



## City Council Staff Report

**From: City Manager**

**Report Type: CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Lead Department: City Manager**

**Meeting Date: September 9, 2024**

Report #:2407-3297

### **TITLE**

Approval of the Updated City Council Procedures and Protocols Handbook Amendments as Directed by City Council on May 13 and May 20, 2024

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the updated City Council Procedures and Protocols Handbook (Handbook) which reflects Handbook updates that the City Council approved in May 2024.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Municipal Code provides that the City Council shall adopt “a handbook of procedural rules governing any aspect of the conduct of meetings and hearings for the Council and its standing committees, including but not limited to, agenda requirements, the order of business, rules of order, rules of evidence, closed session procedures and rules for public participation in meetings” (PAMC section 2.04.100). The City Council adopted a modern version of the City Council Procedures and Protocols Handbook in the early 2000s and have made modifications over the years. By the early 2020’s, the Handbook had grown hard to follow and needed a general update. As a result, the whole document was revised, reorganized, and reformatted in early 2023. This was a significant effort to improve Handbook readability and ease of use for City Council Members, staff, and the public.

The City Council adopted the reorganized Handbook on April 24, 2023. In that review, the City Council referred a number of items to the Policy and Services Committee to review and make recommendations back to the full City Council. Those recommendations were discussed by the full City Council in early in 2024. The Handbook also calls on the City Council to review its procedural rules and protocols annually, and this occurred in May 2024. The updated Handbook (**Attachment A**) reflects changes directed by Council in May 2024. The minutes from the May 13 and May 20 meetings are included with this report as **Attachment B**.

The Handbook, once approved, will be uploaded online and replace the current version there. That website link is: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/City-Clerk/City-Council> (scroll to the bottom of the page).

## **ANALYSIS**

On May 13 and May 20, 2024, the City Council voted to make updates to the Handbook related to the following sections and topics:

1. Procedures Section 1.1 – Adding language to note that the Mayor makes appointments of Council Members to regional bodies / agencies
2. Procedures Section 1.2d – Adding responsibilities to the CAO Committee based on work they annually do
3. Procedures Section 2.3 – Noting Council Members are expected to be present at the dais throughout the meeting
4. Procedures Section 3.2b – Adding guidelines for Special Orders related to weighing in on foreign affairs
5. Procedures Section 3.8d – Adding time limit language related to members of the public speaking on multiple Consent Agenda items (this language was also copied into Section 5 to make it easy for members of the public to access this information)
6. Procedures Section 3.8e – Adding time limit language related to Council Members speaking to “no” votes for multiple Consent Agenda items
7. Procedures Section 5a(1) – Adding language noting that remote public comment is not available for General Public Comment on the agenda
8. Procedures Section 5b(1) – Clarifies language around the total amount of time and details on how General Public Comment will be done at the meeting
9. Protocols Section 1.4b(1) – Adding language to allow for less formal interactions at City Council Committee Meetings
10. Protocols Section 4.3a(3) – Noting that it is prohibited to accept hotel accommodation from Sister Cities, Sibling Cities, and Friendship Cities and to use discretion in accepting gifts.

One item that the City Council referred to the Policy and Services Committee in May 2024 remains outstanding:

- A. Whether there should be a mechanism under Council Comments to be able to refer to staff a simpler request than would be required in a Colleague's Memo (with the boundaries defined).

This item will be scheduled for discussion at an upcoming Policy and Services Committee meeting.

Lastly, the City Council approved two other items in May 2024. They are listed below with next steps attached to each item.

1. Council Motion Approved: Establish a procedure for proclamations, including additional guidance, and any other staff recommendations based on best practice, specifically identifying guidelines for routine non-controversial proclamations to be approved by the Mayor and Vice Mayor and any controversial proclamations to be brought to the full Council for a vote for approval. [**Next Steps:** Staff is continuing to work on a draft of this text and will bring it to a future City Council discussion on the Handbook].
2. Council Motion Approved: Direct staff to shift Boards and Commissions recruitment process to twice a year at a time to be worked out by the City Clerk and evaluate Boards and Commissions Workplans schedule and present back to the City Council on Consent [**Next Steps:** Staff is implementing this recommendation and will bring changes through amendments to the Board and Commissions Handbook later in the year (estimated in October)].

#### **FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT**

There are no fiscal impacts for this report. This report is a summary of previous City Council actions.

#### **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

The City Council has reviewed and heard public comment about the items included in this updated Handbook draft (**Attachment A**).

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Not a project.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: 2024 Updated Council Procedures and Protocols Handbook - August 2024

Attachment B: May 13 and May 20, 2024 City Council Meeting Minutes

#### **APPROVED BY:**

Ed Shikada, City Manager