



Committee: Directly to Council
Committee Review: N/A
Staff: Christine Wellons, Senior Legislative Attorney
Purpose: To introduce agenda item – no vote expected
and Worksession
Keywords: #CouncilRules

AGENDA ITEM #7
January 24, 2023
Introduction

SUBJECT

Introduction and Worksession: Resolution to Amend the Council Rules of Procedure

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

N/A

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Worksession regarding potential amendments to the Council Rules of Procedure

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

The prior Council amended the Council Rules of Procedure on November 15, 2022. The amendments took effect on December 5, 2022.

During the first 90 days of the term of the current Council, the Council may amend the Rules, via resolution, by a simple majority.

SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- The enclosed resolution contains clarifying amendments identified for Council consideration by Council staff regarding:
 - Voting requirements (including a new Rule 11 expressly laying out required numbers of votes, fractional voting requirements, and methods of voting); and
 - Technical changes.
- Councilmembers Jawando and Sayles support the amendments enclosed at ©20 regarding:
 - The election of officers;
 - The composition and structure of committees;
 - The appointment process;
 - The committee review process;
 - The introduction of special appropriations;
 - The budget reconciliation process; and
 - The adoption of policy positions by the Council.
- Council President Glass supports the amendments enclosed at ©24 regarding the expiration of bills and resolutions.
- Councilmembers might wish to propose additional amendments. Council staff will post an addendum to this packet on Monday, January 23, with additional potential amendments known

at that time. Councilmembers also might move additional amendments during the worksession on January 23.

This report contains:

Resolution	© 1
Amendments by Councilmembers Jawando and Sayles	©20
Amendments by Council President Glass	©24

Alternative format requests for people with disabilities. If you need assistance accessing this report you may [submit alternative format requests](#) to the ADA Compliance Manager. The ADA Compliance Manager can also be reached at 240-777-6197 (TTY 240-777-6196) or at adacompliance@montgomerycountymd.gov

Resolution No.: _____
Introduced: _____
Adopted: _____

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

Lead Sponsor: Council President

SUBJECT: Amendments to County Council Rules of Procedure

Background

1. Section 116 of the County Charter authorizes the County Council to adopt rules of procedure.
2. Section 116 of the Charter and Rule 2(d) of the Council Rules of Procedure allow the Council to amend its Rules through resolution, by a majority vote, during the first 90 days of a Council term.
3. The Council most recently amended its Rules on November 15, 2022, by Resolution 19-1443.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

The County Council amends its Rules of Procedure as reflected in the attachment to this resolution.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Judy Rupp
Clerk of the Council

Rule 1. General provisions.

- (a) *Failure to follow the Rules of Procedure.* A Council action that is otherwise valid does not become invalid because the Council or any person did not follow these Rules or Robert's Rules of Order.
- (b) *Robert's Rules of Order.* In all matters not provided for in these Rules, the latest published edition of Robert's Rules of Order governs.¹
- (c) *Definitions*
 - (1) *Board, Committee, and Commission.* Board, committee, and commission have the same meanings as stated in Section 2-142 of the County Code.
 - (2) *Group.* A group means any board, committee, commission, task force, or any similar multi-member body established by federal, state, or county law, resolution, or executive order, which functions as a part of the County government.
 - (3) *Majority.* Unless otherwise specified in law or these Rules, a majority of the Council, a Council Committee, or a joint Committee, means [a majority] more than half of the Councilmembers present who vote on a matter in a duly convened meeting. For the purpose of determining a majority, an abstention is not a vote. A majority of the full Council is 6 Councilmembers.
 - (4) *Meeting.* A meeting is a convening of a quorum of the Council as defined in the State open meetings law.² A meeting includes a legislative session, a session of the District Council, a meeting as the County Board of Health, a non-legislative session, and a worksession.
 - (5) *Presence.* Unless otherwise specified in law, presence means the participation of Councilmembers at a meeting by means of in-person, virtual, or telephonic conference. A Councilmember who is remote must be able to listen and participate in a contemporaneous debate with other members on matters for a vote or discussion, and such participation at the meeting would be considered being present.
 - (6) *Quorum.* A quorum of a Council meeting is the presence of a majority of the Councilmembers in office. A quorum of a Committee meeting is the presence of a majority of the members of that Committee. A quorum

¹Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised 12th Edition is the latest version at the time of adoption of these rules.

² Maryland Code, General Provisions Article § 3-101(g).

of a joint Committee meeting is the presence of a majority of the members of each Committee that makes up the joint Committee.

[(7) *Two-thirds.* Unless otherwise specified in law or these Rules, and consistent with Charter and Resolution 19-581, two-thirds of the full Council is 7 Councilmembers.]

- (d) *Closed meetings.* At the direction of a majority of the Council, a meeting may be closed to the public only for any reason allowed in the State open meetings law.³ Any closed meeting, except a meeting that is closed to discuss a personnel issue, may be attended by any Councilmember, confidential aide to a Councilmember, Council staff attorney, and other appropriate Council professional staff member unless the Council expressly further restricts attendance. The record of a closed meeting includes the attendance of all persons present as required by the state Open Meetings law. Unless authorized by state law, any testimony taken, or evidence received in a closed meeting must be kept confidential and may not be released to the public for inspection. If a person attends a closed meeting remotely, then a verbal acknowledgment of such confidentiality and non-disclosure of each remote attendee will be recorded on a form provided by the Clerk.
- (e) *Roll call vote.* When a roll call is required by law or these Rules or requested by a Councilmember, Councilmembers vote in an order decided by the President with Council concurrence. The President votes last.
- (f) *Media coverage of meetings and public hearings.* Radio, television, and press coverage of Council meetings, Council committee meetings, and public hearings is allowed, unless the meeting is otherwise closed under these Rules. Members of the electronic and print media must observe order and decorum in keeping with the dignity of the governmental process and must refrain from interfering with this process. The President or a majority of the Council may regulate the use of radio and television equipment to minimize interference with the meeting or hearing.
- (g) *Election of Council officers.* The Council elects a Council President, a Council Vice-President, and other officers as the Council desires.

³ Maryland Code, General Provisions Article §§ 3-305(b)(1)-(14).

- (h) *Presiding officer.*
- (1) *Presiding and points of order.* The President presides at Council meetings and decides all points of order.
 - (2) *Appeal.* All presidential decisions provided for in these Rules and Robert's Rules of Order can be appealed, and on appeal may be reversed by majority vote.
 - (3) *Delegation of authority.* Unless any law or these Rules specify otherwise, the President may delegate any function assigned to the President under these Rules to another Councilmember or the Council staff. The President by a memorandum to the Council Clerk may designate one or more Councilmembers in succession as acting President to sign any legislation enacted by the Council when the President and Vice-President are not available.
- (i) *Absence of presiding officer.* In the absence of the President, the Vice-President presides at Council meetings. In the absence of the President and the Vice-President, and if the Council has not previously elected a President pro tempore, the most recent past President in attendance and who sits on the Council must preside. If no past President is available, the Councilmembers present must select a President pro tempore to preside at that meeting. A Councilmember who presides at [a] an in-person meeting or Committee meeting must be present in-person.
- (j) *Recognition of Councilmembers.* A Councilmember must not speak on a matter until recognized by the President. The President must recognize a Councilmember who desires to speak unless recognition is improper under these Rules. If 2 or more Councilmembers seek to be recognized at the same time, the President must select the member who will speak first. After each Councilmember has had a reasonable opportunity to speak on a matter, the President may limit further discussion as necessary to conform to the Council's agenda.
- (k) *Formation of groups.* A Councilmember must not form a group or appoint a member to a group that would advise or report to the Council unless approved by a majority and in accordance with the provisions governing Boards, Committees, and Commissions in Section 2-142 of the County Code. This Rule must not be construed to prevent a Councilmember from consulting with residents or organizations.
- (l) *Council Correspondence.* The Council President must have support of at least a majority of Councilmembers to send correspondence in their capacity as

Council President on behalf of the Council and must note whether such correspondence is on behalf of a majority of the body or as the Council's unanimous view. Councilmembers may individually or jointly send correspondence in their individual capacities and may include their title(s) but must clearly note they are not speaking on behalf of the body.

Rule 2. Suspension and amendment of the Rules.

- (a) *Suspension of Rules.* The Rules of Procedure must not be amended or repealed while a suspension of the Rules is in effect. These Rules or Robert's Rules of Order are suspended in whole or in part if:
 - (1) 7 Councilmembers (or, if there is vacancy on the Council, two-thirds of the Councilmembers in office) vote to suspend a specific Rule or group of Rules;
 - (2) for each matter considered during suspension, the Rules receive a separate suspension; and
 - (3) suspension of the Rules does not violate an applicable law.
- (b) *Rules not subject to suspension.* This Rule, Rule 1(d), and Rule 10(e) must not be suspended.
- (c) *Amendment of these Rules.* The County Council may amend these Rules by resolution. A resolution to amend these Rules must be introduced to the Council in writing at least one week before the resolution is considered for adoption. Adoption of the resolution requires a vote of 7 Councilmembers (or, if there is vacancy on the Council, two-thirds of the Councilmembers in office), except as provided in subsection (d). The resolution must contain the full text of the proposed amendments.
- (d) *Subsequent Council.* The Rules in effect when the term of the previous Council ended continue in effect until amended, suspended or repealed. When a new Council takes office, it may amend or repeal these Rules by a majority vote in the first 90 days after taking office.

Rule 3. Appointment process.

- (a) *Advertisement and solicitation.*
 - (1) *Council appointments.* The County Council must publish notice of and solicit applications for any vacancy that exists on any board, committee, or commission that is appointed by the Council.

- (2) *Executive appointments.* The Council must not consider for confirmation an appointment by the County Executive to any board, committee, and commission unless, when the vacancy exists, the County Executive publishes notice of the vacancy and solicits applications to fill the vacancy.
- (3) *Waiver.* Advertisement and solicitation requirements may be waived on a case-by-case basis. A majority of the Council may waive the requirements for Council appointments. The County Executive with the agreement of a majority of the Council may waive the requirements for Executive appointments.
- (b) *Interviews.* Councilmembers must be afforded an opportunity to interview each County Executive nominee or potential Council appointee before the Council acts on the appointment.
- (c) *County employees.* Subsections (a) and (b) do not apply to any position on a board, committee, or commission that must be filled by an employee representing a County department, office, or agency, as a law, resolution, or executive order provides.
- (d) *Publication.* The name of each appointee should be published at least one week before confirmation.

Rule 4. Public hearing notice requirements.

- (a) *Advertisement requirements.* Unless any law requires the Council to set the date of a public hearing, the President may set the date and time of any public hearing and must advertise each public hearing as provided in this section.
 - (1) The advertisement for a public hearing on all matters must include:
 - (A) the time and place of the public hearing, including if the public hearing is remote or available by other electronic means;
 - (B) the place where members of the public may obtain an electronic copy of the materials to be discussed at the public hearing;
 - (C) how to register to speak at the public hearing; and
 - (D) any other information required by law.

- (2) The advertisement for a public hearing on legislation or a zoning text amendment must include the title or summary of the proposed legislation or text amendment.
 - (3) The advertisement for a public hearing on matters other than legislation must include the generic title and subject matter of the public hearing.
- (b) *Publication requirements.* Before a public hearing, the President must post online the advertisement of the public hearing on the County's website, and if required by law, publish at least once in one newspaper circulated throughout the County. The number of days that advance notice is required, the number of newspapers in which the notice must appear, and the number of consecutive weeks that the notice must appear [is] are established by law. Unless the time is otherwise specified by law or Council action, 14 days advance notice must be provided.
- (c) *Public notice on emergency matters.* If a public hearing will be held on an emergency matter, the President must:
- (1) (A) unless otherwise required by law, post online an advertisement on the County's website of the public hearing as required under subsection (b), if possible; or
 - (B) inform the news media by electronic means of the public hearing if notice under subsection (b) is not possible; and
- (2) disseminate electronic copies of the proposed emergency matter so copies are available to the public and the news media.
- (d) *Board of Health regulations.* Before the Council, meeting as the Board of Health, adopts a regulation, the President must:
- (1) advertise the public hearing in a newspaper circulated throughout the County at least 14 days before the hearing; and
 - (2) notify the governing body or chief executive officer of each municipality in the County by mail or electronically at least 14 days before the hearing.

The President may waive either or both forms of notice if a public health emergency requires immediate action on a regulation.

- (e) *Electronic Notice and Publications of Documents.* Unless otherwise required by law, all notices and dissemination of documents required to be published as outlined in these rules, are deemed satisfied if the documents are electronically available and published on the County's website.

Rule 5. Notice, attendance, and agenda preparation.

- (a) *Notice of meetings.* The Council meets in the Stella B. Werner Council Office Building, Rockville, Maryland, unless the President designates another location. The Council may, in addition to or as an alternative meeting place, conduct remote meetings by virtual or telephonic conference. The President must notify Councilmembers, the news media, and the public of the agenda of a Council meeting and provide reasonable notice of the date, time, and place of the meeting as the State open meetings law requires.
- (b) *Attendance.* A Councilmember is expected to attend in-person meetings in person. A Councilmember may request the option to participate in in-person meetings remotely by means of virtual or telephone conference, although the use of such alternative means must be limited to circumstances when a Councilmember's in-person attendance at the in-person meeting would be impractical or unreasonable. The Clerk must state in the meeting minutes the type of presence of each Councilmember.
- (c) *Agenda preparation.* The President must prepare a written agenda for each meeting. The agenda must include the order and an understandable description of each item to be considered.
- (d) *Advance Notice.* Unless the President determines an agenda item is an emergency, a Councilmember must submit to the President a written draft of a proposed item for introduction, at least eight (8) days in advance of a Council session, before the item can be added to the agenda.
- (e) *Additions to the agenda.* At any time after the President calls a meeting to order, a Councilmember may move to add to or delete from the agenda of that meeting or add an item to a future meeting.
- (f) *Committee assignment.* The President may assign a matter to one or more Council committees, or to two Council committees meeting as a joint committee. An assignment may be changed by a motion to refer the matter to another committee, approved by a majority of the Council. The President may vote on this motion in the same manner as any other motion. A committee is a public body under the State open meetings law, and the President must give notice of any committee meeting as required under that law.

Rule 6. Legislation.

- (a) *Introduction.* All bills that are to be the subject of an advertisement and a public hearing must be proposed in a legislative session and must be reduced to writing before they are introduced, and the advertisement is published.
- (b) *Scheduling.* If the President or a majority of the Council refuse to schedule introduction of proposed legislation by a Councilmember, the Councilmember must give the President at least 2 weeks' written notice of the Councilmember's intention to introduce legislation at a future legislative session. After notice, introduction must be allowed. Neither consent of the President nor a motion to amend the agenda is required. All legislation must be in writing and must substantially comply with the drafting guidelines and format requirements of the Montgomery County Plain Language Drafting Manual.
- (c) *Requested legislation.* A Councilmember who introduces legislation may direct that the legislation indicate that it was introduced on request of a certain public official or body.
- (d) *Reading.* At introduction, the bill is read only by number and short title. At final action, the bill is read only by number and short title unless:
 - (1) [(3)] 3 Councilmembers request a reading of the entire bill; and
 - (2) a copy of the bill as it would be enacted, with all adopted amendments, is not available to each Councilmember.
- (e) *Copies.* The President must disseminate copies of legislation in advance by electronic means for distribution to Councilmembers, the news media, and the public.
- (f) *Expiration.* Unless the Council enacts, defeats or withdraws a bill, the bill expires 18 months after introduction. A bill that is otherwise pending does not expire at the end of a Council term. A majority of the Council at a legislative session may extend the expiration date of a bill for a specified period of time. The President must inform all Councilmembers in writing of the pending expiration of a bill at least one month in advance.
- (g) *Withdrawal.* A motion to withdraw a bill must be made by an original sponsor of the bill during legislative session. A bill is withdrawn upon the majority vote of the Council.

- (h) *Voting.* The Council must vote by roll call to enact, defeat, or withdraw a bill. If no Councilmember objects, the Council may enact more than one bill by a single combined roll call vote.
- (i) *Expiration of a law.* The Council Clerk must annually circulate to each Councilmember and the County Executive a list of each provision of the County Code that has a fixed expiration date and submit the list for publication in the County Register. The Clerk also must inform each Councilmember and the County Executive in writing of the pending expiration of a law or a significant provision of a law 14 months before the law or provision is scheduled to expire.
- (j) *Committee amendments.* If a Council Committee to which a bill was referred recommends that the bill be enacted with amendments, the Council must first consider the bill as amended by the Committee. The motion on the floor is the Committee's motion to enact the bill as amended by the Committee. At that point a Councilmember may move to amend the Committee bill, including a motion to enact the bill as originally introduced, remand the bill to the same or another Committee, or take any other action regarding the bill.
- (k) *Expedited legislation.* A bill that has been introduced as, or amended to be, expedited legislation, but received only [(6)] 6 affirmative votes to enact it, has without further amendment been enacted as ordinary legislation, and the Council Clerk must revise the bill to delete any indicia of expedited legislation.

Rule 7. Resolutions.

- (a) *Introduction.* Except as provided in subsection (b), if the President or a majority of the Council refuse to schedule introduction of a proposed resolution by a Councilmember, the Councilmember must give the President at least 2 weeks' written notice of the Councilmember's intention to introduce the resolution at a future meeting. After notice, introduction must be allowed. Neither consent of the President nor a motion to amend the agenda is required. Each resolution must be in writing and (except for ceremonial resolutions) must substantially comply with the drafting guidelines and format requirements of the Montgomery County Plain Language Drafting Manual.
- (b) *Introduction of Special Appropriations.* Before introduction at a Council meeting, a proposed resolution for a special appropriation must have a sponsor and the support of 2 or more co-sponsors.
- (c) *Reading.* At introduction, the resolution is read only by subject. At final action, a resolution is read only by subject unless:

- (1) 3 Councilmembers request a reading of the entire resolution; and
 - (2) a copy of the resolution as it would be adopted, with all adopted amendments, is not available to each Councilmember.
- (d) *Action.* A resolution must not be acted on until the next meeting after it has been introduced. However, the following resolutions may be acted on at any time:
- (1) setting the time and date of a public hearing;
 - (2) approving a matter that has been the subject of a public hearing by the Council or the Executive, or that has been published in the County Register;
 - (3) approving or confirming an appointment;
 - (4) extending a time for action, an effective date, or an expiration date;
 - (5) amending a previously-adopted resolution; or
 - (6) any resolution containing a declaration of emergency.
- (e) *Effective dates.* A resolution takes effect on adoption unless the resolution specifies a different date.
- (f) *Expiration.* A resolution that is not adopted or defeated sooner expires one hundred and eighty (180) days after the date it was introduced, unless the Council by motion extends it to a specified date.

Rule 8. Consideration of resolutions and legislation.

- (a) *Consideration of legislation.* Before a public hearing is advertised, a Councilmember may move not to consider a bill. This motion is debatable and must be made only in legislative session. A motion not to consider may be made when another Councilmember has the floor. The bill must not proceed to public hearing if a majority of the Council votes not to consider it. A member who was absent or on the prevailing side when a motion not to consider is adopted may move to reconsider the motion at any future legislative session before the bill expires.
- (b) *Consideration of a resolution.* When a resolution is introduced, a Councilmember may move not to consider it. This motion is debatable. A

motion not to consider may be made when another member has the floor. If the motion is adopted, the resolution must not be considered further.

- (c) *Effect of motion not to consider.* A successful motion not to consider does not limit the contents of any bill or resolution that is introduced at a later meeting or legislative session.

Rule 9. Procedure during public hearing.

- (a) *Quorum.* A quorum is not required for a public hearing unless expressly required by law. Unless otherwise expressly required by law, the Council may delegate the conduct of any hearing to a Council committee, Councilmember, or Council staff member.
- (b) *Preliminary remarks.* After convening a public hearing, but before the presentation of testimony, the presiding officer must:
 - (1) briefly explain the purpose of the public hearing;
 - (2) specify the last date by which written testimony or information should be submitted;
 - (3) announce the date and time for worksession or final action, if known; and
 - (4) present any information required by law.
- (c) *Time limits and registration requirements.* The presiding officer may announce in advance or at the hearing time limits for each speaker, registration requirements, and limits on the number of speakers. A majority of the Council may extend or shorten the time limits or change the limits on the number of speakers. The presiding officer may vote on a motion to change the time limits or the limits on the number of speakers.
- (d) *Information from members of the public.* Each member of the public desiring to speak at a public hearing first must register with the Council Clerk by providing the person's name, home or business address, and the person or organization the speaker represents. When recognized by the presiding officer to speak, the person must provide the following information:
 - (1) name; and
 - (2) the person or organization the speaker represents, if any.

- (e) *Relevance.* The presiding officer may temporarily suspend any testimony that is not relevant to the subject of the hearing and advise the speaker to that effect. The presiding officer may stop taking further testimony from and vacate any remaining time allocated to a speaker who, after being so advised, continues to offer irrelevant testimony.
- (f) *Questions from Councilmembers.* After being recognized by the presiding officer, any Councilmember present may briefly question any speaker. The member and the speaker must not debate.
- (g) *Transcript of a public hearing.* A transcript of a public hearing must [only] be made as required by law.
- (h) *Continuing or postponing a public hearing.* A public hearing may be postponed or continued without further published notice if, after the required notice of the hearing has been published, either:
 - (1) at the time and place for which notice was given, the presiding officer specifies when and where the hearing will convene or reconvene; or
 - (2) before the hearing was scheduled to be held, the presiding officer has:
 - (A) informed each person who registered to testify when and where the hearing will convene or reconvene;
 - (B) inserted in the Council's printed agenda or an addendum to the agenda when and where the hearing will convene or reconvene, or posted when and where the hearing will convene or reconvene at the place where notices of Council meetings are posted; and
 - (C) specified on the Council website when and where the hearing will convene or reconvene.

If severe weather conditions or another emergency requires the Council to postpone a hearing, the presiding officer may do so before the hearing is held without giving one or more of the notices required by this subsection. In that case, the President must readvertise the hearing as required by Rule 4 unless the original advertisement specified when and where a postponed hearing would be held.

Rule 10. Procedure during debate.

- (a) *Withdrawal.* The maker of a motion may withdraw the motion at any time before a vote is taken unless another member objects.
- (b) *Written motions.* Before a vote is taken, any Councilmember may direct the Council Clerk to state the motion in writing and distribute it to the Council.
- (c) *Committee recommendations.* A recommendation from a Council committee that received the affirmative votes of a majority of members of that committee, or a recommendation that received the affirmative votes of a majority of the members of any joint committee, is a main motion that does not require a second.
- (d) *Motion to table; taking from the table.* A motion to table is not in order at a meeting of a Council Committee, including a joint Committee meeting. A Councilmember may move to take a bill or resolution from the table if the Councilmember voted to lay the bill or resolution on the table or was absent and not merely abstaining from the vote. A bill may be taken from the table at any time until it expires. A resolution may be taken from the table at any time before it expires.
- (e) *Reconsideration.* A Councilmember may move to reconsider a matter already decided if:
 - (1) the matter is still in the possession of the Council;
 - (2) the motion to reconsider is made:
 - (A) at the same meeting; or
 - (B) at the later of:
 - (i) the next similar Council meeting; or
 - (ii) any similar Council meeting held within the next 7 days; and
 - (3) the Councilmember voted with the prevailing side or was absent, and not merely abstaining from the vote.

The Council may postpone a vote on a motion to reconsider to a time certain, but not indefinitely.

- (f) *Effect of Motion to Reconsider.* A motion to reconsider, properly made, suspends the action that is the subject of the motion until the motion is adopted or rejected. A motion to reconsider, properly adopted, voids the action that is the subject of the motion.
- (g) *Reconsideration of enactment.* A motion to reconsider the enactment of any law, zoning text amendment, or subdivision regulation amendment, requires 6 votes for adoption.

Rule 11. Vote requirements.

- (a) Recording of votes. The Clerk must record in the Council minutes the vote of each Councilmember who votes on a matter, regardless of the method of voting used, such as a roll call vote, a hand vote, or a vote “without objection”.
- (b) Voting – by consensus or “without objection”. Except as provided under subsection (d) of this Rule, the Council or a Committee may, at the discretion of the presiding officer, vote on amendments or Committee recommendations through consensus or “without objection” of the members present.
- (c) Fractions under Robert’s Rules votes. If Robert’s Rules of Order apply under Rule 1(b) and prescribe a vote requirement of two-thirds, two-thirds of the 11-member Council must be 7 Councilmembers.
- (d) Numbers and types of votes. The votes of the Council must comply with the requirements of the following chart. In the chart, RC means a roll-call vote, and HV means a vote by hand.

<u>Action</u>	<u>Votes required</u>	<u>Type of Vote</u>	<u>Citation</u>
<u>Legislation</u>			
<u>Regular legislation</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>RC</u>	<u>Charter § 111</u>
<u>Expedited legislation</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>RC</u>	<u>Charter § 111</u>
<u>Override of Executive veto</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>RC</u>	<u>Charter § 208</u>
<u>Law authorizing individual CIP project</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>RC</u>	<u>Charter § 302</u>
<u>Law creating new department or agency</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>RC</u>	<u>Charter § 401</u>
<u>Law designating non-merit position</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>RC</u>	<u>Charter § 401</u>
<u>Extend expiration date of bill</u>	<u>Majority</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Rule 6(f)</u>
<u>Withdraw bill</u>	<u>Majority</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Rule 6(g)</u>

<u>Action</u>	<u>Votes required</u>	<u>Type of Vote</u>	<u>Citation</u>
<u>Motion not to consider bill</u>	<u>Majority</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Rule 8(a)</u>
<u>Land Use</u>			
<u>Zoning text amendment</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>RC</u>	<u>□</u>
<u>Subdivision regulation amendment</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>RC</u>	<u>□</u>
<u>Subdivision regulation amendment – Executive veto override</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>RC</u>	<u>□</u>
<u>Master Plan approval</u>	<u>Majority</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Code § 33A-8</u>
<u>Master plan – extend time for Council action</u>	<u>8 (or, if less than the full Council is voting, 2/3 of members voting)</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Code § 33A-8</u>
<u>Local map amendment</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>RC</u>	<u>□</u>
<u>Local map amendment if contrary to recommendation of municipality where property is located or Planning Board does not recommend approval</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>RC</u>	<u>□</u>
<u>Sectional map amendment</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>RC</u>	<u>□</u>
<u>Sectional map amendment - if contrary to recommendation of municipality where property is located or Planning Board does not recommend approval</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>RC</u>	<u>□</u>

<u>Action</u>	<u>Votes required</u>	<u>Type of Vote</u>	<u>Citation</u>
<u>Budget</u>			
<u>Spending affordability guidelines</u> <u>Adoption</u> <u>Amendment</u>	<u>Majority</u> <u>Majority</u>	<u>HV</u> <u>HV</u>	<u>Charter § 305</u>
<u>Budget approval – in general</u>	<u>Majority</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Charter § 305</u>
<u>Budget approval – that has been increased above the CPI limit in the Charter</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Charter § 305</u>
<u>Budget approval – that exceeds spending affordability guidelines</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Charter § 305</u>
<u>Veto override – budget of Council, Fire & Rescue Commission, Fire Departments and Rescue Squads, Housing Opportunities Com’n, Montgomery College</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Charter § 306</u>
<u>Other veto budget override</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Charter § 306</u>
<u>Supplemental appropriation before January 1 – in general</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Charter § 307</u>
<u>Supplemental appropriation before January 1 to accept a grant or comply with a law or regulation</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Charter § 307</u>
<u>Supplemental appropriation after January 1</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Charter § 307</u>
<u>Special appropriation</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Charter § 308</u>

<u>Action</u>	<u>Votes required</u>	<u>Type of Vote</u>	<u>Citation</u>
<u>Transfer appropriation</u>	<u>Majority</u>		<u>Charter § 309</u>
<u>Six-year CIP program approval</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Charter § 302</u>
<u>CIP amendment</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Charter § 302</u>
<u>Emergency special capital improvement project that is not done through legislation</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Charter § 302</u>
<u>Property tax rate that exceeds the limit under Charter § 305</u>	<u>All current councilmembers</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Charter § 305</u>
<u>Resolutions</u>			
<u>Resolution – in general</u>	<u>Majority</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Rule 7</u>
<u>Motion not to consider resolution</u>	<u>Majority</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Rule 8</u>
<u>Motions</u>			
<u>Suspend rules</u>	<u>7 (or, if there is a vacancy, 2/3 of Councilmembers in office)</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Rule 2</u>
<u>Appointment</u>			
<u>Confirm Executive appointment</u>	<u>Majority</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Charter § 215</u>
<u>Council appointment</u>	<u>Majority</u>	<u>HV</u>	
<u>Fill County Executive vacancy</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Charter § 205</u>
<u>Fill Councilmember vacancy</u>	<u>Majority</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Charter § 106</u>
<u>Removal from Office</u>			
<u>Councilmember</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Charter § 118</u>
<u>Executive</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Charter § 206</u>
<u>Miscellaneous</u>			
<u>Disapprove Executive reorganization plan</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Charter § 217</u>

<u>Action</u>	<u>Votes required</u>	<u>Type of Vote</u>	<u>Citation</u>
<u>Close meeting under Open Meetings Act</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>HV (individual votes must be recorded, per Open Meetings Act)</u>	<u>Md. Code Ann., General Provisions Article, Title 3</u>
<u>Amend Council Rules during first 90 days of term</u>	<u>Majority</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Rule 2(c)</u>
<u>Amend Council Rules after 90 days</u>	<u>7 (or, if there is a vacancy, 2/3 of Councilmembers in office)</u>	<u>HV</u>	<u>Rule 2(c)</u>

**Amendments to Council Rules of Procedure –
By Councilmembers Jawando and Sayles
January 19, 2023**

Rule 1. General provisions.

* * *

(g) **Officers and committees.**

(1) **Election of Council officers.** The Council elects a Council President, a Council Vice-President, and other officers at the first Council meeting each December or more frequently as the Council desires.

(2) **Committee structure and membership.** After the election of officers at the first Council meeting of a new term of the Council, the President must introduce a resolution to adopt a committee structure and to identify the members of each committee. Prior to introducing the resolution, the President must consider Councilmembers' preferences and an equitable assignment of roles. To take effect, the resolution must be approved by a majority vote of the Council. The vote to approve the resolution must not occur during the same meeting at which the resolution is introduced.

* * *

Rule 3. Appointment process.

* * *

(b) **Interviews.**

(1) **In general.** Councilmembers must be afforded an opportunity to interview each County Executive nominee or potential Council appointee before the Council acts on the appointment.

(2) **Selection of interviewees.** If a potential appointee is selected for an interview based upon an informal survey of

**Amendments to Council Rules of Procedure –
By Councilmembers Jawando and Sayles
January 19, 2023**

Councilmembers, the Clerk must provide to a Councilmember, upon request, the results of the survey. The survey may be publicly disclosed only in accordance with the Maryland Public Information Act or other applicable law. If at least 3 Councilmembers indicate to the Clerk in writing that they wish to interview a potential appointee, the potential appointee must be permitted the opportunity to interview before the Council.

- (3) **Council worksession on an appointment.** If a Councilmember requests in writing to the Council President a Council worksession regarding a potential appointment, the Council President must add the worksession to an agenda for a Council meeting that occurs prior to the appointment.

* * *

Rule 6. Legislation.

* * *

- (g) **Withdrawal.** A motion to withdraw a bill must be made by an original sponsor of the bill, or by any Councilmember if the terms of each original sponsor has expired, during legislative session. A bill is withdrawn upon the majority vote of the Council.

* * *

- (j) **Committee review.**

- (1) **Committee worksessions.** Upon the written request of a sponsor or co-sponsor of a bill to the Clerk and to the chair of a Committee to which a bill was referred, the chair must schedule a Committee worksession on the bill. The worksession must

**Amendments to Council Rules of Procedure –
By Councilmembers Jawando and Sayles
January 19, 2023**

occur within 30 days of the request, or at a later date agreed to by the requestor and the chair.

- (2) Committee amendments.** If a Council Committee to which a bill was referred recommends that the bill be enacted with amendments, the Council must first consider the bill as amended by the Committee. The motion on the floor is the Committee’s motion to enact the bill as amended by the Committee. At that point a Councilmember may move to amend the Committee bill, including a motion to enact the bill as originally introduced, remand the bill to the same or another Committee, or take any other action regarding the bill.

* * *

Rule 7. Resolutions.

* * *

- (b) Introduction of Special Appropriations.** [Before introduction at a Council meeting, a proposed resolution for a special appropriation must have a sponsor and the support of 2 or more co-sponsors.] Any Councilmember may introduce a special appropriation. If the President or a majority of the Council refuse to schedule the introduction, the Councilmember may give the President at least 2 weeks’ written notice of the Councilmember’s intention to introduce the special appropriation. After notice, introduction must be allowed. Neither the consent of the President, nor a motion to amend the agenda is required.

* * *

Rule 11. Annual budget.

**Amendments to Council Rules of Procedure –
By Councilmembers Jawando and Sayles
January 19, 2023**

- (a) **Transparent process.** The adoption of the annual capital and operating budgets must be transparent processes, in accordance with the Maryland Open Meetings Act and Maryland Public Information Act.
- (b) **Reconciliation list.** If a Committee recommends the removal of a budget item, the item must be placed on a reconciliation list. Upon the request of a Councilmember, the Council must vote on any individual item from the reconciliation list.

Rule 12. Council transparency.

- (a) **In general.** The Council must conduct its business in view of the public whenever possible and must comply with the Maryland Open Meetings Act and Maryland Public Information Act.
- (b) **Council decisions.** Unless the law requires otherwise:
 - (1) each Council decision, including policy positions expressed in correspondence under Rule 1, must be voted on in an open meeting; and
 - (2) prior to the vote on any new or changed position, each Councilmember must be permitted to speak about the matter during a Council meeting.

**Amendments to Council Rules of Procedure –
By Council President Glass
January 19, 2023**

Rule 6. Legislation.

* * *

- (f) *Expiration.* Unless the Council enacts, defeats or withdraws a bill, the bill expires upon the earlier of: 18 months after introduction; or the end of the Council term. [A bill that is otherwise pending does not expire at the end of a Council term.] A majority of the Council at a legislative session may extend the expiration date of a bill for a specified period of time, not to exceed the end of the Council term. The President must inform all Councilmembers in writing of the pending expiration of a bill at least one month in advance.

* * *

Rule 7. Resolutions.

- (f) *Expiration.* A resolution that is not adopted or defeated sooner expires upon the earlier of: one hundred and eighty (180) days after the date it was introduced[, unless the Council by motion extends it to a specified date]; or the end of the Council term. The Council may vote to extend the expiration to a specified date, not to exceed the end of the Council term.

* * *

ADDENDUM

Agenda Item #7
January 24, 2023
Introduction / Worksession

MEMORANDUM

January 23, 2023

TO: County Council

FROM: Christine Wellons, Senior Legislative Attorney

SUBJECTS: Resolution – Amendments to County Council Rules of Procedure

PURPOSE: Introduction / Worksession

This memorandum is an addendum to the staff packet dated January 19, 2023 for this Item #7. The initial packet included a resolution proposing technical amendments and clarifications to the Rules of Procedure.

The initial packet also included amendments to the Rules proposed by Councilmembers Jawando and Sayles (©20); and by Council President Glass (©24).

Enclosed are amendments proposed by Councilmember Stewart; by Councilmembers Luedtke and Fani-González; and by Councilmembers Friedson, Stewart, and Luedtke:

Councilmember Stewart	©A1
Councilmembers Luedtke and Fani-Gonzales	©A2
Councilmembers Friedson, Stewart, and Luedtke	©A3

Also enclosed is a memorandum from Council President Glass (©A5) regarding the Council’s ongoing commitment to, and efforts to enhance, open and transparent government.

To help organize discussion regarding potential amendments to the Council Rules, the following chart lists each Council Rule; identifies proposed amendments to the Rule; and notes additional considerations.

Council Rule	Proposed Amendments	Council Staff Notes / Context
<p>Rule 1 – General provisions.</p> <p>(c) Definitions.</p>	<p>Council staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarify definition of majority. - Delete definition of two-thirds. (©2) 	<p>See the proposed new rule on vote requirements.</p>
<p>(g) Election of officers; committee structure.</p>	<p>Councilmembers Jawando and Sayles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Election of officers each December or more frequently - One-week’s notice of proposed committee structure; structure is proposed by newly elected Council President (©20) <p>Councilmembers Friedson, Stewart, and Luedtke:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Election of officers each December - Four days advance notice of proposed structure, which is adopted during the same meeting as the election of officers. Structure is proposed by the Vice-President. (©A3) 	<p>Under the current Rule, the officers are elected “as the Council desires.” December is not mentioned, but the longstanding convention has been to elect officers at the first meeting in December.</p>
<p>(l) Council correspondence.</p>	<p>Councilmember Stewart:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarification that Councilmembers may individually or jointly send correspondence, as long as the Councilmembers are clearly identified, and the correspondence does not imply that it is on behalf of the body. (©A1) 	<p>Under the current Rule, the Councilmembers writing a letter individually or as a group “must clearly note they are not speaking on behalf of the body.”</p>

Council Rule	Proposed Amendments	Council Staff Notes / Context
Rule 2 – Suspension and amendment of the Rules	Council staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarify that 7 Councilmembers (or, if there is a vacancy, two-thirds of the Councilmembers in office) may suspend certain Rules or amend the Rules (after 90 days of the term have passed) (©5) 	Clarifies the vote requirement without cross references
Rule 3 – Appointment process	Councilmembers Jawando and Sayles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requires candidates to be interviewed at the request of 3 Councilmembers - Requires a worksession on appointment if requested by a Councilmember (©20) Councilmembers Friedson, Stewart, and Luedtke: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For Planning Board appointments, and when requested by a Councilmember, requires a nomination process followed by a roll call to affirmatively select an appointee (©A3) 	The current Rule does not speak to the identification of interviewees or a formal nomination process.
Rule 4 – Public hearing notice requirements	Council staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical amendments (©6) 	No substantive changes recommended.
Rule 5- Notice, attendance, and agenda preparation	Council staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical amendments (©8) Councilmembers Luedtke and Fani-Gonzalez:	The current rule states that Councilmembers “are expected” to attend meetings in person, except when unreasonable or impractical.

Council Rule	Proposed Amendments	Council Staff Notes / Context
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requires in-person attendance except when unreasonable or impractical - Provides examples of when attendance is unreasonable or unpractical - Requires advance notice of virtual attendance (©A2) 	
Rule 6 – Legislation	<p>Council staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical amendments (©9) <p>Councilmembers Jawando and Sayles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Permit any Councilmember to move to withdraw a bill if the original sponsors are no longer on the Council - Requires the scheduling of a committee worksession at the request of a bill sponsor. The worksession must be scheduled within 30 days or the request, or at a later date agreed to by the sponsor and the committee chair. (©21) <p>Council President Glass:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides a general rule that a bill expires at the end of a Council term, or 18 months after the bill’s introduction, whichever is sooner (©24) 	Currently, only bill sponsors may move to withdraw the bill; the scheduling of worksessions is at the discretion of the chair, or can be moved by a majority of the committee; and a bill does not expire at the end of a Council term.

Council Rule	Proposed Amendments	Council Staff Notes / Context
Rule 7 – Resolutions	<p>Councilmembers Jawando and Sayles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Permits a Councilmember to introduce a special appropriation, upon 2 weeks’ written notice to the Council President (©22) <p>Council President Glass:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides a general rule that a resolution expires at the end of a Council term, or 180 days after the bill’s introduction, whichever is sooner (©24) 	
Rule 8 – Consideration of resolutions of legislation	N/A	N/A
Rule 9 – Procedure during public hearing	N/A	N/A
Rule 10 – Procedure during debate	N/A	N/A
New Rule – Annual budget	<p>Councilmembers Jawando and Sayles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides that the budget process must follow open meetings laws - Provides for a reconciliation list process (©22) 	<p>Per Maryland law and the County Charter, the Council already must adhere to the Open Meetings Law and the Public Information Act. Currently, there is no formal “reconciliation” process; the budget process is generally set forth in the Charter, Article 3.</p>
New Rule – Transparency	<p>Councilmembers Jawando and Sayles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide that the Council must comply with the Open Meetings Act and Public Information Act 	<p>Per Maryland law and the County Charter, the Council already must adhere to the Open Meetings Law and the Public Information Act.</p> <p>Under current rules, the Council President sets the</p>

Council Rule	Proposed Amendments	Council Staff Notes / Context
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide that Council decisions must occur during open meetings, and that Councilmembers must be permitted to speak on new or changed positions (©23) 	<p>agenda, but a Councilmember may move to alter the agenda. Per Robert’s Rules, a Councilmember must be recognized by the chair when the Councilmember seeks the floor, although the chair can set the order of speakers; and limit times. In addition, Councilmembers may move to “call the question,” and to limit or expand debate.</p>
<p>New Rule – Vote requirements</p>	<p>Council staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explicitly requires the recording of each individual vote - Permits voting “without objection” under certain circumstances - Address fractional voting under Robert’s Rules - Expressly lists voting requirements for certain actions (©15) 	<p>Staff believes this proposed new rule would provide helpful clarifications regarding voting requirements,</p>

**Amendments to Council Rules of Procedure –
By Councilmember Stewart
January 20, 2023**

Rule 1. General provisions.

* * *

- (1) *Council Correspondence.* The Council President must have support of at least a majority of Councilmembers to send correspondence in their capacity as Council President on behalf of the Council and must note whether such correspondence is on behalf of a majority of the body or as the Council’s unanimous view. Councilmembers may individually or jointly send correspondence in their individual capacities and may include their title(s). [but] Correspondence on behalf of individual Councilmembers must clearly [note] identify those Councilmembers, and must not imply they are [not] speaking on behalf of the body.

* * *

**Amendment to Council Rules of Procedure –
By Councilmembers Luedtke and Fani-González
January 20, 2023**

Rule 5. Notice, attendance, and agenda preparation.

* * *

- (b) *Attendance.* A Councilmember ~~[[is expected to]]~~ must attend in-person meetings in person,~~[[. A Councilmember may request the option to participate in in-person meetings remotely by means of virtual or telephone conference, although the use of such alternative means must be]]~~ except for limited ~~[[to]]~~ circumstances when a Councilmember’s in-person attendance ~~[[at the in-person meeting]]~~ would be impractical or unreasonable. Examples of when the Councilmember’s in-person attendance would be impractical or unreasonable include illness or injury of the Councilmember or their family member; bereavement; or inclement weather that would make travel unsafe. A Councilmember must send a written notice to the Council President and Council Clerk advising that they will be absent or requesting the option to participate in a meeting remotely. The ~~[[Clerk]]~~ Councilmember’s presence must ~~[[state]]~~ be announced as virtual by the Clerk at the commencement of the meeting, and all members must be recorded in the meeting minutes ~~[[the type of presence of each Councilmember]]~~ as in-person, virtual, or absent.

* * *

**Amendments to Council Rules of Procedure –
By Councilmembers Friedson, Stewart, and Luedtke
January 23, 2023**

Rule 1. General provisions.

* * *

(g) *Election of Council officers; determination of committee structure and membership.*

(1) The Council elects a Council President, a Council Vice-President, and other officers as the Council desires at the first Council meeting each December.

(2) At the first meeting of a new Council term, the Council approves, by majority vote, the structure and membership of Council committees. At the direction of the Council Vice-President at least 4 days prior to the vote, the Clerk must post a proposed committee structure and membership.

* * *

Rule 3. Appointment process.

* * *

(e) *Special process for certain Council appointments.*

(1) *Scope.* This subsection (e) applies to: any appointment to the Montgomery County Planning Board; and any Council appointment for which a Councilmember requests the use of the process under this subsection. This subsection does not apply to an Executive appointment.

(2) *Nominations.* At a Council meeting to consider or make an appointment under this subsection, each Councilmember may nominate an individual for the appointment. If the nomination is

**Amendments to Council Rules of Procedure –
By Councilmembers Friedson, Stewart, and Luedtke
January 23, 2023**

seconded, the Clerk must add the nominee to a list of eligible nominees.

- (3) *Appointments.* The Clerk must announce the list of eligible nominees and call the roll of Councilmembers. Each Councilmember may vote in the affirmative to appoint an individual from the list of eligible nominees. If a nominee is selected by a majority of Councilmembers present and voting, the nominee is appointed. If no nominee is selected by a majority, the Council may repeat the nomination process, repeat the vote, or defer the appointment to a subsequent meeting.

* * *



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

EVAN GLASS
PRESIDENT

TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE, CHAIR
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: January 23, 2023
TO: Councilmembers
FROM: Council President Evan Glass
SUBJECT: Enhancing Council Transparency

This memorandum identifies potential changes the Council can make to increase transparency at the Council. I intend to implement the opportunities identified in this memorandum and welcome suggestions from colleagues on further options to increase transparency.

Openness and transparency are essential components to increasing public trust in government. Providing information about how decisions are made and access to government records helps residents understand why actions are being taken and informs community members about potential outcomes. Transparency fortifies our democratic principles and promotes accountable and effective government.

Montgomery County is a diverse and vibrant community. Public engagement is a key component of open government and improves the quality of decision making. Elected leaders at all levels of government benefit from listening to and understanding the multiple viewpoints of all constituents. The voices we hear have a meaningful role in the lawmaking process, which results in fair, equitable and responsive policymaking.

The Council is committed to transparent government and adheres to the Maryland Open Meetings Act and the Maryland Public Information Act. Some additional actions that the Council already takes to ensure transparency are:

1. Livestreaming and broadcasting Council and Committee sessions, except for legally required closed sessions.
2. Ensuring that agendas, staff reports, and minutes are all available online.
3. Holding in-person and remote town halls and public hearings accompanied by multiple ways to testify. Additionally, if an individual is not available at the specified date and time, they have the option to submit written testimony or pre-record audio and video that is posted on the Council's website.
4. Issuing media releases and social media with information about Council and Committee meetings, and board, committee, commission openings and appointments and community events.

5. Holding regular Council President media briefings to publicize budgetary, legislative, and public policy issues at the Council and highlight significant community events, meetings, and issues.
6. Providing options for residents who would like to testify in their native language. The Council has simultaneous translation/interpretation available to facilitate public engagement that honors constituents' communication preferences. Services are provided in Spanish, Amharic and French by the Council's bilingual staff; additional languages are contracted out as needed.
7. Prioritizing communication and collaboration among the Council, Council staff, and community members to enhance transparency, trust, and shared decision making.
8. Investing in solutions and software tools to streamline processes by recently procuring and implementing Indigov, a constituent experience management platform designed for government to strengthen and streamline electronic communications between residents and the Council.
9. Working towards a culture of accountability by providing trainings for Council staff regarding all aspects of Council work (including the requirements and expectations associated with open meetings, public information and ethics).

As existing operations were further reviewed, I have identified additional opportunities to improve transparency at the Council. The following are recommendations the Council should consider to further improve transparency.

I. Appointments

The Council makes or confirms many appointments to non-merit positions (e.g., executive branch directors) and for boards, committees and commissions. Not all of these appointments require interviews, but for those that do, they should occur in open session so that the public can watch. The Council has historically held many, but not all interviews, in open session. Going forward, I believe that all executive branch appointments and interviews associated with appointments to boards, committees and commissions should be in open session.

While it is Council protocol not to have public hearings about individuals applying for positions, the Council does provide opportunities for individuals and group to comment on applicants. I recommend that staff do everything possible to maximize the time between an appointment announcement and Council action so that the public has sufficient time to comment on applicants.

Finally, we should do all we can to expand and diversify our network of potential applicants for all appointed positions. We can do this by increasing our outreach and leveraging community partnerships to disseminate information about opportunities to serve county government.

II. Agenda and Staff Reports

Our agendas provide notice of public meetings and are always posted three business days in advance of a meeting. Late additions to the agenda, except in the case of emergencies, should be minimized so that the public is provided adequate notice of the meeting topics and sufficient review of Council staff reports. If the staff reports for a non-emergency item cannot be distributed with enough time for adequate public review, consideration should be given to delaying that discussion or action item until a future meeting.

III. Public Hearings/Participation at Meetings

We will continue to provide all those testifying before the Council with a variety of ways to participate, including in-person or remote speaking opportunities and the ability to submit written or video testimony. I plan to continue the practice of increasing the number of speakers for a hearing when there is a waiting list and sufficient time to accommodate them. **I have also decided to increase the time allotted for each speaker from two to three minutes, returning to the pre-pandemic standard.** Additionally, I recommend having more hearings in the community, when appropriate, and identifying locations that are close to public transportation and have the stable IT infrastructure that allows for remote participation.

Regarding Committee and Council meetings, staff believes that they need to do a better job of explaining that the Council practice is to generally limit participation at meetings to Councilmembers, Council staff, and staff of the Executive Branch and outside agencies. The Council President or Committee Chair will determine whether/when participation of non-government staff is appropriate. If this participation is determined to be appropriate, Council staff will clearly explain the role of the parties in the staff report and/or during meetings.

IV. Access to Records and Documents

Easy access to Council documents and records of Council actions are key to transparency. We have — and will continue to provide — public access to staff reports, video and other documents considered by the Council during public meetings.

Staff believes that our new Granicus system will enable us to provide access to voting records by issue or Councilmember, and attendance records for meetings. Staff also plans to explore options for providing issue tags with timestamps in the Council meeting videos to make those more easily searchable. Our new correspondence system (Indigov) is equally enhancing our capacity to manage and share correspondence. The Council's goal should be to provide public access to constituents' communication with the Council by September 2023.

V. Website

Staff has continued to enhance our website over the years but many of us believe there are further opportunities for improvement. I have initiated discussions with staff to improve our website so that it is more intuitive, accessible and easily searchable. In preparation for any changes, I propose we facilitate a public focus group evaluation on the redesign, with feedback sought on the overall design, ease of use, interactivity and content. The improvements may include:

1. Making it easier to navigate and quickly find frequently searched items.
2. Exploring options to improve search results that can be easily obtained by topic.
3. Ensuring that Equity Impact Statements for bills and ZTAs are easy to locate.
4. Creating a welcoming and interactive design.
5. Continuing to use metrics to track website usage.
6. Obtaining input from website users.
7. Creating short instructional videos for the website and social media about key Council processes (e.g., how to sign up and participate in a public hearing, alternative ways to provide feedback, contact or schedule a meeting with a Councilmember, subscribe to media releases and Councilmember updates. This work is currently underway and will be updated with the new site.)
8. Creating a multilingual section devoted to increasing public engagement.

VI. Communications

Communication is a necessary component of transparent government. We should always strive to increase and improve our communication with residents. Staff will continue to explore new communication channels while leveraging best-practices already in place (e.g., using videos to highlight the contributions of community members, creating engagement strategies around the Racial Equity and Social Justice Act community engagement process or community involvement in future land use decisions).

The work of our multicultural communications team will provide new opportunities to engage the County's diverse communities. They are developing, for Council review, a public engagement and multicultural communications strategic plan rooted in equity, inclusion and accessibility. Council staff now has internal capacity to translate Council documents from English to Spanish and will assess which Council documents should be translated into the County's other top four languages (Chinese, French, Korean and Amharic). The strategic plan will also make recommendations on investments that the Council may consider to enhance multicultural community partnerships.

In addition to the Council's communication channels, I am recommending we adopt a communication policy that requires Councilmembers to have an official social media account on the platforms of their choosing for engagement by county government. The official handle is a requirement and best practice in other legislative bodies, such as the United States Congress and the Council of the District of Columbia, where legislators are able to maintain their own personal social media accounts, but official communications (i.e, office emails or newsletters, websites, printed materials) are only linked to the official accounts.

VII. Decision-Making and Committee Oversight

The public frequently asks questions regarding the Council's decision-making process on various issues. In an effort to increase transparency, the Council should make decisions during public sessions whenever possible. If a decision cannot be made at a public session, we should explain the reason (e.g., state law requires that personnel matters remain confidential to provide protection for employees). We will continue to clearly explain processes associated with key decisions related to budget, legislation, zoning and other important decisions.

Committees are essential to the effective operation of the Council. Committee chairs should schedule oversight hearings about significant budgetary and staffing issues impacting County departments and agencies outside of the traditional budget cycle. Significant reports from the Office of Legislative Oversight and the Office of the Inspector General should also be assigned to the committee of jurisdiction for evaluation. Recommendations reached in committee would then advance to the full Council for deliberation. This approach would provide for more in-depth evaluation and oversight outside of the time limitations of the full Council and the annual budget cycle.

With the creation of a seventh committee (Economic Development), our committees have an even greater capacity to provide oversight and ensure that government services are operating as they should. A more robust committee structure will serve the county and our taxpayers well.