



Rules Subcommittee Agenda

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, April 8, 2026

6 PM
Room 211

The Rules Subcommittee will hold this meeting as a hybrid meeting on Wednesday, April 8, 2026 at 6 PM that the public may access in-person or virtually via Zoom. To attend this meeting via Zoom use this link: <https://newtonma.gov.zoom.us/j/85424365569> or call 1-646-558-8656 and use the following Meeting ID: 854 2436 5569

Scheduled for Discussion:

Chair's Note: *The Rules Subcommittee will begin reviewing City Council Rules. The primary focus will be outlining a work plan and reviewing the initial list of topics/specific changes to City Council Rules. The focus of this meeting will be on the following items:*

- 180-day requirement for docket items
- Withdrawal of docket items

Respectfully Submitted,
R. Lisle Baker, Chair

The location of this meeting is accessible, and reasonable accommodation will be provided to persons with disabilities who require assistance. If you need a reasonable accommodation, please contact the city of Newton's ADA Coordinator at least two business days in advance of the meeting: ADACoordinator@newtonma.gov or (617) 796-1253. The city's TTY/TDD direct line is: 617-796-1089. For the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), please dial 711

Rules:

- Financial Audit Committee - must membership include chair of Finance Committee? Or can it be someone else?
- Alphabetical Order of votes - Should the Council vary the starting position of roll call votes (even if they continue to proceed in alphabetical order)?
- Robert's Rules of Order - should the Council rules explicitly cite some Robert's Rules?
- Auto Licenses - Must these come to City Council?
- Committee Composition - Do we need to have one councilor from each ward on each committee?
- Review the lack of meeting minutes being produced for City Council (not committee) meetings and how this might be procedurally accomplished. This would include discussing the inclusion of voting records and motions.

From Newton's legal department

The Law Department recommends that the next review of the City Council rules by the Rules subcommittee should include consideration of the following:

- a. potential clarification and revisions regarding the process for accepting docket items,
- b. the second call procedure,
- c. recess provisions,
- d. special permit filing requirements,
- e. special permit time restrictions,
- f. potential new rules addressing the use of official City Council letterhead; and
- g. framing and disposition of motions.

Section 6. Committee reports.

A. It shall be the duty of any committee to whom an item, which was docketed by a City Councilor or the Mayor, may be specifically referred to take the item up and report thereon within 180 days from the time said subject is referred to it or to ask for further time from a majority of the committee. No committee and hence Council action (Approved, Denied, No Action Necessary) may be taken without a discussion with the primary docketer. Prior to any docket item being taken up by a committee, the docket item may be withdrawn from the City Council Docket by written request submitted to the City Clerk by all the docketers of the item.

B. Records of the proceedings of committees shall be kept, and all votes in the several committees shall be taken by yeas and nays, and record thereof shall be kept by the Clerk of the Council and made available on the city's website.

C. No report shall be received from any committee unless the subject matter thereof shall have been considered in committee actually assembled, and unless the report shall state the vote by which the same was adopted. In case the number of members voting is different from those recorded as attending the meeting, or in case the vote is not unanimous for all members present, the report shall state the members voting in the affirmative, the members voting in the negative, and the members electing to abstain from voting.

D. The Clerk shall have the responsibility for the preparation of committee reports, which shall be subject to the approval of the Committee Chair. All committee reports shall be submitted in writing and such reports shall contain an explanation of the item, copies of all relevant material, reports of city officials available to the committee, and the final form of the order, ordinance or resolution that is recommended by the committee. Committee reports shall be assembled in an orderly manner.

E. With regard to all petitions for special permits or site plan approvals, the report of the Land Use Committee should include the reasons supporting the recommendation of the committee and, if applicable, any reasons which support a position contrary to the committee's recommendation. The Land Use Committee shall prepare and include with its report a draft decision for each such land use petition which reflects the recommendation of the committee on such petition.