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TOWN OF SOUTHBRIDGE
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SOUTHBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

RULES AND REGULATIONS

ADOPTED BY TOWN COUNCIL: APRIL 16, 1974

WITH ADDITIONS AND AMENDMENTS

PERIOD ENDING JANUARY 27, 1992

I, Helen I. Lenti, Town Clerk of Southbridge, Massachusetts do hereby certify that attached hereto is a true copy of the Town Council Rules and Regulations containing additions and amendments ending August 6, 1990.

Attest: _____

Helen I. Lenti
Helen I. Lenti, Town Clerk
Southbridge, Massachusetts
January 30, 1992

ORGANIZATION

Rule 1.

The Town Council shall meet at 7:00 P.M. on the first Monday in July following the regular town elections in June, and the members shall severally make oath before the Town Clerk to perform faithfully the duties of their respective offices, except that any member elect not present shall so make oath at the earliest possible time thereafter.

Rule 2.

After a majority of the Councillors elect have been sworn in the Town Council shall be called together and organize as specified in Chapter 3, Section 1 of the Southbridge Home Rule Charter.

Rule 3.

The Town Council shall appoint a Clerk of the Town Council, whose duties are to record Council meetings.

Rule 4.

The Town Council shall have five (5) standing subcommittees. They are (1) General Government, (2) Department of Public Works, (3) Protection of Persons and Property, (4) Education and Human Services and (5) Planning and Development. Establishment of other subcommittees will be authorized by a majority of Councillors present at an official meeting. All subcommittees shall be appointed and announced by the Chairman of the Town Council. The term to expire at the organizational meeting of the next Town Council. The Subcommittee shall make a written report of activity under their jurisdiction. The report is to be turned in to the Chairman before the next organizational meeting and will be used in the Annual Town Report.

Each Town Councillor shall be assigned to at least two subcommittees except the Chairman, who shall not be assigned to any, and the Vice-Chairman who will be automatically assigned only to the General Government Subcommittee. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be ex-officio members of all subcommittees.

A secretary shall be chosen for each subcommittee. He/she shall take minutes of each meeting and deliver them to the Town Manager's Office by Thursday morning prior to the next Council meeting so that they can be included in the packet, except when the subcommittee meeting takes place too late in the week for this to happen. In the latter case, copies will be given to all Councillors at the Monday night meeting.

Rule 4. (continued)

The Subcommittee Chairman shall see that meetings are posted at least 48 hours in advance, and should make sure that all subcommittee members, as well as the appropriate Finance Committee members and the Town Manager if needed are notified of the meeting.

Unless excused by the Chairman of the Council or subcommittee due to illness, vacation, unusual work problems or other just cause, a Councillor's absence shall count as unexcused and unauthorized.

The Town Council Chairman shall have the power to issue warnings, either publicly or privately, to any Councillor for chronic unexcused absences from meetings.

The Town Council may, by a 2/3 vote, censure a Councillor if he/she has more than 20% unexcused absences during any three-month period.

The revisions will be effective as of the first meeting of the Council after the March, 1986 elections.

MEETINGS:

Rule 5.

Regular meetings of the Town Council shall be held on Monday evenings at 7:00 P.M. Summer schedules and special situations are to be decided by a majority vote of the entire Council (7). Schedules at all times must be in adherence to Chapter 2, Section 6 of the Southbridge Home Rule Charter.

Rule 6.

Unless the Town Council shall vote to go into executive session as specified in the Southbridge Home Rule Charter, all meetings of the Town Council and of the committees thereof shall be open to the public.

Rule 7.

All regular and special meetings of the Town Council shall be called by written notice delivered to the residence or place of business of each member at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the set time; such written notice shall include an agenda.

Rule 8.

As provided in Chapter 2, Section 6 of the Southbridge Home Rule Charter, all inhabitants and employees of the town shall have a reasonable opportunity to be heard at any such meeting in regard to any matter considered thereat. Each speaker shall have five (5) minutes to present the subject of his or her concern. The time limit may only be extended by a majority vote of the councillors present. There shall be a Citizens' Forum which will allow citizens the opportunity to present information or address issues to the Town Council that are not regular agenda items of the meeting.

Rule 8a.

Deleted.

Rule 9.

Votes on motions or procedures may be taken by a show of hands except as specified in the charter. The Chairman will announce those votes in the minority. This rule is waived if a member of the Town Council requests a roll call vote. Roll call votes will become a permanent part of the journal.

DUTIES OF THE CHAIRMAN DURING MEETINGS:

Rule 10.

The Chairman of the Town Council shall take the chair at the announced time of the meeting and call the members to order and shall cause the roll to be called and the names of the absentees recorded. If a quorum be present he shall then proceed to business.

Rule 11.

The Chairman of the Town Council shall preserve order and decorum, may speak to points of order in preference to other members and shall decide all such questions.

Rule 12.

The Chairman of the Town Council may at any time during debate or otherwise declare a recess for not more than ten (10) minutes.

Rule 13.

Every member shall respectfully address the chair, confining himself to the question under debate and avoiding personalities. No member shall speak out of his place without leave of the Chairman, nor shall any member be interrupted by another while speaking except by a call to order.

Rule 14.

Any member who may be mentioned in debate by another shall be addressed by his or her name and title (Councillor).

Rule 15.

When two or more members shall address the chair at the same time, the Chairman shall name the member who is entitled to the floor.

Rule 16.

The seats of the Town Council shall be numbered and determined by lot and no member shall change his seat except by permission of the Chairman.

Rule 17.

The order of voting shall be by roll call in alphabetical order and the first to vote shall be determined by rotation in alphabetical order at the beginning of each regular or special meeting.

Rule 18.

All rules of procedure not considered herein shall be governed by "Roberts Rules of Parliamentary Procedure".

Rule 19.

The initiating department will submit a request for transfer of funds to the Town Manager. It will be placed on the agenda for appropriate action by the Town Council.

Rule 19a.

Councillors Forum will be an agenda item on each regularly scheduled Town Council meeting. The purpose of Councillors' Forum is to conduct Council business. It affords councillors the opportunity to present issues or request information in a formal meeting. Councillors should present any issue or complaint from a citizen to the Manager for action as soon as it occurs.

Rule 19a. (continued)

Such issues or complaints not reported shall be considered not in order at formal meetings. Issues will be respectfully addressed to the Chair and should be phrased in an orderly form or request for information that can be either answered immediately or referred by the Chair for appropriate action.

STANDING RULES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL REGARDING FINANCE COMMITTEE

BUDGET PROCEDURES:

Rule 20.

The following procedures will be followed annually prior to adoption of the budget:

1. Joint Council, Town Manager meeting to cover broad aspects of budget.
2. Subcommittees of Council will work together on subcommittee areas of responsibility in budget.
3. Deleted.
4. Joint subcommittees meeting with Town Manager after budget review is complete, or meeting of entire Council and Town Manager.
5. Deleted.

SPECIAL PROJECTS:

Rule 21.

The Finance Committee shall advise the Town Council on matters having a financial impact on the Town. The Finance Committee will receive assignments from the Council Chairman as follows:

1. Requests from subcommittees will be assigned to the Finance Committee.
2. Requests from all other sources will, at the Chairman's discretion, be sent to subcommittee for recommendation or assigned to the Finance Committee with notification to the proper subcommittee of the Council.

When the project is completed, a written report will be submitted to the Town Council and the requester with the results of the project and any recommendations.

Rule 22.

Membership: The Chairman of the Town Council shall appoint annually a member of the Council to serve on the Finance Committee.

January 30, 1992