

## **Protocol for Public Safety Involvement during Disruptions of City Council Meetings (January 29, 2024)**

There are six steps to this process: OVERVIEW, WARNING, RECESS, LEAVE, ROOM CLEARED, and RETURN.

- 1) OVERVIEW. The presiding officer opens the Council meeting with a clear review of the rules and procedures for disruptions.
- 2) WARNING. If and as soon as an individual or group speaks out of turn and disrupts the meeting:
  - a) The presiding officer calls the meeting to attention using the gavel.
  - b) The presiding officer states: “This meeting’s business has been disrupted. I call this meeting to order. Please refrain from disrupting this lawful meeting. Speaking out of turn and making loud utterances are in violation of the rules of this Council and interferes with the due conduct of this meeting. This is a warning that such activity is in violation of the Codified Ordinances and must immediately stop.”

It is essential that the presiding officer note on the record that Council business has been disrupted, and that he or she issue a warning. If Council business continues without interruption, then it is challenging to claim that the disruptive actions constituted interference with the proceedings.

- 3) RECESS. If the conduct is repeated or if it continues:
  - a) The presiding officer must call a recess. The rules of Council do not include a motion for recess, and so they default to Robert’s Rules. The presiding officer should state: “This Council cannot continue with its business due to the disruption. As a result, I move that we recess until the disruption has concluded.”
  - b) “Is the motion seconded?” “Without objection, the motion is approved.”
  - c) “The motion passes. The Council stands in recess until the disruption has concluded. I request that the Director of Public Safety clear the room.”

- 4) LEAVE. Council Members leave the Council Chambers. The Council meeting is temporarily recessed.

No public business is to be discussed or conducted during recess or when any quorum of Council Members is gathered.

- 5) ROOM CLEARED. The Director of Public Safety orders the assembled officers to clear the Council Chambers of all members of the public, whether or not they were engaged in disruption.
  - a) As there is no longer public business occurring in the Council Chambers, there is no longer a right to be present in the Council Chambers.
  - b) Upon completion, the Director of Public Safety informs the presiding officer that Council Chambers has been cleared.
- 6) RETURN. Council Members return to the Council Chambers.
  - a) The remainder of the meeting must continue to be open to the public electronically via internet and television. Public in- person attendance except for the media will be prohibited for the remainder of the meeting.
  - b) The presiding officer resumes business by stating: “The recess has ended, and the meeting will come to order.” The meeting can then resume from the point at which recess was called.