

**ALTAVISTA TOWN COUNCIL
RULES OF PROCEDURE
Adopted October 12, 2021**

These rules of procedure were designed and adopted for the benefit and convenience of the Altavista Town Council (herein "Council"). Their purpose is to help Council conduct its affairs in a timely and efficient manner. Further, Council reserves the right to suspend or amend the rules of procedure whenever a majority of Council decides to do so. When Council's rules of procedure do not address a procedural issue, Council may consider the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order for guidance. The failure of Council to strictly comply with the rules of procedure shall not invalidate any action of Council.

Section 1: Purpose and Basic Principles

Section 1-1. Purpose of Rules of Procedure

- A. To enable the Council to transact business fully, expeditiously, and efficiently while affording every opportunity to citizens to witness the operations of government;
- B. To protect the rights of each individual Council member;
- C. To preserve a spirit of cooperation among Council members; and D. To determine the will of Council on any matter.

Section 1-2. Basic Principles Underlying Rules of Procedure

- A. The business of the Council should proceed in the most efficient manner possible;
- B. Council's rules of procedure must be followed consistently;
- C. Council's actions should be the result of a decision on the merits and not a manipulation of the procedural rules;
- D. Only one subject may claim the attention of Council at one time;
- E. Each item presented for consideration is entitled to full and free discussion;
- F. Every member has equal rights to participate and vote on all issues;
- G. Every member must have equal opportunity to participate in decision making;
- H. The will of the majority must be carried out, and the rights of the minority must be preserved; and
- I. The Council must act as a body.

Section 2: Meetings

Section 2-1. When and Where Regular Meetings are Held

- A. The regular meetings of the Council shall be held in the Council Chamber located at 510 Seventh Street at 6:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday and at 5:00 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month commonly referred to as the "work session meeting". The purpose of the meeting on the fourth Tuesday is to introduce topics for consideration and discussion prior to action being taken at the next regular meeting. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Council may take action on any matter deemed to be time sensitive at the work session meeting.

- B. The Council may hold additional meetings at other locations and times or may change the locations and times of regularly scheduled meetings as it deems appropriate to do so. Notice of such additional meetings or changes to the location or time of regularly scheduled meetings shall be provided to the public and the press as required by State Code. Additional meetings shall be referred to as “special meetings” and shall be approved by Council during a regularly scheduled meeting.

Section 2-2. Cancellation or Rescheduling of Meetings

A regularly scheduled meeting may be cancelled or rescheduled, in special circumstances and for the convenience of Council, if the change would not impact an advertised public hearing or a scheduled public presentation. The Mayor and Vice Mayor shall agree to any such change and the remaining members of the Council shall be immediately notified of the change and the reason therefore. If any two (2) members of the Council object, the regularly scheduled meeting shall proceed as originally planned. In absence of such objection by two (2) members of the Council, the public and the media shall be notified promptly of the change.

Section 2-3. Recessed/Continued Meetings

If the Council deems necessary to continue a meeting due to the lateness of the hour, or a need for additional discussion, a regular meeting may be continued to a date not greater than seven (7) days after the recessed meeting. The meeting may be set for a different time or place as the regular meeting so long as the information is communicated to the Council members and the press as promptly as possible. All hearings and other matters previously advertised shall be conducted at the continued meeting and no further advertisement is required.

A properly called regular, additional scheduled, or special meeting may be recessed or adjourned to a time and place certain by a motion made and adopted by a majority of the Council in open session during the regular, additional scheduled, or special meeting. The motion must state the time and place when the meeting will reconvene. No further notice need be given of such a recessed or adjourned session of a properly called regular, additional scheduled or special meeting.

Section 2-4. Special Meetings

- A. The Council may hold such special meetings, as it deems necessary, at such times and places as it may find convenient; and it may adjourn from time to time. A special meeting of the Council shall be called pursuant to Section 15.2-1417 of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended.
- B. Special meetings may be called by the Mayor or any two (2) members of the Council in writing to the Clerk of Council for the purpose stated in the notice of the special meeting. The Clerk of Council will notify the members of the Council of the time and place designated and the purpose of the meeting. Written notice of the special meeting shall be delivered to each member of the Council by leaving a copy thereof at his or her place of abode or place of business at least twelve hours before the time scheduled for the special meeting. Only matters specified in the notice of the special meeting shall be considered unless (1) all of the members of the Council are present and (2) the Council determines in good faith at the meeting that it is essential to discuss or act on such additional item(s) immediately.
- C. Notice, reasonable under the circumstances, to the public of any special, emergency or continued meeting shall be given at the same time as the notice provided the members of the Council, the Town Attorney, and the Town Manager.

Section 3: Officers

Section 3-1. Mayor

The Mayor shall preside over all meetings of the Council. The Vice Mayor serves in the absence of the Mayor. In the absence from any meeting of both the Mayor and Vice Mayor, the Council members present shall choose one of their members as temporary presiding officer.

Section 3-2. Vice Mayor

In addition to serving in the absence of the Mayor, the Vice Mayor is charged with the annual evaluation of the Town Manager. The Vice Mayor may utilize assistance from another Council member to complete this task.

Section 3-3. Clerk

The Clerk of Council shall be appointed by the Council. He or she shall prepare the agenda for Council meetings, shall attend all Council meetings, and shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings. This role is typically filled by the Town Manager; however, a deputy clerk may be assigned to take the minutes for the Council.

Section 3-4. Parliamentarian

The Town Attorney shall serve as the Parliamentarian for the purpose of interpreting these Rules of Procedure and the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, as may be directed by the presiding officer, or as required as a result of a point of order raised by one or more Council members. If the Town Attorney is unavailable, the Town Manager shall serve as the Parliamentarian.

Section 4 – Meeting Procedures and Expectations Section

4.1 – Conduct during a Meeting

- A. At meetings of the Council, the presiding officer shall preserve order and decorum. The presiding officer shall have the following powers:
1. To rule motions in or out of order, including any motion not related to the subject under discussion or blatantly offered for obstructive purposes;
 2. To determine whether a speaker has gone beyond reasonable standards of courtesy in his or her remarks and to entertain and rule on objections from other members on this ground;
 3. To entertain and answer questions of parliamentary law or procedure;
 4. To call a brief recess at any time; 5. To adjourn in an emergency.
- B. A decision by the presiding officer under any of the first three powers listed above may be appealed to the Council upon motion of any member stating his or her grounds for such appeal. Such a motion is in order immediately after a decision under those powers is announced and at no other time. The member making the motion need not be recognized by the presiding officer, the motion does not require a second, and the motion, if timely made, may not be ruled out of order. Council shall consider and decide the appeal by majority vote before any further business is taken up by the Council. There are two exceptions to this right of appeal. The presiding officer may adjourn without the Council's

vote or appeal in an emergency, and he or she may also call a brief recess without a vote at any time, when necessary to "clear the air" and thus reduce friction among the members.

Section 4.2 – Council Comments and Rebuttals

A. To maintain professional decorum, individual Council members should indicate that they wish to speak by raising their hand to be recognized by the presiding officer prior to beginning to speak. Once recognized, the Council member may ask questions of staff or the Council and/or make comments related to the current subject matter. Comments should be limited to five minutes.

B. The presiding officer shall preside over the discussion when a motion has been made according to the following general principles: 1. The maker of a motion is entitled to speak first. 2. A member who has not spoken on the issue shall be recognized before someone who has already spoken. 3. To the extent possible, the debate shall alternate between proponents and opponents of the measure. 4. The presiding officer may participate in the debate prior to declaring the matter ready for a vote.

C. In the instance of a rebuttal, the Council member should be acknowledged by the presiding officer prior to offering comments. The rebuttal comments should be limited to five minutes and should be delivered in a manner that is respectful to the Council as well as the staff and audience.

Section 4.3 – Order of Business at Regular Meetings

The suggested order of business at a regular meeting of the Town Council shall be set out in the printed agenda and may include, but not be limited to the following items:

1. Call to order
2. Invocation
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Adopt meeting agenda – Amendments/deletions to the agenda
5. Citizens Time (may be for items on the agenda and those not on the agenda)
6. Recognitions and Presentations
7. Partner Updates
8. Consent Agenda
9. Public Hearings
10. Unfinished Business
11. New Business
12. Reports and Communications
13. Matters from Council
14. Closed Session
15. Adjournment

Items added to the Agenda will be moved to the end of the meeting.

Section 4.4 – Order of Business at Work Sessions

The suggested order of business at a work session meeting or any special called meeting of the Town Council shall be set out in the printed agenda and may include but are not limited to items outlined and referenced in Section 4.3 above.

Items added to the Agenda will be moved to the end of the meeting.

Section 4.5 – Public Comment (Citizens' Time)

There shall be a period of time at every meeting where citizens are encouraged to speak to Council. Citizens wishing to address Council should sign in prior to the meeting and when recognized at the podium, provide their name and residential address for the record. Citizen comments will be limited to three (3) minutes with a total of fifteen (15) minutes allotted for this purpose.

- Public comment shall be for the purpose of allowing members of the public to present any matter, which, in their opinion, deserves the attention of the Council. They shall not serve as a forum for debate with the Council.
- Remarks shall be addressed directly to the Council and not to staff, the audience, or the media.
- There shall be no comment during Citizens' Time on a matter for which a public hearing is scheduled during the same meeting.

- There shall be no comment during Citizens' Time on a matter that has already been the subject of a previous public hearing where no final vote has been taken.
- Any issue raised by the public which the Council wishes to consider may be put on the agenda for a future Council meeting by a majority vote.
- Council members shall not discuss issues raised by the public except by consent of a majority of the Council members present.
- Other than as stipulated above or during public hearings, no person shall be permitted to address the council orally, except by permission of the Council, and such permission shall not be granted unless with the consent of a majority of the members of the Council present at such meeting.
- Any person who desires to submit written statements for forwarding to the Council prior to a Council meeting must submit ten (10) copies to the Clerk of Council by 4:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding the Council meeting.

Section 4.6 - Unfinished Business Items

Unfinished Business shall include all business not concluded at the previous two regular meetings. The town manager shall automatically place unfinished business items including postponed motions, under this agenda item.

Section 4.7 – Roberts Rules of Order

The provisions of Robert's Rules of Order, revised, edition date, shall govern the council in its meetings, except in so far as such provisions are inconsistent with law and modified by the special rules of order as set forth below. In the event that there is an inconsistency between the respective rules of order, the special rules shall control.

Section 4.8 – Special Rules of Order

Voting and Debate

- The Mayor shall vote on all matters before council unless contrary to law or he is required to abstain from a vote.
- During council meetings, council deliberations will be held amongst council members; unless the Mayor consents and there are no objections to invite other participants.
- Individuals shall request to speak by raising their hand to be recognized by the presiding officer during the debate. Individuals speaking without being recognized by the presiding officer will be asked to hold their comments until such time as an individual who was properly recognized finishes their statement.
- Any motion, amendment or resolution may be withdrawn or modified by the mover at any time before a decision, (with the concurrence of the seconder) of an amendment or ordering of the yeas and nays, except a motion to reconsider, which shall not be withdrawn without leave.
- The maker of the motion shall be allowed to provide opening and closing discussion during debate.
- Council members shall not engage in electronic or other communications amongst themselves regarding any motion or topic that is on the floor for debate.
- Prior to the vote, the motion under consideration shall be repeated back for clarity and understanding.

Section 5 – Agenda Items

Section 5.1 – Items included on the Agenda

Items will be included on the Agenda based on the following actions:

1. A Council member may request an item be added to an agenda by notifying the Clerk to the Council and Mayor prior to the meeting;
2. A staff response to Council's request from a previous meeting or special request;
3. A request from staff that requires the attention and/or approval of Council such as policy, contractual obligation or budgetary item;
4. Public Hearings as necessary stemming from the Planning Commission or by virtue of a Council decision that requires a public hearing as part of the statutory process;
5. Procedural items such as nuisance hearings, proclamations and resolutions. Proclamations shall be shared with the Council prior to the meeting;
6. Items from staff received for information only, such as monthly reports that require no action by Council

Section 6 – General Operating Policy

Section 6-1. Minutes of the Council Meetings

The minutes of the Council meetings shall reflect the official acts of the Council. They shall provide a summary of discussion and record Council votes. Minutes shall be considered for approval within a reasonable time after the meeting they record.

Section 6-2. Broadcasting Council Meetings

Regular meetings and work sessions of the Council shall be broadcast live on the Town's website. Copies of the broadcast are archived on the website and available for viewing at any time. For a copy of the meeting, individuals should contact Town Hall and request an electronic copy; there may be a charge for such service.

Section 6-3. Amending the Rules of Procedure

These rules may be amended at any regular meeting, or at any properly called special meeting that includes amendment of the rules as one of the stated purposes of the meeting. Adoption of an amendment shall require an affirmative vote of four (4) members of the Council.

Section 6-4. Special Rules of Procedure

The Council may adopt its own special rules of procedure to cover any situations that are not adequately addressed in these Rules of Procedure. Adoption of a special rule of procedure shall require an affirmative vote of a majority of a quorum of the Council.

Section 7 – Council Standards of Conduct

Section 7.1. Attire

To maintain the dignity and decorum of the Town Council Meetings and so as not to disrupt said meetings Council members shall dress in business or business casual attire, or in a shirt with Town logo.

Section 7.2. Attendance

As an elected official of the citizens of the Town of Altavista, Council members should make every effort to attend the meetings of the Town Council as the meeting schedule is set and confirmed annually. Council members should inform the Mayor if they will be unable to attend a regularly scheduled meeting of the Council as far in advance as possible. The Mayor or presiding officer should announce at the beginning of the meeting if a Council member will be absent.

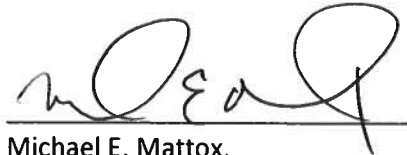
As permitted, Council members may participate in Council meetings by electronic means (telephone or videoconferencing such as Zoom) as permitted by Virginia Code Section 2.2-3708.2. The purpose of the policy is to comply with the requirements of Section 2.2-3708.2 of the Code of Virginia and to allow for and govern participation by one or more Council members in Council meetings by electronic communication means.

If a Council member is aware that they will be unable to attend an upcoming meeting; they should announce it at the preceding meeting to be recorded in the official record. For example: if the Council member knows at the regular meeting he will miss the upcoming work session, he should inform the Council prior to adjournment of the regular meeting.

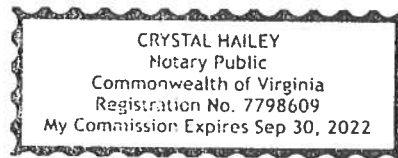
Section 7.3. Code of Ethics

There shall be a Code of Ethics adopted separately by the Town Council, which shall illustrate the proper behavior and ethical standards that should be followed by all Town Council members.

Adopted this 12th day of October, 2021



Michael E. Mattox,
Mayor



Crystal Hailey 10/12/21