

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Monday, September 14, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.
Franklin Elks Lodge

ATTENDANCE

Present: Councilors Al Warner, Ben Forge, Ed Prive, Sam Jacobson, Justine Hoppe, and Delaney Carrier; Mayor Glenn Morrill.

Absent: Councilors Susan Hallett-Cook, Tim Johnston, and Tom Boyce.

Others Present: City Manager Mitch Kloewer.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Morrill called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Led by Councilor Carrier.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Muster Committee

Councilor Hoppe reported that the Muster Committee has held several meetings over the past few weeks. The event is scheduled for September 26. The Committee continues to seek sponsors and vendors and asked that any leads be forwarded to the Committee. The Committee has obtained an EIN and completed its registration with the State as a nonprofit organization. Councilor Hoppe noted that the Muster League has expressed enthusiasm about the event, and that weather, particularly rain, could affect whether the event proceeds as planned.

ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER LEARNING SESSION

City Manager Kloewer conducted a work session for the Council on parliamentary procedure, focused on common types of public meetings, the handling of motions under Robert's Rules of Order, and a related recommendation from the State. City Manager Kloewer noted at the outset that no Council business or votes could be conducted during a workshop.

Types of Public Meetings

City Manager Kloewer reviewed the categories of public meetings recognized under the Council's practice: regular meetings, held on a set annual schedule with a standard agenda template; special meetings, called to conduct business outside the regular schedule, which may not include a full slate of agenda items or public comment; emergency meetings, which may bypass normal notice requirements only upon the Mayor's determination that an emergency exists requiring immediate action, and which are limited to action on the emergency item itself; public hearings, formal proceedings

that generally require notice beyond the 24-hour minimum under RSA 91-A; workshops, informal working sessions, such as this one, at which no Council business or votes may be conducted; town halls and community forums, open sessions allowing two-way dialogue between the public and the Council; and non-public (executive) sessions, closed-door sessions limited to the purposes specified with RSA 91-A:3, II. City Manager Kloewer noted that meeting types may be combined as needed, and that only the Mayor has authority to call a meeting, subject to the Council's ability to compel a meeting by majority vote.

Councilor Jacobson asked about the noticing requirements for town halls and community forums. City Manager Kloewer responded that such meetings generally follow RSA 91-A's public-meeting notice requirement of 24 hours, posted in two locations, one of which may be a website.

Motions and Debate

City Manager Kloewer reviewed the requirements for a proper motion: it may be made by any voting member, including the Chair; should be framed affirmatively; should include specific details (who, what, when, and amount); and should stand as a complete sentence. He reviewed the procedure once a motion is made: it must be seconded and then repeated by the Chair, at which point the body as a whole, not the maker, owns the motion, and all further remarks are directed to the Chair rather than to other Councilors directly. An unseconded motion dies without action, and the Chair may move on. City Manager Kloewer stated that, under Robert's Rules as written, each Councilor is permitted only one opportunity to speak on a given motion; a Councilor recognized by the Chair to answer a factual question does not thereby use that opportunity, but may not use the recognition to reopen debate.

Councilors Carrier and Jacobson questioned this limit, noting that Council debate typically involves back-and-forth exchange and expressing concern that restricting each Councilor to a single opportunity to speak, particularly the motion's maker, could prevent a meaningful response to points raised later in debate. Councilor Prive illustrated the concern with a hypothetical example of how the rule might be invoked against a Councilor mid-debate, and stated that the rule would be difficult to enforce in practice. City Manager Kloewer acknowledged the concern but explained that the rule is intended to keep debate focused and avoid repetition, noting that a Councilor may still seek the Chair's recognition for a brief clarification. Councilor Carrier stated that neither the Charter nor the City Code requires the Council to follow Robert's Rules strictly, and expressed a preference not to restrict debate on motions. City Manager Kloewer stated he would return to the broader question of whether the Council must follow Robert's Rules at all later in the work session.

Subsidiary Motions

City Manager Kloewer reviewed subsidiary motions, in order of precedence: postponing a motion indefinitely (which does not kill the motion permanently, any Councilor may bring it back at a future meeting under new business); amending the motion; referring the motion to a committee; postponing the motion to a specific future time; calling the question, which ends debate and forces an immediate vote if the Chair finds no

objection, or requires a two-thirds vote if an objection is raised; and laying the motion on the table, which City Manager Kloewer identified as the most effective way to end a motion given the restrictive rules for removing it from the table, only at the next meeting with new business on the agenda, by majority vote, failing which it remains tabled indefinitely.

Councilor Jacobson asked whether “the next meeting” for purposes of removing a motion from the table means any meeting or specifically the next meeting with new business on the agenda. City Manager Kloewer responded that it would be the next meeting at which new business could be taken up, and recommended coordinating with the Mayor or City Manager in advance to place the item on that agenda.

Amendments

City Manager Kloewer stated that amendments may be made by any voting member, including the maker of the original motion, must be seconded, and are addressed to the Chair rather than to the maker of the original motion. He noted there is no such thing as a “friendly” amendment under Robert’s Rules: the Chair may ask whether there is any objection and, if none, treat the amendment as accepted without a formal vote; if any member objects, the amendment must be debated and decided by majority vote before debate resumes on the motion. Permitted amendments add, strike, strike-and-insert, or substitute language; amendments must be germane and may not reverse the effect of the original motion.

Withdrawing a Motion or Amendment

A motion or amendment may be withdrawn without prejudice before the Chair repeats it. After the Chair has repeated it, the maker must request the Chair’s permission to withdraw; the Chair may grant the request absent objection, or otherwise put it to a vote. A motion to withdraw is not itself debatable.

Failed Motions

City Manager Kloewer stated that when a motion fails, no action is taken, and no Councilor on the losing side of the vote may bring the identical motion back before the Council; only a materially different motion, accepted by the body, may revisit the matter. He noted this issue had arisen with several motions considered during the FY27 budget process.

Points

City Manager Kloewer reviewed the categories of points, the only actions that may properly interrupt a speaker: a point of order, raised when a Councilor believes a rule or procedure is being violated, on which the Chair rules (subject to appeal to the full body by majority vote); a point of information, used to ask a factual question about the pending motion without offering opinion or new argument; a point of parliamentary inquiry, used to ask the Chair about procedure; and a question of privilege, used for requests such as stepping away from the table, which the Chair should acknowledge for the record.

State Training and the Council's Own Rules of Procedure

City Manager Kloewer reported that, following recent training on RSA 91-A that also covered meeting procedure and minutes, the recommendation was that municipalities not rely on Robert's Rules of Order, which is considered to be confusing and difficult to apply, and instead boards should adopt their own written rules of meeting procedure to provide consistency and transparency to the public. City Manager Kloewer recommended that, until the Council adopts written rules of its own, it continue to follow Robert's Rules as currently practiced, and offered to help draft Council-specific rules modeled on other municipalities' procedures rather than starting from scratch.

Mayor Morrill invited Council comment on whether to develop the Council's own rules of procedure. Councilor Warner suggested it would be worthwhile for Councilors to research what other communities do before proceeding further. Councilor Carrier reiterated the concern that Councilors should be permitted to speak more than once on a motion, but stated a preference against a lengthy process to develop new rules and expressed willingness to work from the outline the City Manager provided. Councilor Prive agreed that the document provided was a good starting guideline. City Manager Kloewer noted that several other municipalities have already adopted their own procedural rules and recommended adapting an existing model rather than drafting one from scratch. No motion was made on this item.

OTHER BUSINESS

Late Items

Councilor Jacobson announced that the Legislative Committee meeting scheduled for Thursday, September 17, has been relocated to the Bessie Rowell Community Center due to an accessibility issue at the Library; the meeting will remain at 6:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Councilor Hoppe moved to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Forge.

Vote: Voice vote.

Result: Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Demers

Executive Secretary

With Assistance of AI