

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COMMISSION
VIRTUAL SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE WORKSHOP
MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 2020
7:30 P.M.**

WORKSHOP SESSION

This was considered a workshop session of the City Commission. No formal actions were taken. The purpose of this workshop was to participate in a discussion in parliamentary procedures with a registered parliamentarian.

I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Pierre Boutros, Mayor, called the workshop session to order at 7:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. ROLL CALL

Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk Designee, called the roll.

PRESENT: Mayor Boutros
Mayor Pro-Tem Longe
Commissioner Baller
Commissioner Hoff
Commissioner Host
Commissioner Nickita
Commissioner Sherman

ABSENT: None

Administration: City Manager Valentine, City Attorney Currier, IT Assistant Alawadi,
City Clerk Designee Bingham

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

- Brad Coulter, resident, attended the meeting to understand the process of forming the Commission agenda.

IV. PRESENTATION

Parliamentary Procedure Presentation by Ms. Eleanor Coco Siewert, Professional Registered Parliamentarian, Parliamentarian of the Michigan Municipal League, and educator of municipal leaders on parliamentarian procedures. She served as Mayor, City Commissioner, Library Board Member, and other community boards and committees for the City of Birmingham.

- Funnel of Laws applicable to all boards, committees, and sub-committees
- Why Parliamentary Procedure
- Objectives of Parliamentary Law
- Rules of Debate
- Amendments Pertaining to Motions
- Postponing Action

- Reconsider Action
- Rescind Action¹
- Tips for Better Meetings
 - Under New Business and after new business has been conducted, a Commissioner could make a motion to put an item on an upcoming agenda opening discussion as to priority, and factors relative to available resources.

Parliamentary Procedure Workshop Q&A:

Commissioner Baller asked, relative to unanimous consent and objecting, in the absence of a motion, how and who expresses the item that the Commission is considering for consent.

- Ms. Siewert explained that when a suggestion is made, the person making the suggestion has expressed it and the use of unanimous consent is appropriate to direct staff. However, she recommended the practice of using motions to insure the clarity of direction.

Mayor Boutros asked if the motion is already written in the agenda is it necessary to restate the motion.

- Ms. Siewert advised that as long as everyone, including those at home, can see the motion on a screen, it is not necessary to restate the motion. If the motion is made during the meeting and not printed, it should be restated three times.

Commissioner Baller commented that due to the way that meetings are held today, there will always be someone that does not have an agenda visible. Therefore, it would make sense that the prepared motions are read.

Commissioner Hoff pointed out the significance of restating motions due to the amount of discussion typically surrounding a motion.

Commissioner Sherman agreed with Ms. Siewert on her recommendation to use New Business as a tool to introduce items that Commissioners would like to see on upcoming agendas.

Commissioner Hoff agreed that New Business is the appropriate tool to introduce new items for consideration on an upcoming agenda. She asked about reading and approval of the minutes, is a motion required.

- Ms. Siewert affirmed that a motion is required for approval of the minutes and adjourning a meeting. She added that minutes should reflect what was done and not what was said, including public comment as referenced in the Open Meetings Act and Roberts Rules of Order.

Commissioner Host asked how the rules of order for Commissioners and rules of order for the public relative to First Amendment Rights differ.

- Ms. Siewert pointed out that there is a common courtesy expected among colleagues; conversely, the public's behavior is unpredictable.

Commissioner Baller pointed out that the Constitution of the United States trumps any procedure.

¹ Note: Ms. Siewert expressed that while the Open Meetings Act requires that meetings are posted, it does not require posting the agenda. Therefore, an issue that has not been on the agenda may be discussed, but action cannot be taken.

Commissioner Hoff asked for clarity in the Rules for Debate and if the Birmingham City Commission is doing it correctly.

- Ms. Siewert advised that habitually making more motions and operating according to rules, arrival at a decision would happen sooner.

Commissioner Hoff suggested that Commissioner Comments should be limited to two minutes.

- Ms. Siewert advised that Commissioners should limit themselves and use a countdown timer. She went on to say that a 2/3 vote is required to adopt the limits.

Commissioner Nickita asked for clarity on the idea of adding items to New Business, is it only to decide if it is a valid item for discussion in the future.

- Ms. Siewert clarified that the motion is to put the item on the next agenda ***only***. Discussions and proposals for action would take place at the meeting where the item is on the agenda.

Commissioner Nickita asked what would be the appropriate type of things to bring to Commissioner Comments.

- Ms. Siewert conveyed that it is for the good of the order. It varies from municipalities across the State. Some have made a rule that there would be no response to Commissioner Comments; such as done with Public Comment. This is not the space for debate. Typically, it is a short opportunity for a Commissioner to speak directly with no response.

Mayor Pro-Tem Longe asked what is appropriate to report in Commissioner Reports.

- Ms. Siewert advised that some use the Top Three Take Aways rule, which is included in the rules. Reports from Commissioners on their other committees are printed in the agenda and only mentioned if action is required. The Commission must decide.

Public Comment

- David Bloom, resident, thanked Ms. Siewert for her time. He commented on the City having a rich history of documenting what has happened in meetings. He expressed that it is important that he and other residents are able to go back through meeting minutes to see what Commissioners have said in the past. While it is not required it is invaluable to residents. He further asked for clarity on how motions could be rescinded and when is it appropriate to provide direction to the City Manager.
 - Ms. Siewert affirmed that minutes should be a reflection of what was done and not what was said. Direction to the City Manager is appropriate during New Business and not appropriate during Commissioner Comment. In response to rescinding a past motion attention to the funnel of laws is essential and it depends on the situation.
- Mr. Coulter, resident, reiterated his initial question.
 - Ms. Siewert explained that it should be done through New Business, and referred to the Mayor, City Manager, or City Clerk to speak on how it is currently done.
 - City Manager Valentine explained that the process of establishing an agenda is driven by the actions of the boards that support the City Commission. The initiatives come through staff and the administration to be placed on the agenda.

Additionally there are items that come from the Commission directly and emergencies that happen between meetings.

- Mayor Boutros asked, relative to rules of procedures, is it mandated to conclude the meetings by 11:00 p.m.
 - Ms. Siewert clarified that there are things in the rules of procedure that are mandates, suggestions, and goals. Having an end time is a goal for Birmingham.
- Commissioner Baller expressed concern that no action was taken at this workshop.

V. ADJOURN

Mayor Boutros adjourned the meeting at 9:22 p.m.