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**CITY OF SAINT PAUL**

# **Council Rules of Procedure**

**Presented by Jay Willms, Director of Operations**



# Purpose of the Discussion

Recent issues have prompted a discussion and a review of our rules, specifically how the Council responds to disruptions in chambers.

We are discussing whether rule changes are needed to:

- Clarify authority
- Reduce risk
- Improve coordination and predictability



# Purpose of Rules

## What the Rules Are Designed to Do

- Establish order, authority, and predictability
- Balance:
  - Individual councilmember rights
  - Collective body authority
  - Presiding officer discretion

## Written Rules vs. Norms

### Broad Question for Today:

- Are the rules sufficient, but norms are not?
- Or do the rules themselves need refinement?



# Issue: Disruptions in Chambers

## What the Rules Say:

- Rule 11(d): President may:
  - Preserve order and decorum
  - Recess or adjourn meetings
  - Order removal of individuals
  - Clear chambers if business cannot proceed
  - Request law enforcement assistance

## What is unclear:

- Expected Councilmember behavior during:
  - A recess
  - An order to clear chambers
- Whether Councilmembers are expected to act collectively



# Issue: Disruptions in Chambers

## Governance Question

- When the President recesses due to disruption should Councilmembers:
  - Remain in chambers?
  - Exit together?
  - Follow a prescribed protocol?



## Issue: Disruptions in Chambers

- **Option A: Clarify expectations**
  - Codify Councilmember conduct during:
    - Recesses
    - Chamber clearings
  - Emphasize collective action (Note: Action cannot be compelled)
- **Option B: Keep discretion, improve norms**
  - No rule changes
  - Adopt shared expectations
- **Option C: No changes**



## Next Steps

### **Possible Outcomes from Today:**

- Direction to staff to draft rule amendments
- Direction to update non-binding norms or protocols
- Decision to maintain current rules and practices
- Schedule a follow-up discussion

### **Process Check:**

- Rule amendments require:
  - Seven-day notice
  - Specific language
  - A resolution