



Town of Westlake

POLICY ON BOARD MEETING PROCEDURES

**Approved by the Board of Aldermen
July 28, 2008**

Upon adoption of this policy by the Board of Aldermen, the following rules and order of business will be adhered to.

MEETINGS

Regular Meetings will be held on the second and fourth Monday of each month. Special meetings shall be called, upon request of the Mayor or a majority of the members of the Board of Aldermen as prescribed by the Texas Local Government Code Sec. 22.038. Should the Town Manager identify a need for a special meeting, he or she shall consult with the Mayor to schedule said meeting. All meetings shall be subject to the provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, V.T.C.A., Government Code, Ch. 551, Open Meetings, as amended.

Work Sessions may be scheduled prior to the regular meetings on the second and fourth Monday of the month, as necessary. The time is subject to change at the discretion of the Board of Aldermen or the Town Manager. Periodic Work sessions will also be scheduled to provide the Board of Aldermen with time to discuss short term and long term goals. The general public can, of course, attend such meetings, but may not participate in the proceedings unless invited to do so by the Mayor.

Executive Sessions are an exception to the general rule that all meetings are open to the public. Executive Session may be held on the second and fourth Monday of each month. A special meeting can be called by the Mayor and the Town Manager. The Open Meetings Act allows closed meetings in a few specific instances where privacy serves the public interest – i.e. to discuss real estate, economic development, personnel matters. The Board must keep a record of the meeting and it shall be certified by the Mayor to assure that all matters discussed in executive session were properly recorded.

AGENDA

Agendas are prepared and posted for every meeting of the governmental body.

The Mayor, working in conjunction with the Town Manager, will exercise their professional judgment in determining what items of business should come before the Board. Any member of the Town staff wishing to have an item placed on the agenda shall consult with the Town Manager's office and then submit the item to the Town Secretary.

Staff will post agenda packets on the internet for all Regular Meetings and Work Sessions no later than the Friday afternoon preceding the week of scheduled meetings. This should afford ample time for all Board members to inquire into the nature of each matter to be discussed or to personally investigate the matter so as to be better informed before a Board meeting.

The Town Secretary's office, in conjunction with the Town Attorney, assumes the responsibility for compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

First item on the regular Board agenda shall be to recite the Pledge of Allegiances.

These procedures shall apply to all meetings of the Board of Aldermen. The Mayor shall be the presiding officer at all meetings of the Board of Aldermen. In the event of the absence of the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem, the Mayor shall designate the presiding officer. In the event the Mayor has failed to designate the presiding officer, the Board member with the most seniority shall serve as presiding officer.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

In regular and special meetings the Board of Aldermen will utilize reasonable rules of parliamentary procedure in the conduct of its business. Below are examples (not mandatory) of reasonable parliamentary procedure in certain types of actions of the Board of Aldermen:

1. **MAIN MOTION:** A formal proposal to take certain action.

Step 1. Addressing the Chair. (Begin the discussion by having a member make the motion. Motion should be made and seconded. After this, debate can be conducted. (Ex: "Mayor, I move the following...").

SECOND REQUIRED	Yes
DEBATABALE	Yes
AMENDABLE	Yes
VOTE REQUIRED	Majority

Step 2. Assigning the floor (Mayor recognizes the member)

Step 3. Making a motion.

Step 4. Seconding a motion.

Step 5. Stating the motion (Mayor states the motion)

Step 6. Debating the question. (Mayor allows debate, with maker of motion speaking first in debate).

Step 7. Putting the question. (Mayor takes the vote after debate is complete).

Step 8. Announcing the result of vote. (Mayor announces the vote, members for and against).

2. **TO TAKE FROM THE TABLE:** To enable an assembly to take up and consider a motion that was postponed temporarily during the same meeting. Maybe used at a future meeting if the item that was tabled was posted.

SECOND REQUIRED	Yes
DEBATABALE	No
AMENDABLE	No
VOTE REQUIRED	Majority

3. **AMENDING A MOTION** Any motion may be amended as follows: “Mayor, I move that we amend the motion by (adding, striking out, etc. the words...).” The amendment must be seconded and then it can be discussed. When discussion ends, the amendment is voted on first. If the amendment passes, the original motion is then put to a vote as amended. If the amendment fails, the original motion is put to a vote.

SECOND REQUIRED	Yes
DEBATALE	Yes
AMENDABLE	Yes
VOTE REQUIRED	Majority

4. **TO OFFER A SUBSTITUTE AMENDMENT:** Another way to change an original motion is by use of the Substitute Motion. A substitute motion is an amendment that changes an entire sentence or paragraph. It must be seconded and then discussed. It may be amended and differs only from an amendment in that if the substitute motion passes it does away with the original motion.

SECOND REQUIRED	Yes
DEBATALE	Yes
AMENDABLE	Yes
VOTE REQUIRED	Majority

5. **LAY A MOTION ON THE TABLE:** Sometimes a board or committee may wish to defer action on a motion. One way to accomplish this is to lay a motion on the table. It is in order to move that a main motion be laid on the table when discussion on the main motion has or is about to end. A tabled motion can be brought from the table during the same meeting but is usually done so at a later meeting when unfinished business is being considered.

SECOND REQUIRED	Yes
DEBATALE	No
AMENDABLE	No
VOTE REQUIRED	Majority

6. **MOTION TO CLOSE DEBATE (call for question):** To prevent or stop discussion on the pending question, and to bring the pending question or questions to an immediate vote.

SECOND REQUIRED	Yes
DEBATABALE	No
AMENDABLE	No
VOTE REQUIRED	2/3 of members present

7. **POINT OF ORDER:** Anytime a member feels an incorrect procedure is being used, he or she can interrupt with a point of order request that requires the Mayor to determine the correct procedure. The point of order can have no additional motions applied to the request other than a motion to withdraw.

SECOND REQUIRED	No
DEBATABALE	No
AMENDABLE	No
VOTE REQUIRED	Mayor must concede or deny.

RIGHTS IN DEBATE

Robert's Rules of Order says that debate is the discussion regarding a motion that occurs after the presiding officer has restated the motion and before putting it to a vote.

When a pending question is presented for consideration to the Board, the presiding officer shall recognize the member who made the motion to speak first and the member who seconded the motion to speak second. When two or more members wish to speak, the presiding officer shall name the member who is to speak first. No member of the Board shall interrupt another while speaking except to make a point of order or to make a point of personal privilege. No member shall speak more than five minutes on any amendment to the question except as further provided in this rule.

No member shall speak more than the time limits provided herein on any subject or amendment, and such member may use his or her time in any combination, in separate speech or comments totaling the number of minutes permitted. The Mayor shall not be obligated to recognize any Board member for a second comment on the subject or amendment until every Board member wishing to speak has been allowed a first comment.

Board members shall also have the right to yield a portion of time to another member.

Any member deciding to speak more than five minutes on any question or more than five minutes on any amendment to the question shall be accorded the privilege without objection upon motion supported by two-thirds of the Board. No member shall be permitted to interrupt while another member is speaking.

No Board member shall be permitted to indulge in a discussion of personalities, use language personally offensive, arraign motives of members, charge deliberate

misrepresentation, or use language tending to hold a member of the Board of Aldermen up to contempt.

If a member is speaking or otherwise transgressing the rules of the Board, the presiding officer shall or any Board member may call him or her to order in which case he or she shall immediately be quiet unless permitted to explain. The Board shall, if appealed to, decide the case without debate. If the decision is in favor of the member called to order, he or she shall be at liberty to proceed, but not otherwise.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Each Board member should be aware of the conflict of interest regulations, including State provisions and statutes.

When a Board member has a conflict of interest with an agenda item, he or she should submit the required affidavit (if required) prior to the beginning of the meeting at which the agenda item is scheduled. Upon introduction of the agenda item, the Board member with the conflict of interest should announce that he or she has a conflict of interest and will not participate in discussion or consideration of the agenda item. It is not necessary that the Board member leave the meeting room.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Individuals who wish to address the Board of Aldermen on an item posted as a public hearing shall register with the Town Secretary prior to the Mayor's announcement to open the public hearing. Registration forms are available in the lobby. The Mayor will open the public hearing and recognize individuals who wish to come forward to speak for or against the item. The speaker will state their name and address for the record and shall be allowed three minutes. After a public hearing is closed, there shall be no additional public comments. If the Board needs additional information from the general public, some limited comments may be allowed at the discretion of the Mayor.

When a large number of participants have indicated an interest in addressing the Board on a zoning case or another regular agenda item, the Mayor or Mayor Pro Tem may set a maximum time limit for the proponents and opponents and a time limit for rebuttal, if necessary.

Individuals who wish to address the Board of Aldermen on a consent or regular agenda item not posted as a public hearing shall register with the Town Secretary prior to the Mayor's reading of the agenda item. Registration forms are available in the lobby. The Mayor will recognize individuals who wish to come forward to speak for or against the item. The speaker will state their name and address for the record and shall be allowed three minutes.