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June 9, 2008

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE
ON RULES

The Committee on Rules met on June 9, 2008, with Chairman William White, presiding and Committee Member Alderman Dennis Sullivan also present and voting. Also present were Aldermen John Connolly, Rebekah Gewirtz and Walter Pero as well as City Clerk John Long.

The committee debated changes to rules 3, 21 and 24 of the Rules of the Board of Aldermen.

Rule #3:

There was debate on adding the phrase “*wherever possible*”, and Alderman Gewirtz stated that this wording creates a loophole in the rule. Alderman Gewirtz further stated that the Administration should have ample time to know what it wants included on the agenda.

The approved version of Rule #3 is as follows:

The agenda for a meeting shall be printed and made available to all members of the board by 3 PM on the day of the meeting. No matter not submitted by a member shall be printed on the agenda of a meeting unless it is in the hands of the city clerk by the close of the previous business day. No matter submitted by a member shall be printed on the agenda of a meeting unless it is submitted to the Clerk of Committees by midnight of the previous day under the provisions of Rule 52. Any item submitted on the day of the meeting by the Mayor, by City Officers, or as New Business, shall be printed on a supplemental agenda made available to all members of the board and the public prior to the start of the meeting. All additional items not printed on an agenda that the city clerk presents, if challenged, shall be accepted only by a two-thirds majority vote of the board.

Rule #21:

The City Clerk will adjust the language to include referencing Robert’s Rules of Order.

The approved version of Rule 21 is as follows:

The member first named on each committee shall be its chair; and in the case of his/her resignation, inability to serve or absence, the other members in the order in which they are named shall call meetings of the committee and act as chair, subject to the provisions of Rule 20. The most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall be the authority on all questions of debate in committee wherever they do not conflict with the several rules of the board that apply to committees.

Rule #24:

There was some discussion as to the amount of time allowed for committee chairs to submit committee meeting agendas to the Clerk of Committees, with Chairman White suggesting that agendas be prepared within 72 hours of the meeting. The Clerk of Committees would then be responsible for distributing committee meeting agendas to committee members 48 hours prior to such meetings. Both Chairman White and Alderman Sullivan stated that the new rule could be too restrictive but that each committee chair should strive to comply with it. Alderman Gewirtz said that the public is not served when they don't have an agenda before a meeting and, at times, is only made aware of action on an item when it is reported out of committee. Chairman White noted that any alderman may object, under Rule #24, and ask for an item to be returned to committee for further discussion.

Chairman White suggested that when a committee meeting is noticed, the committee chair would need to provide a meeting agenda to the Clerk of Committees 48 hours prior to the meeting. In the event that an agenda is not provided and an item is acted on, the committee report, if challenged, shall be accepted only by a majority vote of the Board.

The approved version of Rule 24 is as follows:

The chair of each committee shall endeavor to post the committee's agenda in the call of the meeting. In the event that an agenda is not distributed prior to the meeting, the committee report, if challenged, shall be accepted only by a majority vote of the board. Each s~~t~~anding ~~and~~er special committees shall cause records of ~~its~~~~their~~ proceedings to be kept by the clerk of committees. No committee shall act by separate consultation and no report shall be received by the board unless the subject thereof shall have been considered in committee actually assembled. All reports of committee shall be signed by the chair, but in no case shall this preclude a member not in agreement from submitting a minority report, which shall be signed by that member as part of the committee report.

The committee discussed matters before it and took action on the following item:

185031: Order - By Ald. Gewirtz, That Rule #3 of the Rules of this Board be changed as follows: That any item submitted after midnight of the previous day before a regularly scheduled Board meeting, either by Aldermen or the Administration, be printed as part of an addendum agenda available to the public the evening of the meeting, and that any item submitted an hour or less prior to the meeting, or during the meeting, require a 2/3 vote of the Board to admit the item before it is accepted and admitted to the agenda.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be approved, as amended (in report)

VOTE: Unanimous, 2 - 0 in favor

Alderman William A. White, Jr., Chairman
Committee on Rules

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Committee on Rules, June 9,
2008

In Board of Aldermen

Clerk