

SECTION-BY-SECTION REPORT

Chapter 3 – Council Meetings, Agendas & Directives

Workshop Draft Review Document

SECTION 3.1 – Authority & Definitions

Prior Framework

- Charter controls Council authority (City Charter, Article II City Charter as amended 2024)
- Protocol and Procedures manuals referenced Council authority but did not consolidate hierarchy clearly.
- Definitions (Council action, directive, administrative matter) were not formally standardized in one location.

Draft Change

- Establishes hierarchy: Charter → Ordinance → Resolution → Policy.
- Defines:
 - Council Action
 - Council Directive
 - Administrative Matter
- Clarifies that once adopted, a Councilmember item becomes a Council action.

Nature of Change

Clarification and consolidation.

Reason Section Exists

- Avoids confusion between discussion items and binding action.
- Reduces disputes about what constitutes a directive.
- Strengthens legal defensibility.

Decision Point

Does Council wish to retain the formal definition structure for clarity?

SECTION 3.2 – Meetings, Quorum & Remote Participation

Prior Framework

- Ordinance Sec. 2-5 sets:
 - 5:30 p.m. start
 - 10:30 p.m. end
 - Two 15-minute extensions
 - Mayor controls special meeting order
 - Public comment timing
- No formal codification of technology disruption or hybrid mechanics in older manuals.

Draft Change

- Codifies quorum standards.
- Clarifies hybrid participation.
- Addresses technology disruptions.
- Reinforces 10:30 adjournment expectation.

Nature of Change

Modernization and formalization of operational practice.

Does not conflict with ordinance.

Reason Section Exists

- Reflects post-pandemic hybrid environment.
- Protects vote validity during broadcast or technical issues.
- Clarifies adjournment enforcement.

Decision Point

Does Council wish to maintain:

- 10:30 limit structure?
- Hybrid participation structure?

- Continuation during tech disruption if quorum remains?

SECTION 3.3 – Notice & Posting

Prior Framework

- Texas Open Meetings Act controls.
- Ordinance references 72-hour posting for certain meetings.

Draft Change

- Consolidates posting language.
- Clarifies business-day counting.
- Defines City Secretary responsibilities clearly.

Nature of Change

Consolidation only.

Reason Section Exists

- Prevents posting disputes.
- Improves compliance clarity.

Decision Point

No substantive change anticipated unless Council wishes modification.

SECTION 3.4 – Agenda Governance & Structure

Prior Framework

- Order of business adopted by resolution (Sec. 2-5(b)).
- Presiding officer reviews agenda (Priority Procedures, p. 43).
- Suspension allowed by vote.
- Individual member placement rights existed but not structurally defined.

Draft Change

- Formalizes 3 + 3 protected placement structure.
- Clarifies consent agenda pull authority.
- Clarifies suspension thresholds after adoption.

- Standardizes order of business.

Nature of Change

Structural formalization.

Potential policy decision point depending on interpretation of old practice.

Reason Section Exists

- Prevents agenda sprawl.
- Protects equal placement rights.
- Creates predictable meeting flow.
- Reduces mid-meeting manipulation.

Decision Points

- Is 3 + 3 structure appropriate?
- Should suspension threshold change?
- Should order of business be modified?

SECTION 3.5 – Agenda Workflow & Submission Deadlines

Prior Framework

- Informal submission timelines existed.
- Administrative review occurred but was not codified.
- Late items occurred via amended agenda.

Draft Change

- Formal five-week planning target.
- Defines readiness standards.
- Requires rationale for late items.
- Codifies amended agenda process.

Nature of Change

Formalization of workflow.

This may be viewed as new policy structure.

Reason Section Exists

- Ensures fiscal and legal review before vote.
- Improves staff preparation.
- Reduces emergency amendments.

Decision Point

- Is five weeks appropriate?
- Should late items require written justification?
- Should workflow be codified or remain flexible?

SECTION 3.6 – Council-Initiated Items & Guardrails

Prior Framework

- No structured separation between discussion and directive.
- Sponsorship informal.
- RFI process informal.

Draft Change

- Defines:
 - Discussion items
 - Directives
 - Action items
- Clarifies sponsorship is voluntary.
- Establishes RFI structure.

Nature of Change

Policy clarification and governance structure enhancement.

Reason Section Exists

- Reduces operational interference risk.
- Clarifies administrative boundaries.
- Protects procurement and budget integrity.

Decision Point

Does Council wish to retain structured lanes for:

- Discussion
- Directive
- Action

SECTION 3.7 – Executive Sessions

Prior Framework

- Governed by Texas Open Meetings Act.
- Manuals referenced but did not centralize standards.

Draft Change

- Consolidates lawful purposes.
- Defines attendance and return to open session.

Nature of Change

Consolidation and clarity.

Reason Section Exists

- Reduces risk of unlawful executive session participation.
- Standardizes process.

Decision Point

Likely none unless Council wishes change.

SECTION 3.8 – Directive Tracking & Clarification Authority

Prior Framework

- Directives issued verbally.
- Tracking informal or administrative.
- No formal return-for-clarification language.

Draft Change

- Formal directive tracking system.
- Clarifies that Manager may return unclear directives.
- Explicitly states not a veto.
- Defines compliance triggers.

Nature of Change

Formalization of administrative safeguard.

Potential policy shift depending on prior written standards.

Reason Section Exists

- Prevents unlawful implementation.
- Prevents misinterpretation.
- Improves accountability.
- Protects Council intent.

Decision Point

Does Council wish to retain structured directive tracking and clarification return authority?

SECTION 3.9 – Public Participation

Prior Framework (Sec. 2-5(e))

- 3 minutes citizen comments.
- 3 minutes per agenda item.
- Translator double time.
- Additional time allowed by Council vote.

Draft Change

- Organizes public comment structure.
- Allows topic grouping.
- Introduces potential per-topic caps (if included).
- Clarifies written substitution option.

Nature of Change

Structural organization with possible procedural tools.

Must remain consistent with ordinance.

Reason Section Exists

- Protects meeting time.
- Prevents repetitive duplication.
- Maintains viewpoint neutrality.

Decision Point

- Does Council want topic grouping?
- Does Council want cap flexibility?
- Should ordinance amendments be considered?

SECTION 3.10 – Amendments & Implementation

Prior Framework

- Manuals amendable by Council.
- Ordinance amendable by ordinance.
- Charter only amendable by election.

Draft Change

- Clarifies amendment pathway.
- Allows administrative workflow updates consistent with policy.

Nature of Change

Clarification only.

Reason Section Exists

- Prevents confusion about hierarchy.
- Preserves Charter supremacy.

Decision Point

None unless structural preference differs.

OVERALL SUMMARY

Chapter 3:

- Does not change Charter.
- Does not override ordinance.
- Consolidates prior manuals.
- Formalizes workflow.
- Modernizes governance structure.
- Introduces clearer directive handling.
- Potentially introduces structured agenda limits (policy decision).