

# Council Policy

Title	Council and Committee Meeting Procedures			P41
Type	Council Policy			
Document Owner	Director Corporate Services			
Approval Date	25 July 2019	Review Date	25 July 2022	
MaGiQ Document ID	253717	Council Resolution Number	OC079/2019	

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Council and Committee Meeting procedures is to provide a clear, transparent framework for the effective conduct of business of the Council for the governing of Council and Committee meetings.

## SCOPE

The Council and Committee Meeting procedures apply to Councillors and employees of the Central Desert Regional Council (CDRC).

## DEFINITION AND TERMS

**Confidential Matters** means any confidential information as defined by regulation 9 of the NT Local Government Administration Regulations 2008.

**CEO** means Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and includes an acting CEO.

**Committee** means any committee of Council established under section 54 of the Act.

**Meeting** means any meeting of Council or Committee and includes Ordinary Council meeting, Special Council meeting and Committee meeting.

**Councillor** means an elected member of Council.

**Motion** is a request made by a Councillor for an issue to be discussed at a council meeting and for a decision to be made.

**Deputation** may be made by a person or group who wish to appear in person before a Council or Council Committee meeting in order to speak on a particular matter.

## LEGISLATION AND REFERENCE

Local Government Act 2008, Chapter 6 Part 6.1 (Council Meetings)

## POLICY STATEMENT

### 1 Scheduling of Council and Committee Meetings

- 1.1 The dates, times and places of all ordinary Council and Committee meetings will be determined annually in advance at a December Ordinary Meeting of the Council. The resolution will constitute notice of those scheduled meetings in compliance with Section 59 of the Act.
- 1.2 In the year of General Council Elections, Council shall establish meeting dates and times for the remainder of the calendar year at the next Ordinary Council meeting following the General Council Election.

1.3 The scheduled date or time of Council meetings may be changed in accordance with the following:

- Ordinary Council meetings to be scheduled every two months;
- Finance Committee meetings to be scheduled in the month that the Council does not meet.
- Audit and Risk Committee meetings to be scheduled triannually (three times a year).

1.4 The scheduled date or time of any Ordinary Council Meeting of Council will be changed in circumstances where it would be inappropriate to conduct the meeting in accordance with the schedule, such as prior knowledge that a quorum will not exist.

## 2 Location of Council Meeting

2.1 CDRC shall hold meetings in accordance with the schedule as established above. The meeting location will be advertised on the public notice and meeting agenda, the selected venue will be:

- generally accessible to the public and to people with disabilities;
- of an adequate size to host the full Council plus visitors; and
- equipped with appropriate facilities for the convenience of Councillors and visitors.

## 3 Determination of the Chair

3.1 The Chair of the meeting of the Council shall be the President as governed by Section 61 of the Act.

## 4 Ordinary Council Agenda

4.1 The content and general structure of the Ordinary Council meeting agendas will be as follows:

- Welcome
- Attendance
- Apologies
- Acceptance of Agenda
- Declarations of Conflict of Interest
- Code of Conduct Matters
- Confirmation of Previous Minutes
- Actions From Previous Minutes
- Local Authority Minutes
- Local Authority Reports
- President's Report
- Chief Executive and Officers Reports
- Committee Reports
- General Business
- Questions From Members
- Questions From The Public
- Deputations - Presentations and question time will be maintained by the President and should not exceed 30 minutes with 15 minutes of question time.
- Petitions
- Closed Session – Council may deliberate on items of a confidential nature as allowed by the Section 8 of Local Government (Administration) Regulations.

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## 5 Availability of Agenda and reports

- 5.1 Council will make the open Council Meeting agenda and reports available for the information of the media and public.
- 5.2 Copies of open any Ordinary Council Meeting agenda and open Committee meeting agendas will be uploaded to the Central Desert Shire Council website no later than three days prior to the meetings.
- 5.3 Copies of the minutes from any Council meeting and open Committee will be uploaded onto the Central Desert Shire Council website no later than 10 days following the meeting.

## 6 Late Reports

- 6.1 Late reports to Council Meetings will be considered for admission by only the President or CEO on the following grounds:
  - (a) Either a decision on a matter of reasonable importance is required by an outside party, or an important internal matter which was unforeseen and, in both cases, could not reasonably wait until the next meeting.or
  - (b) Where some prompt action is required in the interests of public relations to offset, counter or correct some unfavourable publicity or action against Council.

## 7 Confidential Reports

- 7.1 Council may nominate to restrict the distribution of confidential Council agenda item and reports under Section 8 of Local Government (Administration) Regulations.
- 7.2 'Confidential' Council and Committee agenda items and reports will be restricted to:
  - (a) President;
  - (b) Councillors;
  - (c) CEO;
  - (d) Executive Management Team;
  - (e) Governance Officer;
  - (f) Records Officers; and
  - (g) Interpreters.
- 7.3 Highly sensitive confidential Council and Committee agendas and reports may be restricted further subject to confidentiality requirements. Highly sensitive confidential Council and Committee agendas and reports will be delivered in sealed envelopes.

## 8 Attendance by Members – Audio/Audiovisual

- 8.1 Members may attend ordinary, special or committee meetings by technological means so long as there are no members of the public in attendance when confidential matters are discussed and undue influence is not exercised over members by members of the public during the meeting.

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## 9 Notice of Motion

- 9.1 Members may give written notice to the CEO 10 working days prior to the Council meeting of a motion proposed to be moved at the meeting. The CEO shall include the Notice of Motion on the agenda.

## 10 Apologies and Leave of Absence

- 10.1 Councillors must attend all Council meetings. The Act (section 39 1 (d)) states that councillors who fail to attend two meetings without a valid apology will lose their elected position on Council.
- 10.2 A Councillor who becomes aware of a situation or circumstance that will prevent them from attending a meeting should notify the CEO to register their apology at the meeting. An email, signed letter or the apology form should be used and need to be received by the CEO no later than 24 hours before the meeting.
- 10.3 The Council has an expectation that, for a range of operational reasons, members will, wherever possible, seek leave of absence for multiple meetings in advance.
- 10.4 A member of the Council who is aware of circumstances that will prevent attendance at more than one meeting may:
- (a) Submit a written request for leave of absence with such request detailing the inclusive dates of the absence. The written requests will be included on the agenda or tabled at a meeting of the Council prior to the period of absence commencing.
- or
- (b) Notify the CEO or another Councillor, of their absence on a meeting by meeting basis as for an apology for a single meeting.
- 10.5 Council will appoint an Acting President when it becomes known that both the President and the Deputy President will be unavailable. The Council shall be made aware of the known absence or other inability to perform the functions of the President or Deputy President in sufficient time to enable the Council to consider and appoint a Councillor to be Acting President.

## 11 Visitors

- 11.1 Members of the public, including journalists, shall be allowed to attend ordinary, special or committee meetings unless Council chooses to close them for confidential reasons. A member of the public must not take part, or attempt to take part, in the proceedings of a meeting unless invited to do so by the Chair.

## 12 Deputations

- 12.1 A deputation wishing to attend and be heard at a meeting must apply in writing to the CEO no less than five working days before the next Council meeting. Each deputation is allocated a ten minute time limit in which to address the meeting.
- 12.2 The President and CEO will consider the request and advise the outcome of the request.
- 12.3 The CEO will advise the requestor in writing of the acceptance of their deputation request (including the details of the date, time, location of the meeting and the length of time allocated

for the deputation). Or the CEO will advise the requestor in writing if their deputation request has been refused.

12.4 A deputation may be halted by the Chair if:

- (a) the Chair is satisfied that the purpose of the deputation has been sufficiently explained to the Councillors; or
- (b) the person is severe in speech or manner or uses insulting or offensive language.

## 13 Motions

13.1 Motions to be dealt with in the order they appear in the agenda unless otherwise determined

13.2 Motions to have a mover and a seconder for debate to commence.

13.3 The Chair shall only allow debate on a motion if the motion is seconded.

13.4 If a motion is not seconded it will be recorded in the minutes as having lapsed.

13.5 Motions are not to be withdrawn without consent when a motion has been moved and seconded. It becomes subject to the control of the ordinary meeting and may not be withdrawn without the consent of Councillors.

13.6 When a motion has been moved and seconded, a Councillor may move an amendment to the motion.

13.7 The Chair shall rule that any proposed amendment that attempts to negate a motion, or replace an amended motion with the original motion, is rejected.

13.8 Council may only deal with one amendment to a motion at a time

13.9 Once an amendment has been moved, no further amendment can be considered until that amendment is disposed of, either because it lapses, or is seconded and put to the vote.

13.10 The amendment, if voted on and carried, becomes a motion

13.11 Dealing with further amendments to motions

13.12 If an amendment to a motion is lost, then further amendments may be considered until a motion is carried (be it the original motion or some variation of it) or all motions are exhausted.

13.13 Limitation as to the number and duration of speeches

13.14 The mover of an original motion, in his or her opening speech, must not speak for more than ten (10) minutes.

13.15 Except with the consent of the Chair, a Councillor, other than the mover of the original motion, must not speak for more than five minutes at any one time. The Chair is responsible to keep the Councillors on time.

13.16 A Councillor, who is the mover of an original motion, has a right of general reply (and may speak for up to five (5) minutes once all debate is completed) to all observations which have been made in reference to the motion and every amendment involved in respect of it.



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13.17 A Councillor, other than the mover or an original motion, has the right to speak once to the motion and any amendment proposed to it. The Shire President has the right to close the debate at anytime he or she deems that there has been ample debate.

13.18 Chair to take Part in Debate

13.19 The Chair may move or second motions as well as to take part in a discussion upon any motion or business before the Meeting and when doing so shall adhere to the general procedures for motions.

## 14 Chair to maintain order, to decide who can speak first and to have priority when speaking

14.1 If the Chair indicates an intention to speak, a Councillor speaking or proposing to speak to the debate must be silent until the President has been heard.

14.2 Councillors must address other Councillors and Council officers properly at meetings, and may request the Chair to bring order to the meeting

14.3 The call for order must be dealt with immediately, without further discussion, in accordance with CDRC's Code of Conduct.

## 15 How the Chair shall deal with calls for order from Councillors

15.1 Where a Councillor calls for order, the Chair must rule on the call by determining whether the comments made by a Councillor are out of order.

15.2 Where the Chair rules that a Councillor is out of order on more than three occasions at a meeting he or she may request the Councillor to leave the meeting.

15.3 If the Chair decides that any motion, amendment or other matter (including a matter he or she considers is objectionable) is out of order, it must be rejected and not be considered further.

## 16 Rescinding or altering resolutions

16.1 A resolution passed by Council may only be altered or negated within three months of its adoption, by a motion signed by 3 Councillors. The rescission motion must be submitted to the CEO in accordance with the time table outlined in 9 Notice of Motion requirements.

16.2 Motions that rescind or negate a previous motion should be mindful of the following:

- (a) If the action that the original motion required has already been taken, a rescission motion is unnecessary – basically the action is done, no motion will fix it.
- (b) If the action has been partially taken, it is suggested that a motion be proposed that no further action be taken.
- (c) If no action has been taken, then any Councillor can move the rescission motion. The correct wording is: "That the motion to do XYZ, be rescinded", or, "That the motion carried at the March 24th meeting requiring XYZ, be rescinded." or, alternatively, "That motion number 165/2010, moved and carried on March 24th, be rescinded."

## 17 Motions to improve the handling of matters at a meeting

17.1 A Councillor may move a motion to have a matter put on the vote only after the Chair has:

- (a) first queried whether Councillors wish to speak for, or against, the particular motion to do with the matter; and
- (b) at least two Councillors have had the opportunity to do so.

- 17.2 If the motion to put a matter to the vote is lost, debate on the matter must be allowed to continue for at least ten minutes before the Chair can allow a similar motion for the matter to be put to the vote.
- 17.3 If the motion to put a matter to the vote is carried, the Chair must immediately put the motion to do with the matter to the vote.
- 17.4 A Councillor may move a motion to have debate on a matter put off to the next Council meeting and have the meeting move to the next item of business:
- (a) if the motion is carried, the CEO must ensure the matter is included in the agenda for the next meeting; or
  - (b) if the motion is lost, the Chair must continue to allow debate on the matter until it is put to the vote
- 17.5 A Councillor may move a motion to have a meeting put off for a short period:
- (a) if the motion is carried, the meeting must continue with the matter before the meeting at the point where it was delayed; and
  - (b) if the motion is lost, the Chair must not accept a similar motion within 30 minutes after the motion was lost.

## 18 Closed Sessions

- 18.1 Members of the public may be asked to leave the meeting when Council is dealing with matters defined as “confidential” under Section 8 of Local Government (Administration) Regulations.
- 18.2 The Council, or a Committee of the Council of which all the members are Councillors, may close to the public part or all of the Meeting by resolution to close.
- 18.3 The grounds on which part of a meeting is closed must be stated in the decision to close that part of the meeting and must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. The grounds must specify the following:
- (a) the matter that is to be discussed during the closed part of the meeting; and
  - (b) the reason why the part of the meeting is being closed.

## 19 Public access to decisions made in closed sessions

- 19.1 Resolutions or recommendations made at a closed part of a Council meeting must be made public by the Chair as soon as practical after the closed part of the meeting has ended.
- 19.2 While discussions in the closed part of the meeting remain confidential, the separate nature of a resolution or recommendation allows it to be made public immediately after the closed part of the meeting has ended, whilst ensuring that confidential information is not revealed.
- 19.3 Any person is entitled to inspect minutes containing resolutions or recommendations from the closed parts of the meeting.

## 20 Voting

- 20.1 At all meetings every Member present shall vote when a motion is put except where the Act otherwise provides. If any Member who is required to vote at the meeting fails to do so the Chair shall call upon the Member to vote.
- 20.2 At any Meeting where there is an equal division of votes upon any motion the Chair may cast a second vote.

## 21 Method of Taking the Vote

- 21.1 The Chair shall, in taking the vote on any motion or amendment, put the question first in the affirmative and then in the negative. The Chair may do so as often as is necessary to determine the majority. Voting shall be by a show of hands except where a Member is prevented by physical disability.

## 22 Public Question Time

- 22.1 A member of the public who wishes to raise a question during public question time can, through the Chair, do so in one of three ways;
- (a) Submit the question in writing, including their name and address, to the Shire office prior to the day of the Meeting;
  - (b) Submit the question in writing, including their name and address, to the Shire office on the day of but prior to the start of the Meeting;
- or
- (c) If time permits and if the Chair allows, verbally, after having stated their name and address at a Meeting.
- 22.2 Questions shall be put as succinctly as possible and no discussion shall be allowed. Questions submitted in accordance with (a) and (b) shall be read aloud to the Meeting by the Chair or the Minuting Officer.
- 22.3 Public question time shall be conducted for 15 minutes if there are sufficient questions and may be extended for up to another 15 minutes by the Chair. At the discretion of the Chair questions are to be dealt with generally in accordance with the following:
- (a) Questions of which a written notice has been submitted prior to the day of the Meeting;
  - (b) Questions of which a written notice has been given on the day of the Meeting but prior to the start of the Meeting;
- or
- (c) Questions without notice from the gallery.
- 22.4 A question may be taken on notice for later response. When the Chair determines that a question will be taken on notice the CEO is to ensure that a response is given to the member of the public in writing and a summary of the response is included in the agenda of the next Meeting.
- 22.5 Summaries of public questions and responses are to be included in the minutes.



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- 23 The Chair is to maintain order when the public is participating in ordinary, special or committee meetings
- 23.1 The Chair may invite questions, submissions or comments from members of the public at a meeting of the Council but is not obliged to do so.
- 23.2 If the Chair considers a question, comment or statement of a member of the public at a meeting of the Council is offensive, irrelevant, and unduly long or deals with a confidential matter, the Chair may rule the matter out of order and proceed to deal with it or the next item of business.
- 23.3 A question on notice from a member of the public must be included in the agenda for the next Council meeting.
- 23.4 On receiving a comment or submission from a member of the public, the Council must:
- (a) refer it to a committee;
  - (b) request it be included in the agenda for the next Council meeting;
  - (c) deal with it under general business at the meeting of the Council;
- or
- (d) note it and take no further action.

## 24 Procedures for Council committees

- 24.1 Committees of the Council shall follow the same procedures as provided for Council meetings unless the committee resolves otherwise.
- 24.2 Minutes of committee meetings shall be included in the agenda of the following Council meeting as a recommendation for the Council to adopt in whole, or part, or be simply noted with no further action required.

## 25 Changing these procedures

- 25.1 Council may change these procedures by resolution at a meeting.

### REVIEW HISTORY

Date	Details
6 December 2001	Originally adopted
June 2013	Updated 235/2001
July 2019	Reviewed and standardised Policy format OC0798/2019