

**City of Puyallup
City Council Retreat
Mayor Knutsen Presiding
February 12, 2014**

(These minutes are not verbatim. The meeting was recorded, and copies of the recording are retained for a period of six years from the date of the meeting and are available upon request.)

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Knutsen, Deputy Mayor Hopkins, Councilmember Door, Councilmember Palmer, Councilmember Shadko, Councilmember Swanson, Councilmember Vermillion

Mayor Knutsen called the meeting to order at 5:54 p.m.

City Council Rules–Decorum (McDonald/Door/Council)

*** Dick Rapp’s Rules**

*** Lynnwood Rules**

City Manager Bill McDonald explained that councilmembers have expressed interest in effectively conducting the business of the council. He referred to “Dick Rapp’s Rule” for political bodies which illustrated differences between effectiveness and dysfunction and also to suggested language for debate and decorum as presented to the Lynnwood city council.

Councilmember Door commented that dysfunctional relationships or communications discredit the council as a whole. She asserted that all members can work together and felt that as previous disagreements were of the past, council should not continue to carry these forward but rather should look to the future and the goals it is trying to achieve. She believed that the diverse opinions of its different members had the potential to strengthen the council, and thus should be respected, and did not want to foster negative feelings or divisions in the community.

Deputy Mayor Hopkins agreed that the public does not like bickering and that feuding does not do the council any good.

Pointing out that councilmembers are not always going to agree, Mr. McDonald emphasized the need to disagree respectfully and protect the minority opinion.

Councilmember Palmer concurred that all should be allowed to have their say and a healthy, issues-based debate should be the focus.

Councilmember Shadko cautioned against holding preconceived notions of the view a councilmember may take on any one issue, based on previous expressions or actions.

Mayor Knutsen said heartfelt arguments will occur. He believed problems in the past were often sparked by insulting or provoking comments by citizens, with councilmembers responding accordingly. He expected that the current council will be issues-based.

Mr. McDonald advised the councilmembers that while they will feel strongly about some issues and will naturally want their own position to prevail, they should take care not to “play to harm” in the course of deciding matters.

Mayor Knutsen commented on the contentious election last fall, saying relationships have improved and he expected that to continue. He referred to the “shock and anger” of former battles, was not concerned about the interaction between councilmembers, and warned against paying heed to those who try to sow dissent.

Regarding the rules from the city of Lynnwood, Councilmember Swanson expressed discomfort with legislating decorum or what people can or cannot say. He said while councilmembers may be falsely accused by members of the public who speak during citizen comments, he believed it easier to ignore accusations and negative comments than to try to prevent them by adopting rules. He did not want to put the mayor in the position of having to decide if a decorum rule was being violated.

Mayor Knutsen agreed and noted that the city cannot legislate courtesy or respect.

Deputy Mayor Hopkins pointed out that the Lynnwood rules are taken from Roberts Rules of Order, which according to council’s own Rules of Procedure are to serve as a guide for conducting Puyallup’s meetings. He spoke against councilmembers impugning the motives of others. Mayor Knutsen stressed the importance of ignoring outside influences. Councilmember Door concluded that council has the opportunity to not model inciteful behavior.

City Council Rules of Procedure-Variou (Council)

City Attorney Kevin Yamamoto explained that interest has been expressed in reviewing and possibly amending some sections of the Council’s Rules of Procedure.

Mr. Yamamoto asked if rule 2.5(3), which prohibits “final action on any matter” during study sessions should be modified.

Discussion ensued regarding the reason for this rule, the fact that more members of the public attend regular meetings than study sessions, and the perception that the public generally does not expect final action to be taken at study sessions. Some Councilmembers spoke in favor of providing flexibility to allow final action at study sessions under certain conditions. Council consensus was that the rule be changed to specifically prohibit the awarding of contracts, the appointing of members to boards or commissions, or the passage of legislation at study sessions without suspending the rule as allowed in 2.8(2). Mr. Yamamoto suggested that if final action is anticipated at a study session, this be made explicit on the agenda for the notification of the public.

Referring to rule 2.6, which relates to the preparation of the City Council’s meeting agendas, Mr. Yamamoto asked if the procedures for preparing the agenda and for adding councilmember-initiated items should be changed, and if so, how.

Following discussion, it was decided that the city manager and the mayor shall collaborate on the preparation of the agenda. In the event that the mayor removes an item from the agenda, Council would be immediately notified. It was further agreed that any two councilmembers can request that a “councilmember-initiated” item be placed on a preliminary agenda for Council to decide whether

the matter should be added to the agenda of a future meeting for discussion only, with the stipulation that if Council directs the item be added to a future agenda, it be for a date certain. The initial discussion by Council of the matter will allow the city manager to assess the amount of resources required to research and/or possibly take action on the issue.

Mr. Yamamoto next asked if the rule relating to the consent agenda should be modified to allow comments on consent agenda items without their removal from the consent agenda. Council consensus was to allow comments on consent agenda items after the vote is taken to approve all items.

Regarding rule 2.7(8), which requires that all ordinances have two readings at two separate meetings unless Council suspends this rule, Council concurred to make no change to this rule.

Mr. Yamamoto suggested, and Council agreed, that the rule relating to confidentiality of executive sessions be revised to incorporate language from the Revised Code of Washington (RCW).

With respect to Section 6 of Council's Rules of Procedure which describes the process for selecting the mayor and deputy mayor, councilmembers spoke to the benefits of retaining the current process.

Councilmember Swanson favored a directly-elected mayor, saying that because Puyallup's councilmembers represent districts, two-thirds of the voters have no say as far as which person serves as mayor unless the position is filled by the councilmember who is elected at-large. He commented that the mayor is asked to attend events and sought out as a spokesperson for media interviews to a greater extent than other councilmembers.

Mr. Yamamoto noted one final question concerning procedure was raised about councilmembers reading letters from constituents into the record. Council consensus was not to allow this, although none saw a need to adopt a formal policy at this time.

Open Public Meetings Act- General Parameters (Yamamoto)

Mr. Yamamoto addressed the question of what constitutes a violation of the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA), saying that two or three councilmembers gathered together would not constitute a violation as they would comprise less than a quorum and thus could not take action. He further advised that four or more councilmembers gathered together (at social events, for example) but not engaging in city business also would not violate the OPMA.

Mr. Yamamoto strongly recommended that councilmembers discuss issues with each other, emphasizing that they are allowed to try to persuade each other so long as no secret balloting is conducted since all votes must be taken in open public meetings. He did not advise serial emails as it could be easy to make a case that a meeting had occurred outside of public view, recommending instead that communication of this type be channeled through the city manager. He concluded that it is allowable to discuss the scheduling of a meeting via email, but not to have any material discussion of the content of the meeting.

The meeting was recessed at 7:41 p.m. and resumed at 7:49 p.m.

**Role of the City Manager; staff workload capacity considerations (Mayor/McDonald/Council)
*ICMA Code of Ethics**

Mr. McDonald referred to the Code of Ethics of the International City Management Association, noting that city managers have a responsibility to protect and further democracy as well as to remain politically neutral.

Councilmember Swanson encouraged councilmembers to allow Mr. McDonald to adhere to these tenets and stressed the impropriety of directly soliciting staff support or donations to a campaign or cause.

Priorities and Goals for 2014 (Mayor and Council)

Councilmembers agreed to the following list of items as top priorities for 2014 (items are not listed in order of priority):

- South Sound 911
- Sound Transit
- Shaw/Pioneer land use
- Roads/neighborhood streets/utilities
- Parks/sports fields
- Recreation center
- Justice center
- Debt reduction

Mr. McDonald offered to bring these subjects to Council along with proposed processes for reaching decisions with respect to addressing or implementing them. He noted that items not currently on the list could be added at Council's direction.

Councilmember Swanson shared a sample flow chart illustrating the process for making a big-picture decision, using the Shaw/Pioneer area as an example. He strongly advocated making progress on some of the identified priorities in the near future.

Staff Workload Capacity

Mayor Knutsen encouraged councilmembers to exercise caution with the amount of staff time they use for discussions or getting questions answered.

Mr. McDonald said while councilmembers need and should have access to directors, they should also be sensitive to the risk of possibly changing staff's work priorities. While he wanted them to have information, he asked that councilmembers be judicious in their requests of staff.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:20 p.m.