



## Procedural Guidelines for Meetings of the Youth Council – Town of Woodstock

**Objective:** To provide a structured and engaging meeting environment for a Youth Council that ensures active participation, fosters collaboration, and drives community projects or advocacy relevant to youth in the municipality.

---

### 1. Pre-Meeting Preparation and Facilitation

- **Set a Clear Agenda:**
  - The Youth Council Executive should outline the purpose of the meeting and outline the topics to be discussed.
  - The Secretary should share the Agenda with members at least 48 hours before the meeting to allow time for preparation. The Agenda should have a start time and estimated end time to respect everyone's time and other commitments.
  - The Agenda should be adopted by the members at the beginning of each regular meeting. Items can only be added or removed from the Agenda by agreement of the membership at the beginning of each meeting.

### 2. Roles & Responsibilities

- **Chairperson (Leader):** The Chairperson will lead the meeting and ensure that each agenda item is covered. The Chairperson is responsible to ensure all members are adhering to the procedural guidelines and code of conduct. The Chairperson should encourage active participation by all members in discussion and debates. The Vice-Chairperson will assume the role of the Chairperson in their absence.
  - **Appointed Moderator:** The Moderator, appointed by the Municipal Council, is responsible for facilitating the meeting and ensuring smooth flow. They will act as the timekeeper and help keep the meeting on schedule. The Moderator can allocate specific time limits for each Agenda item and will signal when time is nearing an end for each topic. The Moderator is there to assist the Chairperson when called upon for procedural matters, or for other assistance as deemed necessary by the Chairperson.
  - **Note Taker:** The Secretary is responsible for taking minutes and capturing key decisions.
-

### 3. Opening the Meeting

- **Welcome and Introductions:**
    - The Chairperson calls the meeting to order and can offer a brief introduction to set the tone.
  - **Review of Agenda and Meeting Goals:**
    - Provide a quick overview of the meeting Agenda.
    - Highlight the specific goals for the session (e.g., decision-making, brainstorming, project updates).
    - Any member can request an item be added to the Agenda before it is accepted by the membership. Any additional items must be agreed upon by the majority of the members.
    - The Youth Council Executive has the authority to remove any item from the Agenda with agreement from the majority of the members.
- 

### 4. Main Discussion/Agenda Items

- **Meeting Minutes:** The members must vote to approve the meeting minutes from the previous regular meeting. The Secretary is responsible for sending via email approve minutes to the Town representative.
- **Topic Presentation:** The Chairperson, or another member of the Council, should introduce each Agenda item briefly, explaining the background and what needs to be accomplished. Encourage members to ask clarifying questions before discussion begins.
- **Facilitate Discussion:**
  - The Chairperson will ensure each member has an opportunity to speak and they will maintain focus by guiding discussions back to the Agenda if they stray.
  - The Chairperson is responsible for promoting respectful debate, encouraging differing opinions, and ensuring no one dominates the conversation.
- **Decision-Making Process:**
  - For decisions, consider using voting, consensus, or a show of hands. Ensure every member's voice is heard.
  - Clarify the decision-making method in advance so everyone knows how decisions will be made.
  - A decision is considered accepted by a majority vote of the members present. Quorum (half the membership plus one) is required to be in attendance in order to make a formal decision.

---

## 5. Wrapping Up the Meeting

- **Recap Key Points:** Summarize the key decisions and actions from the meeting and clarify any responsibilities or follow-up actions assigned to individual members.
- **Future Meetings:** Confirm the date and time for the next meeting and ask if anyone has topics they want to add to the next Agenda. Members should be reminded that they can submit topics to the Youth Council Leadership up until 48 hours prior to the next meeting for inclusion in the next Agenda.
- **Adjournment:** The Chairperson should close the meeting and remind everyone of any immediate tasks or next steps.

---

## 6. Post-Meeting Follow-Up

- **Distribute Meeting Minutes:**
  - The Secretary will send out brief meeting notes with any action items, responsibilities, and deadlines to all members within 48 hours of a regular meeting.
  - The Secretary will distribute official meeting minutes within 48 hours of the next regular meeting of Council.
- **Track Progress:** The Youth Council Leadership will monitor the progress of assigned tasks and follow up with members as needed. Keep communication open via email, messaging apps, or follow-up meetings.
- **Feedback Opportunity:** The Secretary will encourage members to provide feedback on meetings to share their thoughts on what is working or what could be improved. All members should provide feedback in a constructive and positive manner.

---

## Additional Tips for Success:

- **Engagement:** This should be a fun and dynamic atmosphere where all members feel comfortable sharing their ideas. Do what works best for you! Feel free to use multimedia (videos, presentations) to keep members engaged and understand that all members are at varying levels of experience and have a variety of learning styles.
- **Respect and Inclusivity:** Ensure all members feel valued, regardless of their background or experience. Ensure any issues of bullying, discrimination, or exclusion are addressed quickly and professionally.
- **Adaptability:** Be flexible with the structure of the meeting if the group feels the need for a more interactive approach or if the discussion requires more time during the meeting or after a meeting to decide. It is more important to ensure everyone feels they have enough

information to make an informed decision rather than rush a decision simply because it is part of an Agenda.

By following these procedural guidelines, you can ensure that Youth Council meetings remain effective, inclusive, and productive, while fostering a positive and collaborative environment for youth engagement in local governance.