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**Welcome!**

**Torrington's City Council Meetings  
are your opportunity to learn  
about what's going on in the City,  
voice your concerns,  
and see your elected officials in action!**

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*With this guide you can learn the  
Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How  
of Torrington City Council Meetings*

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## Who Goes to City Council Meetings?

The Board of Councilmen and WPC Authority consists of your six elected Councilors, with the Mayor presiding. At least four Councilors need to be there to hold the meeting. Everything the City Council does is open to the public. That's why you'll also see the City Clerk making an audio recording of the meeting. You'll often see City Department Heads bringing business up before the Board. Most importantly, you should be there to learn, to listen, to speak and to help.



## What Will be Discussed at This Meeting?

Every meeting has an agenda posted on the City Clerk's bulletin board in City Hall. Extra copies are available at the meeting, and you can even have one mailed to you upon request to the City Clerk. Meeting agendas are also posted on the City Website: **[www.torringtonct.org](http://www.torringtonct.org)** The online version contains links to all the backup information such as bid documents, memos, or invoices, so you can be informed of all the details of each agenda item before you come to the meeting.

## Where is the Meeting, and When?

City Council meets in the City Hall Council Chambers/Auditorium, 140 Main Street, on the first and third Monday of every month whenever a quorum (4 members) is available. Meetings usually start at 6:30 p.m.



## Why do we need Rules of Procedure?

*Your voice matters, and your elected officials want to hear from you!*

An efficient, orderly meeting is the best way for everyone to hear each other, and for all to be well-informed. Emotional or noisy disruptions cause everyone to lose focus, and prevents participants from hearing and understanding each other.

Torrington's City Council Rules of Procedure can be found on pages 6 and 7.



## How Do I Make My Opinion Known?

At the beginning of every City Council Meeting, right after the Pledge of Allegiance and approval of the previous meeting's minutes, the Mayor will announce that the Meeting is "Open to the Public." At that time, anyone can raise their hand to take a turn at the podium to speak calmly and clearly to the City Council. Don't be nervous, we want to hear from you! This is your only opportunity to speak about an issue *before* the City Council votes on it. Your comments really help City Council make good decisions for the best interest of Torrington!

At the end of the meeting, you'll get another chance to speak when the Meeting is "Open to the Public for Agenda Items Only." Members of the public can have the last word about what occurred, what was discussed, and what was voted on during that meeting.

## How Do I Get Answers to My Questions?

If there is something you'd like to know, the City Council Meeting is not the place to get answers to your specific questions. The City Councilors are there to get their work done, while ensuring there is enough time to listen to everyone who wishes to speak.

Information on just about everything you need to know is available at City Hall from the various Departments, and it's best to get that ahead of time. You are always welcome to contact the Mayor, City Council or any City Staff by phone, email or by mail. All contact information is on the city website: [www.torringtonct.org](http://www.torringtonct.org).

# Sample Agenda

**AGENDA**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
CITY COUNCIL & WPC AUTHORITY  
City Hall Auditorium  
May 6, 2019 | \*6:30 p.m.  
*\*Immediately following the joint meeting*

1. **Roll Call Vote:** by the Board of Councilmen to approve amending the Code of Ordinances by adding an ordinance regarding the sale of tobacco and vaping products.

**Minutes**

2. Vote to accept the minutes of the public hearing held April 15, 2019.
3. Vote to accept the minutes of the regular meeting held April 15, 2019.
4. Vote to accept the minutes of the special and telephonic meeting held May 1, 2019.

**Open to Public**

5. Vote to open the meeting to the public.

**Tax Collector's Lease Agreement**

6. Vote to approve the First Amendment to the Tax Collector's Lease Agreement.

**Release of Liens**

7. Vote to accept Corporation Counsel's recommendation and authorize the Mayor, pursuant to C.G.S. §12-179, to release the liens described in Atty. Muschell's memo dated May 6, 2019.

**Tax Collector Refunds**

8. Vote to accept the recommendation of the Tax Collector and authorize the 14 tax refunds indicated on the list dated May 6, 2019.

9. Acting herein as the Water Pollution Control Authority, vote to accept the recommendation of the Tax Collector and authorize the five sewer usage refunds indicated on the list dated May 6, 2019.

**Technical Advisory Services**

10. Discussion regarding retaining the Technical Advisory Services of Juliet Burdelski.

**11. Business by Dept. Heads**

12. **Comments for the Good of the Order**

**Open to Public for Agenda Items Only**

13. Vote to open the meeting to the public to discuss agenda items only.

**14. Adjournment**



*Though the agenda changes from month to month, depending on the needs of the City and its departments, the general structure of regular City Council meetings is as follows:*

- **Minutes:** This is the City Council's opportunity to discuss any discrepancies or disagreements with the draft minutes from previous City Council meetings. City Councilors may vote to amend the minutes before approving them.
- **Open to the Public:** This is your opportunity to state your concerns and advocate for items of importance to you. Comments during this portion of the meeting are not restricted to agenda items only.\*
- **Contracts, Purchases, and Payments:** The middle portion of regular City Council meetings typically includes discussions and votes regarding the approval of pending contracts, purchases, and invoices. These requests are usually forwarded from Department Heads and almost always have backup documentation linked to the online agenda, available for public inspection before the meeting.
- **Release of Liens/Tax Collector refunds:** Recommendations by Corporation Counsel or Tax Collector to release tax or sewer liens and refund overpayments.
- **Department's Reports:** Reports forwarded from the Building or Other Departments are submitted for City Council approval.
- **Business by Department Heads:** This is an opportunity for the Department Heads in attendance to make announcements and request consideration for matters of business that are relevant to their respective departments.
- **Comments for the Good of the Order:** Sometimes called "Business by Mayor and Members", this is an opportunity for the Mayor and City Councilors to comment on matters of importance to them and address comments or issues that were brought up during the meeting.
- **Open to the public for agenda items only:** This is another opportunity for you to state your concerns and opinions regarding any item on the agenda. *\*Note: Unlike the first public comment section, remarks made at this time must be specifically relevant to one or more items on the agenda.*
- **Adjournment:** This is the vote to close the meeting.

PURPOSE: These Meeting Rules of Procedure of the City Council & WPCA are intended as a guide for meetings of the City Council & WPCA, to preserve order and promote the orderly and efficient transaction of business.

AUTHORITY: Pursuant to State statutes, §C4-1 of the City Charter, and Chapter 65-1 of the City's Code of Ordinances the City Council & WPCA may determine the rules governing its proceedings and may regulate the manner of warning its meetings and the times and places of holding its meetings.

ADOPTION OF STANDARDS: The City Council & WPCA hereby adopt Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR) together with all other applicable Charter and ordinance provisions, regulations and State statutes as a general guide for the conduct of all regular and special meetings.

#### GENERAL RULES

*Public Meetings:* All official meetings of the City Council & WPCA (except where State or local law allows for closed sessions) shall be open to the public.

*Location:* The location of all regular and special meetings, unless publicly noticed differently, shall be in the City Hall Auditorium, 140 Main Street, Torrington, CT 06790.

*Quorum:* Four members of the City Council & WPCA shall constitute a quorum.





GENERAL RULES CONTINUED

*Recognition by the Chair:* All City Council & WPCA Members, City staff, and individuals from the general public shall be recognized by the Chair before addressing the City Council & WPCA on any issue. The Chair shall preside over and regulate all meetings. All meetings are expected to be conducted with appropriate efficiency and decorum and the City Council & WPCA acting by and through the Chair shall maintain the same as authorized by law.

*Public Comment:* Members of the public addressing the City Council & WPCA shall have ten (10) minutes to make their comments. If the Chair identifies an inordinate number of speakers who wish to speak, a shorter period for each speaker may be set. Any citizen so speaking shall identify himself/herself by name and address and state if he/she is representing a group or organization. The Chair, upon approval by two-thirds vote of those present and voting, may allow additional public participation on an agenda item under discussion.

INCLUSION OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA: Items not specifically included on the agenda may be added by 2/3 vote of those present and voting. In accordance with State statutes, no items will be added to a special meeting agenda.

TIME PLACEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS: When a board, commission, organization, or individual is invited to the meeting to discuss a particular agenda item, that item shall be placed on the agenda at the time requested, if possible. The Chair may change the time placement of agenda items, as appropriate, at any time before or during a regular meeting.

EXPIRATION: These Rules of Procedure will be in effect until further additions and amendments are adopted through majority vote by the City Council & WPCA.

## Some other things to know

### **What are Special Meetings and why are they different from Regular ones?**

Special Meetings occur when City Council business needs to be conducted on a different day from the regularly scheduled first and third Mondays. These meetings focus only on the business at hand and offer no opportunity for the public to speak. Every Joint meeting held with another City board or agency is also a Special Meeting. The agenda cannot be changed or amended.

### **What happens at a Public Hearing?**

A Public Hearing is simply a meeting where the public can hear the facts and state their opinion about it. No votes are taken at the Public Hearing itself. A legal notice is published in the newspaper five to ten days beforehand which describes the matter to be discussed and states the time and place for the Public Hearing. There's a list at the door where you can sign in to have the Mayor call on you to come up to speak at the podium. If you don't sign in, the Mayor will still give you a chance to raise your hand to take a turn to speak.

### **What is an Executive Session?**

Certain topics are not open to the public, and when they are discussed, you'll see the Mayor and City Councilors leave the room for a closed session. Executive Sessions are held when privacy needs to be respected, such as for specific personnel matters, litigation, security matters, or the acquisition of real estate where openness might increase the price.

### **Why does the Agenda say "*Amended, Corrected or Section B*"?**

Agendas are posted 24 hours before the Meetings. When a mistake is found, a Corrected Agenda is issued. When something is added either before or during the meeting, the Agenda is Amended; and when several items are added, they are grouped into a "Section B".

## Helpful Websites:

- City of Torrington: [torringtonct.org](http://torringtonct.org)
- Torrington City Charter and Code of Ordinances:  
[library.municode.com/ct/torrington/codes/code](http://library.municode.com/ct/torrington/codes/code)
- CT Freedom of Information Commission [ct.gov/foi](http://ct.gov/foi) (Includes Information on CT Statutes for public records, public meetings, agendas, special meetings, etc.)