be added to agendas. Discussion of how other communities use COW meetings and whether they should be open to the public as to how decisions are arrived at.

Burns noted his appreciation for having 10 people on the council with passion. The rotating chair for COW meetings will begin September 21, 2020, but will defer to the Mayor to chair specific meetings as needed or requested.

The group closed with an agreement to work together. Burns gave positive comments about this group, adding his respect for disagreements because they help.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, moved by Ald. Burghart to adjourn the meeting.

Roll Call:

AYES: 10 (Ald. Bruno, Burghart, Hraby, Kaven, Kilburg, Kosirog, Maladra, Marks, McGowan, Swanson)

NAYS: 0 Motion Carried

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.

- *Submitted by Deputy City Clerk Fornari*