

Court of Common Council

CITY OF HARTFORD
550 MAIN STREET
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06103



Maly D. Rosado, Council President
Thomas J. Clarke II, Majority Leader
Wildaliz Bermúdez, Councilwoman
John Q. Gale, Councilman

Nick Lebrón, Councilman
Josh Michtom, Councilman
Marilyn E. Rossetti, Councilwoman
James Sánchez, Councilman
Shirley Surgeon, Councilwoman

Noel F. McGregor Jr., Town and City Clerk

March 23, 2020

Noel F. McGregor Jr.
Town and City Clerk
550 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Mr. McGregor:

Pursuant to Chapter IV, Section 5(c) of the Hartford City Charter, I hereby call an Emergency Meeting of the Court of Common Council to be held on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at 3:00pm in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 550 Main Street, Hartford, CT for considering the following items of business contained on the attached agenda.

Respectfully submitted,

Maly D Rosado, Council President

2020 MAR 24 AM 12:45

TOWN & CITY CLERK

AGENDA
EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL
MARCH 24, 2020

COMMUNICATIONS:

COUNCIL PRESIDENT ROSADO, with accompanying resolution Pursuant to Chapter IV, Section 5(c) of the Hartford City Charter, hereby calls an Emergency Meeting of the Court of Common Council to be held on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at 3:00pm in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 550 Main Street, Hartford, CT for considering the change in Council Rules.

Attest:

Eric T. Lusa
Acting City Clerk

INTRODUCED BY:
Council President Maly D. Rosado

March 24, 2020

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2020, Governor Ned Lamont declared a public health emergency and a civil preparedness emergency in response to the Pandemic spread of the new Coronavirus, known as COVID 19; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared a national state of emergency in response to the spread of the Coronavirus;

WHEREAS, on March 14, 2020, Governor Lamont issued Executive Order No. 7B, which states, in part, as follows:

"Suspension of In-Person Open Meeting Requirements. Sections 1-206, 1-225, and 1-226 of the Connecticut General Statutes, and any open meeting provision of any municipal charter, ordinance, or regulation that conflicts with this order, are suspended to the extent necessary to permit any public agency to meet and take such actions authorized by the law without permitting or requiring in-person, public access to such meetings, and to hold such meetings or proceedings remotely by conference call, videoconference or other technology, provided that: 1) the public has the ability to view or listen to each meeting or proceeding in real time, by telephone, video, or other technology; 2) any such meeting or proceeding is recorded or transcribed, and such recording or transcript shall be posted on the agency's website within seven (7) days of the meeting or proceeding, and made available within a reasonable time in the agency's office; 3) the required notice and agenda for each meeting or proceeding is posted on the agency's website and shall include information about how the meeting will be conducted and how the public can access it; 4) any materials relevant to matters on the agenda, including but not limited to materials related to specific applications, if applicable, shall be submitted to the agency a minimum of twenty four (24) hours prior and posted to the agency's website for public inspection prior to, during, and after the meeting, and any exhibits to be submitted by members of the public shall, to the extent feasible, also be submitted to the agency a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting and posted to the agency's website for public inspection prior to, during, and after the meeting; and 5) all speakers taking part in any such meeting or proceeding shall clearly state their name and title, if applicable, before speaking on each occasion that they speak."

WHEREAS, on March 17, 2020, City of Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin declared a state of emergency in the City of Hartford in response to the spread of the Coronavirus; and

WHEREAS, on March 19, 2020, pursuant to the powers granted by state statutes, and the Charter and Ordinances of the City of Hartford to the Chief Elected Official of the City of Hartford, its Mayor, Luke Bronin, in response to the growing concern for community spread of the Coronavirus and in response to the civil preparedness and public health emergency facing the City of Hartford, declared that effective at 12:01 AM on March 20, 2020, through April 30,

2020 unless earlier modified, extended or terminated, gatherings of more than 10 people ... [including] community events are prohibited in the City of Hartford; and

WHEREAS, Chapter IV of the Charter of the City of Hartford provides, in part, as follows:

Sec. 5. - Meetings.

(a)

Regular meetings. The council shall have regular meetings at a time and place determined by resolution, except that the council shall have at least one (1) regular meeting a month.

(b)

Special meetings. Special meetings may be held at any time the council may direct and also may be called on forty-eight (48) hours' notice by the mayor, the council president, or any three (3) members of the council. The notice of any special meeting shall be in such form and shall be delivered in such manner as the council shall prescribe by ordinance. It shall contain a statement of the specific item or items of business to be transacted and no other business shall be transacted at such special meeting.

(c)

Emergency meetings. In the event a public emergency arises or threatens to arise involving or threatening the lives or property of the inhabitants of the city or the property of the city, the mayor or council president may call an emergency meeting of the council upon three (3) hours' notice and may summon council members to attend such meeting in such manner as the council may prescribe by ordinance. Notwithstanding any provision of law or this Charter to the contrary, at such meeting, the council may transact any item or items of business relevant to such emergency.

(d)

Open meetings and public comment. All meetings shall be open to the public and the council shall make provision, in its rules, for a public comment period during, at least, one (1) meeting per month; and

WHEREAS, the Court of Common Council recognizes the extraordinary nature of the current public health emergency and the need for social distancing among other efforts to combat the spread of COVID 19, and supports the effort of the Governor, the Mayor and our public health officials in their effort and need to take extraordinary measures; and

WHEREAS, the Court of Common Council also recognizes that its legislative responsibilities as defined in the Charter of the City of Hartford requires public input, participation and discourse; and

WHEREAS, the Court of Common Council is firm in its belief that it can conduct its business in a manner that allows for necessary and desired public input, participation and discourse while taking into consideration the need to adhere to best practices to protect the public health, including the need for social distancing as a means to slow the spread of COVID19; and

WHEREAS, the current Council Rules (2020-2024), as adopted and amended are in conflict with elements of Emergency Orders issued by Governor Ned Lamont and Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order No. 7B, issued by Governor Lamont on March 14, 2020, establishes a way for the Court of Common Council to conduct its legislative responsibilities in an open manner, but without putting the public health and safety of our residents at risk; NOW THEREFORE

BE IT RESOLVED:

That at a duly called emergency meeting of the Court of Common Council under Chapter IV, Sec. 5 (c) of the Charter of the City of Hartford, the following changes are made to the current Council Rules (2020-2024) during the duration of the Emergency declarations of Governor Ned Lamont and Mayor Luke Bronin, unless said declarations are terminated or extended by Executive Order:

- The provision of Council Rule I requiring two meetings a month, except for July and August is suspended.
- The required meeting each month (pursuant to the Charter) will be conducted pursuant to Executive Order of Governor Lamont No.7B, including a Council Member wishing to speak under Council Rule IV shall after gaining the Presiding Officers attention, clearly state their name and title.
- Whether the Council, itself, physically meets or not shall be at the discretion of the City Council President; provided that the requirement in Rule II that in order to constitute a quorum 5 members must be physically present is suspended.
- The provision of Rule II that allows a Council Member to be present electronically, but not vote on a matter before the Council is hereby suspended.

- The provisions of Rule IX, establishing Standing Committees of the Council are hereby suspended. During the duration of this Emergency, resolutions, ordinances or other matters before the City Council will not be referred to committees, but will be the work of the entire Council or the Committee of the Whole.
- The provision of Rule X with respect to discharging a matter from Committee is hereby suspended.
- The requirements of XI with respect to the Committee of the Whole will be maintained, except that all public hearings and public participation will be held consistent with Governor Lamont's Executive Order No. 7B. It will be at the discretion of the Council President whether the Council will physically meet as a Committee of the Whole, but any Member may choose to participate electronically.
- When a nomination has been made by the Mayor for the position of department head, Chief Operating Officer or Corporation Council the requirement that the Council President shall convene a meeting of the Council of the Whole within 15 days of the nomination and that the nominee be invited to appear and be heard may be satisfied under the provisions in Executive Order No. 7B.
- The provision of Rule XI allowing a Mayoral nomination to any Board or Commission to be referred to a Standing Committee is hereby suspended, and such nomination shall be considered by the Committee of the Whole, which may meet to consider the nomination pursuant to the provision of Executive Order No. 7B.
- The provision of Rule XV with respect to the process for amending the current Council Rules is hereby suspended.
- All other provisions of the Council Rules, as adopted by the Court of Common Council shall remain in effect.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That at the duly called emergency meeting of the Court of Common Council on this day, the 24th of March, 2020, this Resolution was adopted and shall be effective upon passage.