



MAYORAL POWERS REGARDING RUNNING CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS & VOTING OPTIONS FOR CITY OFFICIALS



March 11, 2025

Background

- At its September 10, 2024 and September 24, 2024 meetings, City Council requested this report regarding the role of the Mayor as chair of the City Council and Mayoral powers during the running of City Council meetings under Robert's Rules of Order and the voting options for City officials with an emphasis on abstention votes.



Background

- City Council Resolution No. 24-7414 establishes the rules for the conduct of City Council meetings (and subsidiary boards and commissions)
 - Meetings will be conducted, to the extent practicable, in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.
 - If conflict, State law and HBMC govern
 - Officials have three voting options when voting on a motion: (i) aye; (ii) nay; and (iii) abstain



Discussion – Mayoral Role

- Robert's Rules of Order section 47:7 list the 11 duties of the Mayor as the presiding officer of the City Council meeting.
- Robert's Rules, section 47:19 further explains the role of the Mayor as presiding officer: commanding presence and knowledge are essential, be fair and do not take advantage of anyone's lack of knowledge of parliamentary law

Discussion – Mayoral Role

- While all members should be familiar with our parliamentary rules, the Mayor is tasked with applying these rules and making parliamentary rulings – subject to overrule by a motion of the body
- Mechanisms for the orderly and efficient running of City meetings - not as something that vitiates the will of the majority of the City Council
- Under Robert's Rules Mayor supposed to play a less active role in the substance of motions and deliberations, this is not a hard and fast rule and our Resolution makes clear Mayor can participate/make motions



Discussion - Voting

- 3 options to vote – (i) yes (ii) no (iii) abstain
- Robert's Rules of Order, section 45:3 make clear that an abstention is an acceptable option for members when voting on a motion

Discussion - Voting

- As duly elected officials ultimately responsible to the voters of the City
- Any policy requiring explanation requires voluntarily buy-in from all Councilmembers
- Deliberative process and reasoning for a Councilmember's vote is highly protected

Discussion – Options Moving Forward

- Any interest in amending Resolution No. 24-7414 that required explanation – no teeth
- Clear understanding that compliance would be voluntary

Recommendations

- Receive a report on the role of the Mayor and Mayoral powers under Robert's Rules of Order that govern City Council meetings
- Receive a report on the voting options for City officials and a discussion on abstentions
- Provide any direction

