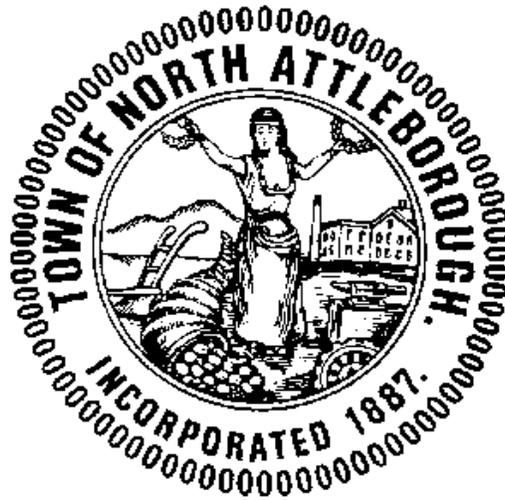


# North Attleborough Town Council Rules of Procedure

Version 1 (5/12/21)



## ***Forward -***

To all future honorable North Attleboro Town Council Rules Sub-Committee Members,

This first membership of the Town Council Rules Sub-Committee wishes to share appreciation for the opportunity to serve the inaugural Town Council by drafting these Rules of Procedure. This document was crafted to serve as a guide for effective communication, smooth efficient operations, and the very best of legislative intentions.

Additionally, memorializing these Rules of Procedure serve not only as future parliamentary guidance, but also as a light to shine forth a path for all individuals interested in how their Town Council operates. This stands to honor the previous North Attleborough form of government that used documented procedure to freely assist all those who desired to have their voices heard in municipal government.

If any lessons learned in this process could be offered to following Town Council Rules Sub-Committees, it would humbly be a desire to see future Town Council Rules maintain the basic standards of respectful decorum and equal provisions for both majority and minority voices to be heard. These are the foundational pillars upon which any decision, no matter the subject, can find the best outcome for the residents of our great town.

Perhaps each following membership of the Town Council Rules Sub-Committee can contribute to the spirit of this Forward, and pass along some brief inspiration to the next group. This will contribute to a lasting legacy of the caretakers for the Town Council's operational guidance, and all those that will serve them.

Most respectfully,

Michael Lennox  
Julie Boyce  
John D. Simmons  
John Donohue  
Greg St. Lawrence

North Attleboro Town Council Rules Sub-Committee  
May 12, 2021

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## **Section 1: Town Council Meetings**

- a. **Regular Meetings** – When; Time; Location; Quorum; Agenda
  - a. **When:** North Attleborough Town Council regular meetings are held on the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) and fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) Monday of every month.
    - i. In the case of a holiday Monday (State or Federal), or other town related conflicts (e.g. School Committee meeting), being on the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) or fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) Monday, a Town Council meeting will be rescheduled for the Wednesday immediately following the holiday.
    - ii. The Council President, or in his/her absence, the Vice-President, shall have the authority to postpone any Regular Meeting until the next previously scheduled meeting.
      - 1. If needed, a Special Meeting may be called to address specific Town business needs until the next Regular Meeting.
      - 2. The Town Council must be informed of the meeting postponement via official town email within 1 business day of the decision to postpone.
  - b. **Time:** Town Council meetings will be held at 7:00pm ET.
    - i. The Council President reserves the right to change the time of future meetings to as early as 6:00pm ET, such as for summer months, upon verbally informing the Town Council during a regularly scheduled meeting no later than 2 weeks prior to the date of the time change.
    - ii. Refer to Town Bylaw Article V, Section 4, Part e, regarding additional provisions and requirements of municipal meeting scheduling.
  - c. **Where:** The official Town Council Chambers are located in the North Attleborough Town Hall Lower Level Conference Room.
    - i. The Council President reserves the right to choose an alternative North Attleborough meeting location when:
      - 1. anticipating audience attendance to be more than can be seated in Town Council Chambers;
      - 2. Town Council Chambers are not available due to a serious facility or safety situation.
    - ii. If the meeting location becomes unavailable within the 48 hours of the agenda notification meeting time, the meeting must be cancelled. At this point, options would be to call a Special Meeting within the rules of the Open Meeting Law, or wait to conduct Town business at the next scheduled Regular Meeting.

- iii. Outside of audience capacity and serious facility / safety concerns, the Town Council shall agree by majority vote to hold meetings in another location for reasons as voted by the Council.
- d. **Quorum:** The presence of five (5) Council members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of Town Council business [Charter, Section 2-5 (b)]. This Charter requirement shall be recognized for all Regular, Special, and Emergency Town Council Meetings.
- e. **Agenda**
  - i. The Council President is responsible for creating and setting the Town Council Agenda through the Town Manager's Office.
  - ii. Town Councilors may make written requests, including via official Town email, to the Council President for specific items to appear on the Town Council Agenda during a Regular Town Council Meeting. At the very minimum, these requests must be made to the Council President by 10:00am on the morning of the day the Town Council Agenda is being submitted, which would be 48 hours prior to the upcoming meeting.  
[Example: If the upcoming Regular Town Council meeting is on a Monday evening at 7:00pm, the request must be submitted to the President of the Council by 10:00am on the prior Thursday morning.]
  - iii. The Council President is not obligated to place a Town Councilor requested subject on the Town Council Agenda for up to two (2) upcoming meetings using reasonable discretion on the urgency of the request and the quantity of the already planned Town Council Agenda items.
    - 1. Upon receipt of the requested Town Council Agenda item, the Council President shall discuss the request with the Town Councilor submitting the item. This will be done to clearly understand the request, its urgency, and to schedule its inclusion in the Town Council Agenda.
    - 2. If the Council President does not include the requested item on the Town Council Agenda by the conclusion of two (2) Town Council Meetings, the requesting Town Councilor may, during a following Town Council Meeting, make a motion to include their item on the next Town Council Agenda. Like any other motion, it would require a second to receive deliberation, and require a

Town Council majority vote for inclusion in the next Town Council Meeting Agenda.

- b. **Special Meetings** – Calling; Notice; Limitations; Location
  - a. Calling & Notice: The Council President may call a Special Meeting in-between Regular Meetings via the rules of the Open Meeting Law.
  - b. Limitations: Special Meetings may be “convened only to consider one or more items of business specified in the call of the meeting.” [Robert’s Rules of Order – Special Meeting (11<sup>th</sup> Edition - page 91)]
    - i. “The reason for Special Meetings is to deal with matters that may arise between Regular Meetings and that require action by the (Town Council) before the next Regular Meeting, or to dedicate an entire session to one or more particular matters.” [Robert’s Rules of Order – page 91 & 92, Special Meeting]
    - ii. “If, at a Special Meeting, action is taken relating to business not mentioned in the meeting agenda, that action to become valid, must be ratified by the Town Council at a Regular Meeting (or at another Special Meeting properly called for that purpose).” [Robert’s Rules of Order – page 93, Special Meeting]
- c. **Emergency Meetings** – Calling
  - a. The Town Manager may call an Emergency Meeting of the Town Council when needed to address an extremely serious or dire situation that already has or contains the immediate potential to adversely impact the lives or property of the Town’s residents. Due to the extremely serious nature of the situation, the Emergency Meeting may be scheduled outside of the Open Meeting Law parameters.
  - b. The Town Council requests the Town Manager to make all reasonable attempts to contact every Council Member via phone, email, and delivery of written notice at the Town Council Members residences of the Emergency Meeting.
  - c. In the event that the Council President or the Vice-President cannot be reached or have the ability to physically participate in the Emergency Meeting, the Town Councilor that is present with the highest vote total from the very last Town Council election shall preside in a “Pro Tem” capacity over the meeting for the Town Council. If the Council President or Vice-President arrives prior to the

adjournment of the Emergency Meeting, they shall then preside over the remainder of the session.

- d. The Town Council requests attendees of an Emergency Meeting should also consist of any required Departments Heads or Regional Officials, such as the Police Chief, Fire Chief, Superintendent of Schools, Department of Public Works Director, Town Nurse, Regional Emergency Management, or other pertinent official Director. This is to deliver the most detailed and official information to all Town Council Members in attendance.

d. **Attendance** – Requirements, Excuses

- a. Town Councilors have made a commitment to the voters of the Town to attend all Town Council Meetings and their participation is expected, however there are no attendance requirements.
- b. Town Councilors missing meetings due to illness, travel or other issues shall notify the Council President of their anticipated absence. The Council President shall inform the Town Council of the absence and the expected return of any missing Town Councilor at the beginning of each Town Council Meeting.
- c. Town Councilors may excuse themselves from a Town Council Meeting and return to Town Council Chambers at any point.
- d. Town Council Members that arrive late to a Town Council Meeting shall take their appropriate seat with the least amount of disruption to the session as possible.

e. **Schedule**

The Council President shall release a schedule for Regular Meetings that extends at a minimum six (6) months into the future. This allows for Town Council Members to properly plan to attend and participate in as many meetings as possible.

f. **Remote Participation**

Town Council Members may participate remotely in Town Council Regular Meetings per Massachusetts 940 CMR 29.10 as adopted by the North Attleboro Board of Selectmen on July 1, 2017.

- i. This includes any exemptions put into place by the then Executive branch of the Town of North Attleboro government. This is the same policy that

is adhered to by any Board, Committee, or Commission in the Town that chooses to opt into the Remote Participation Policy.

- ii. Further exemptions to the Remote Participation Policy will be governed by the current executive branch of the Town of North Attleboro government.

## **Section 2: Council Composition, Powers, and Duties**

### **a. Council Members – Composition, General Powers & Duties**

- a. Per the Charter, Article I, Section 1-2: "All legislative powers of the Town shall be exercised by the Town Council."
- b. Per the Charter, the composition of the Town Council shall be, Article II, Section 2-1(a): "There shall be a Town Council consisting of 9 members elected at large, which Council shall exercise the legislative powers of the Town."
- c. Per the Charter, the General Powers and Duties of the Town Council shall be, Article II, Section 2-2: "Except as otherwise provided by law or by this Charter, all powers of the Town shall be vested in the Town Council which shall provide for their exercise and for the performance of all duties and obligations imposed on the Town by law."

### **b. President of the Council – Powers & Duties**

- a. Per the Charter, the Powers and Duties of the Council President shall be, Article II, Section 2-3(a): "The Council President shall be recognized as the official head of the Town for all ceremonial purposes and by the courts for all purposes serving civil process. The Council President shall be the presiding officer of the Town Council and shall have no power of veto, but shall have the same powers as any other member of the Town Council to vote upon all measures coming before it. The Council President, or another member of the Town Council as the President's Designee, shall serve as an ex officio member of the School Committee, with a voice but no vote. The Council President shall perform such other duties consistent with the office, including appointment of committee members, as may be provided by this Charter, bylaw, or vote of the Council."
- b. The Council President shall facilitate all Town Council requests for legal counsel and opinion as necessary through the Town Manager.

### **c. Vice President – Duties**

Per the Charter, the Powers and Duties of the Council Vice-President shall be, Article II, Section 2-3(b): "The Councilor receiving the second highest number of votes shall serve as the Vice President. The Vice-President shall act as president during the absence or disability of the Council President."

### **d. Pro Tem Officers ("for the time being")**

- a. In the instance of the Council Vice-President acting as president during the Council President's absence or disability, the Town Councilor that is present with the next highest vote total from the very last Town Council election shall preside in a "Pro Tem" capacity as the Council Vice-President.

- b. In the instance of neither the Council President and the Vice-President physically attending the Town Council Meeting, the "Pro Tem" President shall be the Town Councilor present with the highest vote total from the very last Town Council election, and the "Pro Tem" Vice-President shall be the Town Councilor present with the next highest vote total. If the Council President or Vice-President arrives prior to the adjournment of the Town Council Meeting, they shall then preside over the remainder of the session.

### **Section 3: Town Council Business**

#### **a. Meeting Decorum**

Town Council Members shall conduct themselves in a professional and respectful fashion, participating in an open and orderly process of representing the interests of the resident's municipal business matters.

#### **b. Legislation – Introduction; Requirements; Referral**

##### **a. Introduction –**

- i. The Town Manager, or Designee, and Town Councilors, herein known as Parties, shall introduce legislation to the Town Council through the use of a Town Council Measure.
- ii. Parties shall introduce new Town Council Measures during the New Business portion of a Town Council Meeting.
- iii. Town Council Measures returning to the Town Council from Sub-Committee referral shall include a recommendation to be deliberated, debated, and voted upon during the Sub-Committee Report portion of a Town Council Meeting.
- iv. The Town Council shall deliberate, debate, and vote upon older Town Council Measures, such as those in their second reading, tabled, or held for a time certain, during the Old Business portion of the Town Council Meeting.

##### **b. Town Council Measure Requirements**

- i. All Parties shall file Town Council Measures with the Clerk of the Council to be tracked with an official submittal form and identification number.
- ii. Per Charter Section 2-6(a). Bylaws and Other Measures: "Proposed bylaws and other measures shall be introduced in writing in the form necessary for final adoption. A proposed bylaw to amend or repeal a portion of any general or zoning bylaw shall set out in full the portion to be so amended or repealed, or shall have such portion attached thereto. Any proposed bylaw, except an emergency measure, shall be posted for no less than 14 days prior to final passage on the Town Website and in a manner required by the Open Meeting Law for posting meeting notices. Prior to final passage, each proposed bylaw shall be read at 2 separate Council meetings except as provided in Section 2-6(b)" - Emergency Measures.

- iii. Per Charter Section 2-6(b) Emergency Measures: "An emergency measure shall be introduced in the form and manner prescribed for measures generally, except that it shall be plainly designated as an emergency measure and shall contain a separate statement after the enacting clause declaring that an emergency exists and describing the scope and nature of the emergency in specific terms. The preamble that declares the emergency shall be separately approved by a 2/3 vote of those Town Councilors present. An emergency measure shall become effective upon adoption or at such later time as it may specify. An emergency measure may be passed, with or without amendment, or rejected, at the same meeting at which such measure is introduced. Emergency measures shall stand repealed on the 61<sup>st</sup> day following their adoption, unless an earlier date is specified in the measure or the measure is sooner acted upon in accord with Section 2-6(a).
- iv. With the exception of Emergency Measures, all standard Town Council Measures shall be voted on by the Town Council during a Regular or Special Town Council Meeting.

c. Referral

- i. Town Council Measures and questions may be referred to Sub-Committees for study and recommendation through a majority vote of the Town Council present and voting.
- ii. The Measures described below are held to a higher level of study and shall be referred to specific Sub-Committees for focused review and feedback to the Town Council.
  - a. Finance Measures – All Measures within the following criteria, shall be introduced during an open session of a Town Council Meeting and then directed to the Finance Sub-Committee for recommendation:
    - I. Transfer of appropriation amounts equal to or exceeding the value set by the Town Council as required in the North Attleborough Town Charter Art. VI Section 6-6(c).
    - II. Financial details of the Town Manager's Annual Budget
    - III. Financial details of Contracts.
  - b. Bylaw Measures – All Measures specific to study, creation, or amendment of the Town's Bylaws shall be introduced during

an open session of a Town Council Meeting and then directed to the Bylaw Review Sub-Committee for recommendation.

- c. Town Council Rules Measures – All Town Council rule and procedure Measures shall be introduced during an open session of a Town Council Meeting and then directed to the Council Rules Sub-Committee for recommendation.
- d. Economic growth and Sustainability Measures – All economic growth and sustainability related Measures shall be introduced during an open session of a Town Council Meeting and then directed to the Economic Growth and Sustainability Sub-Committee for recommendation.

**c. Order of Business**

The Council President reserves the right to configure the order of the agenda as needed to run a concise and effective business meeting, otherwise the standard order of Town Council business shall be as follows:

- i. Pledge of Allegiance
- ii. Approval of Minutes
- iii. Town Council Community Announcements, Acknowledgments, Citations
- iv. Public Hearings
- v. Resident and Community Comment
- vi. Old Business
- vii. Sub-Committee Reports: (Order of Council President’s discretion)
  - Finance
  - Schools
  - Bylaw
  - Rules
  - [Future Sub-Comms]
- viii. New Business
- ix. Town Manager’s Report
- x. Adjournment or Executive Session

**d. Minutes of Meetings**

- a. The Council Clerk shall attend and record the Regular and Special Meeting Minutes of the Town Council, including Executive Sessions. In the absence of the Council Clerk, another member of the Town Manager’s office staff, or the Town Manager them self, may temporarily record the Town Council Meeting Minutes. In the absence of the Council Clerk and Town Manager’s Office staff, the Council

Vice President (or Vice-President Pro Tem) shall serve as the Council Secretary and would record the Town Council Meeting Minutes.

- b. The Council Clerk or Secretary shall record the Date and Time of the meeting, the Town Council Members and participating individuals in attendance, record all motions, seconds, and vote outcomes of the Town Council. All reviewed documents shall be recorded in and included with the Meeting Minutes.
- c. The Council Clerk shall distribute draft copies of the Town Council Meeting Minutes to the Town Councilors for approval at very next Town Council Meeting. Once approved by the Town Council, the Council Clerk shall file a copy of the Town Council Meeting Minutes and associated documents with the Town Clerk's Office for the official record.

***e. Information and Document Distribution***

- a. The Council Clerk shall distribute all relevant and available documentation to the Town Council upon the posting of a Town Council Agenda via all legally accepted means and in compliance with the Open Meeting Law of 48 hours prior to the meeting. In addition, any prepared but unapproved Minutes of prior Regular or Special Town Council Meetings, shall be included in the public posting of Town Council Agendas.
- b. The Council Clerk, Town Manager, or Council President shall provide supplemental information to the Town Council as it becomes available via all legally accepted means and in compliance with the Open Meeting Law.
- c. Any agenda related support materials or supplemental information, provided to the Town Council on the day of a Town Council Meeting, shall additionally be available by hard copy to all Town Council Members in attendance of that evenings meeting.
- d. The Town Manager may make use of email and text messages in order to provide immediate updates to the Town Council on situations occurring within the Town, such as Safety related events. This is to keep the Town Council informed of serious or emergency related events that could have an impact on residents.

***f. Town Attorney***

Intentionally left blank.

*g. Town Auditor*

Intentionally left blank.

*h. Annual Report*

- a. Annually, for inclusion into the Annual Report of the Town, the Council President shall write a one page report sharing the actions and accomplishments of the Town Council. The report shall include the names of the Town Councilors in the order of their election vote totals, and the Sub-Committees in which the Councilors served.
  
- b. Any residents having been appointed to the Town Council Sub-Committees shall also be recognized in the Council President's contribution to the Town's Annual Report.

## **Section 4: Parliamentary Procedures**

### ***a. Rules of deliberation / debate***

Robert's Rules advises some specific practices and customs that when observed by speakers and other members will assist in the carrying on of debate in a smooth and orderly manner.

- i. All remarks made by Town Council Members shall be confined to the merits of the pending question or subject.
- ii. All remarks made by Town Council Members should refrain from attacking another Town Council Member's motives. The possible outcome of a Measure is what is in debate, not the member that proposed the Measure. A Town Council Member can condemn the nature or likely consequences of a proposed Measure, but must be done while avoiding personalities.
- iii. All remarks from the Town Council Members shall be made to the Council President.
- iv. All Town Council Members should avoid the use of other Town Council Members names. It is better to refer comments from previous Town Council Members as "the Member who spoke last" or "comments made by a previous Town Councilor".
- v. Town Council Members should not adversely reflect on a prior action taken by the Town Council that is not pending, unless a Motion to Reconsider, Rescind or Amend it is pending.
- vi. Town Council Members shall refrain from speaking against their own motion. If a Town Council Member speaks in regards to their motion, they are obliged to take a favorable position. If the Town Council Member changes their mind while the motion is pending, they may ask permission from the Town Council to withdraw the motion.
- vii. Town Council Members should refrain from reading from reports or quotations except when without objection or permission. Short, pertinent extracts, should be allowed as long as the privileged is not abused.
- viii. During debate, all Town Council Members shall refrain from disturbing the assembly. This includes whispering and speaking with other Town Council Members.

**b. Recognition by Council President**

- a. Town Council Members shall wait for recognition from the Council President before speaking. Recognition can be gained by putting a hand up and/or verbally asking "Mister / Madam President?" only when other Town Councilors have finished speaking. The Council President shall recognize each Town Councilor to speak by announcing the Town Councilor by name and giving that individual the floor.
- b. The Council President shall be the only individual to interrupt a Town Councilor currently speaking, except by a "Point of Order" from another Town Council Member. The "Point of Order" must be immediately addressed by the Council President before allowing the Town Councilor with the floor to continue.

**c. Point of Order**

- a. A Town Council Member may interrupt a speaking Member to call the Council President's attention to a breach of rules, etiquette, or procedure. The Council President shall hear the reason for the Point of Order from the interrupting Town Council Member and determine if the speaker who has the floor should continue or request modification of their statement.
- b. The Council President shall decide all Points of Order.
- c. If dissatisfied with the decision of the Council President, any Town Council Member may ask for an appeal of the decision by the Council President. The question from the Town Council Member shall be: "Shall the decision of the Council President be sustained?" No Town Council Member may speak more than once on an appeal without the consent of the Town Council Members in attendance. The decision of the appeal shall be by a majority vote of the Town Council. In any tie vote, the decision of the Council President shall stand.

**d. Consideration of Motions**

- a. Recognition to speak by the Council President shall be required for any Town Council Members to make a motion. All motions made without first gaining recognition from the Council President shall be ignored. Motions shall be entertained in their order of precedence.
- b. The Council President shall recognize a motion by stating: "I have a motion and a second" (or similar). The Council President may use discretion in asking if there is a second for a motion, and may determine a motion to be void if after a short pause there is absence of a second heard from the Town Council. No motions

shall be debated until duly seconded and recognized as such by the Council President.

- c. The Town Council Member who makes the motion has the right to modify or withdraw it prior to the Council President recognizing the motion. If the motion is modified prior to the Council President recognizing the motion, the Town Council Member who seconded the original motion may withdraw their second.
- d. The Council Clerk shall record all recognized motions and be able to read back the wording if requested by Town Council members during the debate period of the motion.
- e. ***Parliamentary Inquiry (Process or Procedure Questions)***

A Town Council Member may be recognized and request a Parliamentary Inquiry to the Council President in order to obtain or clarify information on parliamentary rules of the Town Council or Roberts Rules of Order (if adopted) regarding the proceedings. The Council President shall determine if the inquiry requires a minor pause to the proceedings for review of the Town Council Rules or Roberts Rules of Order, or if the subject requires tabling for consultation with the Town Attorney via the Town Manager.
- f. ***Move the Question***

A Town Council Member may be recognized and make a motion to Move the Question. This motion can only be made after all Town Councilors have had the opportunity to speak at least once on the matter at hand. This motion requires a 2/3 vote majority in favor to end debate and move directly to a vote on the current question.
- g. ***Hold to a Time Certain***

A Town Council Member may be recognized and make a motion to postpone the question's vote to a certain time and within limits such as: specific date, time, meeting, or until a specific event has transpired.
- h. ***Right to Postpone***

Per the Charter, Article II, Section 2-6(c): Right to Postpone: On the first occasion that the question on adoption of a non-emergency measure is put to the Town Council, if a single member present objects to the taking of the vote, a so-called "Charter privilege", the vote shall be postponed until the next meeting

of the Town Council., wither regular or special. This procedure shall not be used more than once for any specific measure whether or not such measure is amended. The use of this right to postpone shall have privilege over all motions, must be raised prior to or at the call by the Council President for the vote, and, once invoked, all debate on the measure shall cease.”

*i. Reconsideration*

- a. A motion to Reconsider a previously adopted question, shall only be made by a Town Council Member in the prevailing side of the vote on that particular motion. Prior to being recognized by the Council President, the motion requires a second, which can be made by any Town Council Member regardless of how they voted on the motion proposed for reconsideration.
- b. A motion to Reconsider a previously adopted question, “is not amendable”. Robert’s Rules of Order – 11<sup>th</sup> Edition – pg. 320
- c. A motion to Reconsider shall be “debatable in all cases in which the motion proposed to be reconsidered is debatable, and when debatable, opens to debate the merits of the question whose reconsideration is proposed.” Robert’s Rules of Order – 11<sup>th</sup> Edition – pg. 320
- d. A Reconsider action shall not create a conflict with a motion previously adopted during a Town Council Meeting. The previously adopted motions must first be rescinded or amended so that the conflict no longer exists, prior to the Reconsider motion. Otherwise it shall be ruled out of order by the Council President.
- e. All motions to Reconsider a question must be made prior to the end of the Town Council Meeting the motion proposed for reconsideration was made and adopted in.

*j. Recessing*

When a Town Council Meeting has concluded its third (3<sup>rd</sup>) hour, the Council President shall ask the Town Council if they would like to take a recess of a short and determined amount of time. At any point during a Town Council Meeting, Town Council Members may make a motion to Recess. On either the motion of a Town Council Member or by the three (3) hour time request, the Council President will consider each with the following rules below:

- i. If there is no current question to the Town Council pending, the Council President may make the motion to Recess for a short and announced period of time and go immediately to recess.

- ii. If there is a current question to the Town Council pending, the request to Recess must be approved through a second and a majority vote of the Town Council. This Recess motion is not debatable, nor can it be reconsidered.

**k. Adjournment**

- a. The Council President shall ask for a motion to Adjourn from a Town Council Meeting once all business on the Town Council Meeting Agenda has been addressed. The motion to Adjourn is not debatable, amendable, nor can be reconsidered. A second will send the motion to an immediate majority vote. Upon an affirmative majority vote, the Council President will announce “the meeting is adjourned” (or similar) along with the time of adjournment to the Council Clerk. The meeting is concluded.
- b. When a Town Council Meeting has concluded its fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) hour, the Council President shall ask the Town Council if they would like to adjourn the Meeting, adjourn at the conclusion of the current topic, or continue with the Meeting Agenda. Town Council Members may make motions accordingly.

**l. Quick Reference Motion Guide**

	Debatable?	Amendable?	Vote Type	Can it be Reconsidered?
Adjourn	No	No	Majority	No
Recess	No	Yes	Majority	No
Reconsideration	Yes	No	Majority	No
Right to Postpone	No	No	Charter Privilege	No
Move the Question	No	No	2/3 Majority	Yes
Hold to a Time Certain	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Refer to a Committee	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Amend	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes

## **Section 5: Town Council Voting**

### ***a. Voting Required***

- a. Recusal – When the need arises for a Town Council Member to remove themselves from a discussion, due to a potential conflict of interest or ethical obligation, the Town Council Members shall inform the Council President as soon as practical. This includes making a simple public statement, without the need to detail the conflict of interest.
- b. Upon each Town Council question, motion, and vote, Town Council Members shall answer with one (1) of the three (3) following options:
  - i. Yes – (or Aye) affirmative for the asked question or motion.
  - ii. No – (or Nay) negative for the asked question or motion.
  - iii. Abstain – choose not to take a position on asked question or motion.
- c. Each Town Council Member shall only have one (1) vote for any Town Council question. Town Council Members that serve specific roles (Ex. Council President, Sub-Committee Chair) may not vote as a Town Council Member and then again as the additional role that they serve on the Town Council.
- d. Town Council Members shall never be compelled to “explain their vote” during the actual voting process. This would be considered debate, which has ceased upon the calling of the vote by the Council President.

### ***b. Voice Vote, Hand Vote***

- a. On all Town Council questions or motions, the Council President shall first ask the Town Council Members, as a group, for their voice vote. If after the voice vote it is unclear the tally of the vote, the Council President may request Town Council Members to raise their hands in the affirmative or negative to show how they voted to the posed question or motion. After a hand count, the Council President shall then announce the results of the vote tally.
- b. Town Council Members shall not raise their hand for a vote that is opposite of the vote they originally verbalized.
- c. Upon finding a voice vote to be unclear, a Town Council Member, by means of a “Point of Order”, shall request the Council President hold a hand vote to confirm the final vote tally.

**c. Tie Votes**

Per the Town Charter, a “majority” is defined by all those present and voting. All properly recognized Town Council questions or motions that end in a tie, shall be considered a non-vote and is not recorded into the Meeting Minutes.

**d. Roll Call Voting**

- a. A roll call vote may be requested by any Town Council Member, provided it is done prior to the Council President calling for a voice vote. This will place on the official record how each Town Council Member voted on a particular question or motion. The request must be made in the form of a motion, properly receiving a second and majority support from those present and voting.
- b. A roll call vote may be performed by the Council President in the order of their preference (alphabetical, seating arrangement, etc.) as long as the presiding officer is the last to vote.
- c. Once a single vote has been voiced, no further debate on the posed question shall be allowed.
- d. The Council President shall call the Town Council Members name, wait for the Town Council Member’s response, and then announce to the body the Town Council Member’s vote prior to moving onto the next Town Council Member.

**e. Proxy Votes**

Only duly elected, sworn in, Town Councilors shall vote on Town Council votes and questions. There shall be no allowance for proxies, stand-ins, or substitute individuals to have the ability to cast a vote for a properly recognized Town Council question or motion.

**f. Announcing and Recording Votes**

At the conclusion of each Town Council vote, the Council President shall announce the result, allowing the Council Clerk an opportunity to record the vote tally. The Council Clerk shall record the motion, the Town Council Member to second the motion, and the final vote tally announced by the Council President for the official record of the Meeting Minutes.

## **Section 6: Town Council Sub-Committees**

### ***a. Types***

- a. Ad-Hoc – Created to address, discuss, act upon, or recommend action(s) to the Town Council in regards to subjects of limited scope or direction. The objective and / or end product of this Sub-Committee shall be specified by the Town Council during its initiation, providing a clear intent of the Sub-Committee’s purpose for the specific Town Council need. These specifications are to include dated benchmarks of progress reporting, proposed times of completion, and number of individuals required to complete the work within the time allowed.
- b. Standing – A Sub-Committee created to exist without a specified end point, within the confines of a specific jurisdiction, in order to consider, recommend, or propose policies to the Town Council.

### ***b. Formation***

All Sub-Committee types are created and dissolved by majority vote of the Town Council.

- i. Ad-Hoc Sub-Committees may be created by the Town Council, without a need to be referred to the Bylaw Sub-Committee for recommendation. However, if discussions on the potential of an Ad-Hoc Sub-Committee were to be lengthy or become cumbersome during a Town Council Meeting, it can be referred to the Bylaw Sub-Committee for recommendation through a majority of the Town Council present and voting. A Measure is not required for the formation of an Ad-Hoc Sub-Committee.
- ii. The formation of a standing Sub-Committee requires action of the Bylaw Sub-Committee to make a recommendation to the full Town Council regarding scope and proposed number of members for the Sub-Committee. A Measure is required for the formation of a standing Sub-Committee.

### ***c. Membership***

- a. All Sub-Committees shall be designed to contain an odd number of individuals serving one (1) year terms.
- b. Ad-Hoc Advisory Committees may consist of members of the Town Council and as the need arises, residents at large. The number of Town Council Members

shall be decided and affirmed through a majority of the Town Council present and voting.

- c. Standing Committees shall consist of Town Council and residents at large. Regardless of the size, the Sub-Committee shall always be a majority of Town Councilors.
- d. When the Town Council creates a new Sub-Committee, the Council President shall request volunteers from the Town Council for membership. When the Town Council determines residents are to be included in a Sub-Committee, the Council President shall also request the Town Manager's office to accept applications from the residents, through a publicly distributed posting. Within a period of the next two (2) Town Council meetings, the Council President shall publicly appoint the panel of Sub-Committee members. If there is not enough resident interest in the Sub-Committee position(s), the Council President may request the Town Manager's office distribute another public posting of the Sub-Committee position(s), or request that the Town Council consider another action in forming the Sub-Committee. Sub-Committees may begin work as soon as a quorum of the membership is appointed.
- e. The Council President shall assign all Sub-Committee Chairpersons. The Chairperson shall be a Town Council Member.
- f. The Chairperson of any Sub-Committee shall assign a Vice-Chairperson and a Sub-Committee Secretary to record meeting minutes. The Sub-Committee Chair and Vice-Chair positions shall be Town Council Members to report upon Sub-Committee activities during Town Council Meetings. In the absence of both the Chair and Vice-Chair persons at the next Town Council Meeting, the Sub-Committee Secretary could publicly share the unapproved meeting minutes with the Town Council during the Sub-Committee update portion of a Town Council Meeting.
- g. Per the Town Charter, the Council President may remove a Sub-Committee member from their duties at the President's sole discretion.

***d. Attendance – Requirements; Excuses***

The Town Council expects members to attend Sub-Committee meetings. An excuse for missing a meeting is not required, but a member shall reach out to the Sub-Committee Chairperson to inform of potential non-attendance out of courtesy. The Council President shall contact any Sub-Committee member

missing more than two (2) consecutive meetings without any outreach to the Sub-Committee Chairperson to inquire on the nature of any absence related emergency or non-emergency conditions.

***e. Duties of Sub-Committee Leadership***

- a. Sub-Committee Chairperson shall create the Meeting Agenda, run the meeting according to the Meeting Agenda, provide pertinent information and documents within a timely basis to the Sub-Committee members, allow all members to participate in accordance with Town Council Meeting participation standards, and distribute Meeting Minutes to the Town Council Clerk.
- b. Sub-Committee Vice Chairperson shall be prepared to lead the Sub-Committee meeting and follow through with the associated duties of being the Chairperson for that particular meeting event(s).
- c. Sub-Committee Secretary shall record the time and place of a meeting, member attendance, motions, voted result of motions, and prepare minutes for Sub-Committee approval at following meetings.

***f. Duties and Responsibilities of Sub-Committee Members***

Sub-Committee members are expected to attend all Sub-Committee meetings (within reason), review all advanced information, and be prepared to contribute at a reasonable level during the Sub-Committee meetings. Any member issues or critique e of the Sub-Committee Meetings should be shared with the Sub-Committee Chair and / or Vice Chair prior to initiating contact with the Council President, unless significant concern for the Sub-Committee's actions are observed.

***g. Voting, Recommendations, and Reporting***

- a. Sub-Committee voting will follow the same format and requirements as the Town Council as described in ***Section 5: Town Council Voting***. However, where the Council President is noted in Section 5, the Sub-Committee Chair or Vice-Chair will be replaced as the Sub-Committee executive(s), additionally Sub-Committee Members shall replace the Town Council Member description.
- b. If Sub-Committee discussion, voting, and recommendations reach an impasse and cannot be overcome in a timely manner, the Council President and Town Council shall be informed by the Sub-Committee leadership for further

instruction. **The Town Council shall always have final decision over all Sub-Committee recommendations, or lack thereof.**

- c. For utmost transparency, all reporting of Sub-Committees shall be done publicly by the Sub-Committee leadership during Town Council Meetings. The Council Clerk shall distribute all Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes to the Council in their meeting packets when available.

## **Section 7: Executive Sessions**

### **a. *Governing Directive***

All Town Council Executive Sessions shall be held in accordance with the directives of the **Massachusetts Open Meeting Law**. To ensure compliance with the law, councilors are reminded to always refer to the current **Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25**, as well as the regulations promulgated thereunder, 940 CMR 29.00, and the Attorney General's most recent *Open Meeting Law Guide and Educational Materials*, which provide specific details or conditions of holding an Executive Session or inviting attendees.

### **b. *When Sessions may be held (G.L. c. 30A, §21)***

- a. To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, discipline, dismissal, complaints, or charges brought against a public officer, employee, staff member, or individual. This purpose does **not** include discussions of "professional competence"; employee evaluations must be conducted in Open Session.
- b. To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel.
- c. To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have detrimental effect on the bargaining position or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares.
- d. To discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies.
- e. To investigate charges of criminal misconduct or consider the filing of criminal complaints.
- f. To consider the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.
- g. To comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements.
- h. To consider or interview applicants for employment or appointment by a preliminary screening committee if the chair declares that an open meeting will have detrimental effects in obtaining qualified applicants.

- i. To meet or confer with a mediator with respect to litigation or decision on public business within its jurisdiction involving another party, group or entity, provided the decision to participate in mediation is made in Open Session and no decision or resolution of the issues subject to mediation are made without deliberation over same in Open Session.
- j. To discuss trade secrets or confidential, competitively-sensitive or other proprietary information relative to the activities enumerated in G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(10).

**c. *How an Executive Session may be convened***

- a. All Executive Sessions shall be included on the Town Council Agenda publicly posted 48 hours, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays, prior to the Town Council Meeting, and shall be convened from an Open Session, even if the only item on the agenda is the Executive Session.
- b. If the Executive Session will be held for the purpose of discussing an individual pursuant to Section 7(b)(1), above, the individual shall be notified in writing at least 48 hours in advance of the Executive Session and its purpose, and said notice shall include the information listed in Section 7(h)(3), below.
- c. The Council President shall clearly state if the Town Council will reconvene in Open Session at the conclusion of the Executive Session, or directly adjourn from the meeting.
- d. The Town Council shall only enter Executive Session following a majority Roll Call vote of the members present in favor of entering Executive Session, conducted pursuant to North Attleborough Town Council Rules Section 5(d) (Roll Call Voting), which the vote shall be entered into the meeting minutes.

**d. *Purpose of an Executive Session***

- a. The Town Council agenda shall include and the Town Council President shall state, in Open Session and prior to entering any Executive Session, the reason(s) and subject(s) that may be discussed in the Executive Session and disclosed to the public without compromising the purpose of the Executive Session.
- b. The Town Council shall only discuss matters in regard to which the Executive Session was called.

**e. *Voting***

All votes taken during an Executive Session shall be made on motions, properly seconded, by Roll Call votes conducted pursuant to North Attleborough Town Council Rules Section 5(d), and recorded in the meeting minutes.

**f. *Remote Participation***

Participating remotely in an Executive Session shall hereinafter be determined by the Executive Branch of the North Attleborough Town Government, the Town Manager, who shall have sole discretion over such matters. Except as otherwise modified by law and/or executive or emergency order, remote participation shall be conducted consistent with 940 CMR 29.10. As of the adoption of this Rule, Executive Session remote participation is not allowed pursuant to the policy established via the July 1, 2017 decision of the North Attleborough Board of Selectmen.

**g. *Presence of Town Attorney***

In consultation with the Town Council President, the Town Manager shall determine whether the Town Attorney shall be present in any Town Council Executive Session.

**h. *Attendees***

- a. The Town Council President and / or the Town Manager may determine which individuals relevant to the purposes and needs of the Executive Session discussion may attend, and shall make or cause to be made the proper notices and invitations with respect to the Executive Session.
- b. Public Town Committees, Boards, or Commissions invited to Town Council Executive Sessions shall create and publicly post an agenda regarding their attendance as a quorum and potential participation in the Executive Session, which notice shall be posted at least 48 hours (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays) prior to the Town Council Executive Session. These invited groups must also convene in an Open Session, giving the allowed purpose for entry into the Town Council Executive Session, and clearly state if they will reconvene their Open Session or directly adjourn at the end of the Executive Session.
- c. Individuals whose reputation, character, physical condition or mental health is being discussed in Executive Session, or about whom discipline is being considered or charges or complaints have been made who will be the subject of an Executive Session shall be provided notice and invited to the Executive Session in writing 48 hours in advance, unless the individual waives their right to this notice in writing. Said notice shall advise the individual of his or her right:
  - i. To be present at the Executive Session in which they will be discussed, although the individual may choose not to attend.

- ii. To have counsel or a representative of their choosing present for the purpose of advising the individual, but not for active participation.
- iii. To speak on their behalf.
- iv. To have an independent record of the Executive Session made by audio-recording or transcription, at their own expense.
- v. To have the discussion take place in Open Session.

**i. Confidentiality**

- a. Executive Session discussions are private and confidential, and Councilors and attendees shall not share or disclose the statements of others or content of these deliberations, or otherwise breach the privacy and confidentiality of Executive Session discussion. The confidentiality of Executive Session shall continue for so long as publication or disclosure would defeat the lawful purpose for which the Executive Session was held.
- b. Matters discussed in Executive Session shall be only disclosed as may be required to comply with any federal or state law.

**j. Executive Session Reporting**

- a. The Town Council Clerk (or Secretary of the Town Council – Vice President) shall record accurate minutes of all Executive Sessions.
- b. Upon completion, Executive Session Minutes shall be approved in a subsequently held Executive Session by majority roll call vote of the Town Council members present and voting. Approved Executive Session minutes may only be disclosed to the public pursuant to Section 7(j)(c) below.
- c. The Town Council President shall periodically review Executive Session minutes to determine whether such minutes should be released. Release of the Executive Session Minutes shall be determined by the timing of the conclusion of the matter being handled in the Executive Session and whether the minutes may be released without defeating the purpose of the Executive Session. A majority roll call vote of Town Council members present and voting shall approve the release of Executive Session minutes.

**k. Executive Session Adjournment**

All Town Council Executive Sessions shall be adjourned through a majority Roll Call vote of the members present, conducted pursuant to North Attleborough Town Council Rules Section 5(d).

## **Section 8: Public Participation and Access**

### **a. Public Sessions**

- a. All Town Council meetings, meetings of standing committees, and associated ad-hoc committees shall comply with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, and be open to the public, except executive sessions or as otherwise permitted by law. These meetings shall be conducted in a manner that provides for attendees to see and hear the Town Council and Committee meeting proceedings
- b. Meetings of the Town Council, standing committees, and ad-hoc committees shall consistently be held in Council Chambers, Lower Level Conference Room, North Attleboro Town Hall, 43 South Washington St, unless an alternative location has been established, through means outlined in Section 1c, and appropriate public notice and access are provided.
- c. Public Participation methods – per Massachusetts Open Meeting Law
  - a. Allowed – In person, written submission, and when the need for virtual meetings arise, by electronic means such as - telephone, internet, or satellite enabled audio or video conferencing, or any other tech that enables all persons present and remote to be clearly audible to one another.
  - b. Not Allowed – Social media, text, instant, or web chat messaging.

### **b. Public Comment – Town Council Meetings and Committee Meetings**

- a. Per the North Attleboro Charter, Article VIII, Section 8-2, all public meetings of the Town Council shall contain a segment exclusively dedicated to hearing comment from the general public.
- b. Public Comment is limited to matters on the Meeting Agenda or within the present jurisdiction of the Town Council or Committee. Items discussed during Public Comment falling outside the jurisdiction of the Town Council will be referred to the Town Manager's office. (See Action Needed Report)
  - a. The presiding officer shall request if there is anyone who would like to address the Town Council in regards to subjects not related to the current session's agenda.
  - b. Public comments regarding the current session's agenda are governed by the North Attleboro Charter [Article VIII, Section 8-2: "Comments with respect to a pending agenda item may be permitted by vote of the Town Council."],

and may be allowed by the presiding officer without objection. Any objections shall be determined through a majority vote of Town Council present and voting.

- c. During Public Comment, individuals who wish to speak shall wait to be recognized by the preference of the Town Council President or presiding officer. Once recognized, each individual shall have five (5) minutes to address the Town Council or assembled Committee. The presiding officer will indicate to the public speaker when their time has concluded and without objection, the presiding officer may allow additional time for the speaker to conclude. Any objections shall be determined through a majority vote of Town Council or Committee members present and voting.
- d. As the Town Council and Committee meetings are electronically recorded, public speakers shall use the microphones provided for these purposes. If participating remotely, the public speaker shall make a best effort to speak clearly, and presiding officer will make best attempt for them to be heard / recorded.
- e. The public speaker shall address the Town Council President or presiding officer and not engage in discussion with other Town Councilors or Committee members.
- f. Community Comment periods shall not be opportunities for debate, rather for an individual to express their thoughts or concerns to the Town Council or assembled Committee. Questions from speakers may be addressed by the Town Council President or meeting's presiding officer, however may also be taken for further review and follow up. At the presiding officer's preference, subject matter experts or individuals potentially offering clarification may also be called upon.
- g. Any Town Councilor inquiry to the public speaker's input is only allowed through the meeting's presiding officer, and should not be deducted from the public speaker's overall time.
- h. While everyone that wants to speak will be heard, if after hearing public several speakers present duplicate or repetitive information, the Town Council President or presiding officer may request to hear from public speakers with new or yet unheard information. It is within the presiding officer's preference to continue to take follow up comments from those that have previously spoken.

**c. Public Hearings**

- a. Public Hearings shall be conducted as its own specific agenda item. Multiple Public Hearings for a specific Town Council meeting shall be listed separately on the meeting agenda.
- b. Public Hearings ensure the public has the opportunity to provide input on proposed legislative actions, and shall occur during Town Council meetings. Each Public Hearing shall have a public input session, followed by a Town Council deliberation and legislative action session.
- c. Public Hearing Notice – shall comply with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. As standard practice, the Public Notice shall be read into the record following the motion to open the Public Hearing.
- d. The general public may attend a meeting to speak at a Public Hearing in person. Written input on a Public Hearing matter shall also be allowed as a means for the Public to communicate to the Town Council. The written input must be received in the Town Manager’s Office no later than 48 hours prior to the Public Hearing for proper and timely dissemination to the Town Council members. Without objection, the Town Council President or presiding officer may request the written input be read into the record. Any input received in a timely manner, but not read into the record, shall be included with the Meeting Minutes as a Town Council reviewed document.
- e. Prior to the start of a public hearing, the presiding officer shall announce the time allowances for public input and the guidelines of the hearing.
- f. Public hearings shall be opened and closed through a majority of Town Council or Committee members present and voting.
- g. The Town Council President or presiding officer shall conduct the public input session in accordance with Section 8b – Public Comment. Once all members of the public who wish to speak have been heard, the presiding officer shall ask to close the Public Hearing through a majority vote of the Town Council members present and voting.
- h. Town Council deliberations shall only be associated with the subject at hand. Inquiries from Town Councilors to hearing attendees, such as subject matter experts or members of the public, must all go through the meeting’s presiding officer.

- i. The Town Council may take legislative action(s) on the hearing subject as per determined through Town Council deliberation, further inquiry, or as required by law.

**d. *Disruptions and Interruption of Town Council and Committee Meetings*** – The Council President or presiding officer shall maintain a respectful decorum and preserve order over the meeting.

- a. Disruptions to Town Council and Committee meeting proceedings are prohibited and include:
  - a. Behavior that disrupts the respectful and orderly proceedings of a Town Council or Committee meeting.
  - b. Out of order conversations or outbursts from members of the public not previously recognized by the Town Council President or presiding officer.
  - c. Failure of a public speaker to comply with respectful dialogue or established time for their input. Public speakers shall not attack the reputation or character of others, keeping their input to the specifics of the discussion subject.
  - d. Holding or placing any type of props / signage in the Council Chamber (or place of official meeting) that obstructs the meeting for others both visually and physically.
- b. Disruption to the meeting may give cause for the presiding officer to briefly pause proceedings to address the room in regards to maintaining respectful meeting decorum. If after direct verbal requests, the disruption continues, the presiding officer may:
  - a. Suspend an individual's remaining public speaking time and move forward to the next speaker.
  - b. Request the Town Manager or Committee member contact the local authorities, respectfully make another request for the disruptive behavior to cease.
  - c. Using the best discretion possible, the presiding officer may request local authorities act within the law to address the source of the disruptive behavior, up to and including removal from the session if deemed applicable.

- c. If a meeting is interrupted in such a manner so as to cause it to no longer be feasible, the Town Council President or meeting's presiding officer may move to go directly to recess in order to bring the meeting to order. The meeting session may reasonably continue once order has been restored.
  - a. If the Town Council President or meeting's presiding officer has Council Chambers (or official meeting room) cleared, representatives of the press and news media shall be invited to stay for any additional proceedings. The Town Council or Committee may also establish a procedure to re-admit individuals not responsible for the interruption that are essential to the continuation of the meeting.
  - b. In more extreme cases, when interruptions represent a risk for the safety of all meeting attendees, the Town Council President or meeting's presiding officer may move to go directly to adjournment of the meeting. In this case Town Council or Committee members shall leave the Council Chambers if / when safe do so.

***e. Digital Recording of Meetings***

- a. For utmost public transparency, all public meetings of the North Attleborough Town Council may be recorded. Town Council Chambers currently offers audio and video recording capabilities.
- b. Public recording of meetings allows for rebroadcast of the meetings through local cable access and internet mediums, in addition to review of the sessions by the general public and news media.
- c. The Massachusetts Open Meeting Law (quoted below) expressly states "any member of the public may make an audio or video recording of an open session of a public meeting."
  - a. Prior to the meeting the presiding officer must be notified of the individual who wishes to create a recording, and "must comply with reasonable requirements regarding audio or video equipment established by the chair as not to interfere with the meeting."
  - b. The presiding officer is "required to inform other attendees of any such recording at the beginning of the meeting".
  - c. Individuals "arriving after the meeting has begun and wishes to record a meeting", "should attempt to notify the chair prior to beginning of recording,

ideally in a manner that does not significantly disrupt the meeting” (such as informing the Town Manager, who will inform the Town Council President).

d. The Town Council President or meeting’s presiding officer “should endeavor to acknowledge such attempts at notification and announce the fact of any recording of those in attendance”.

d. News media who wish to setup larger camera positions within Town Council Chambers, shall make contact with the Town Manager’s office regarding areas within Town Council Chambers which will not interfere with the meeting. Due to size limitations of Town Council Chambers, the Town Manager shall consult with the Town Council President or presiding officer, upon gaining knowledge of any beyond normal attendance by press or news media organizations. Camera positions shall not obstruct the view of the general public.

**f. Inclusive Access on Participation - Reasonable Accommodation**

a. Reasonable efforts shall be made to provide accommodation of all members of the public to attend and participate in all North Attleborough Town Council meetings.

**g. Use of Town Council Chamber**

North Attleborough Town Hall’s Lower Level Conference Room is the main meeting place of the North Attleborough Town Council and the Committees that serve it. The conference room is shared for use by the Town Manager and Town Departments for the professional needs of the town. The Town Council respectfully requests their known and consistent use of Town Council Chambers be prioritized in the schedule planning of the conference room, with the Town Council President being informed in a timely manner when future meetings may be impacted by other important conference room activities (example - Early Voting requirements).

**Section 9: Suspension, Review, Amendments to Town Council General Rules and Procedures**

**a. Suspension**

- a. North Attleborough Charter guidelines and Commonwealth of Massachusetts laws governing Town Council procedures cannot be suspended by the North Attleborough Town Council.
- b. With the exception of Emergency Measures from the Town Manager, Town Council general operating rules shall not be suspended. Any suspension of the Town Council Rules for an Emergency Measure shall be accepted by a two-thirds majority vote of those Town Councilors present and voting. ("Emergency" as defined by the North Attleboro Town Charter – Article I, Section 1-7. Definitions)

**b. Town Council Rules Review**

By bylaw, each North Attleboro Town Council shall have an assigned standing Town Council Rules sub-committee. This sub-committee shall review the current set of Town Council Rules for familiarity, reference, and recommendation during Town Council Meetings.

**c. Amendments to Rules**

- a. The general operating rules governing the meetings of the North Attleboro Town Council can be amended through a referral to the Town Council Rules Sub-Committee. Referrals shall be for specific review and Rules Sub-Committee recommendation regarding a current or potential new rule, done through a Town Council majority vote of those present and voting.
  - i. Town Council Rules Sub-committee recommendations shall clearly delineate the current rule language and the proposed revision language.
  - ii. The Town Council Rules Sub-Committee shall provide recommendations to the Town Council President via a Measure including any accompanying documentation.
  - iii. Rule amendments shall be made available to each Councilor for review a minimum of seven (7) days prior to Town Council consideration.
- b. The Town Council's adopted rules of order (ex. Roberts Rules of Order), shall continuously govern the parliamentary functions for discussion, motions, and voting.

***d. Adoption of New Rules or Amendments***

The Town Council shall adopt new or revised Town Council Rules through a majority vote of those present and voting.