

# **MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

## **City Mission Statement**

The City has adopted a Mission Statement that guides the actions of the organization, provides a sense of direction and purpose, and guides decision making through, Quality Service, Community Leadership, and Innovation in Local Government.

“Our mission is to enrich the quality of life in Blue Ridge for all our citizens. We pledge to work in partnership with our residents, all stake holders and the Fannin County government to protect, preserve and secure the quaintness of our small-town community and to enhance the natural beauty of our environment.”

## **City Organizational Values**

The City has adopted a set of core values that guide the organization in its behavior, beliefs, and performance through • Integrity • Productivity • Stewardship • Empathy • Leadership • Collaboration • Service • Professionalism • Innovation • Accountability and Honesty. (City Council Values, Vision & Mission Statement Attached Hereto As Appendix 1).

## **Interpersonal Standards, Protocols, and Ground Rules**

The Council values and promotes a positive and productive working relationship amongst itself and with neighboring colleagues, staff, and the public. Therefore, the Council has adopted a set of interpersonal standards, operating protocols, and ground rules to foster and promote collaborative, respectful, and healthy working relationships as follows: • Always conduct oneself in a professional, courteous, and respectful manner. • Never compromise your personal integrity or the honor and good faith of the city. • Do not criticize in public. Issues should be addressed in private when possible • Listen attentively, avoid interrupting. Be respectful, even with those with whom you disagree. • Do not act as a committee of one. Governing a city requires a team effort. • Remember, we represent all of the people, not a select few interests. • Arrive on time and be prepared for meetings. Read, and study your materials beforehand. • Avoid engaging in debates with the public or individual citizens. • Avoid texting, e-mailing, making or receiving calls during meetings. • Strive for consensus as an operating goal. • Always be respectful of one another, the public and city staff. • Be open, honest, and diplomatic when communicating. • Accept constructive input and feedback. • Return calls and respond to inquiries in a timely manner. • Do not spring surprises on colleagues and staff, especially at formal

meetings. Notify others of issues and concerns ahead of time. • Respect and support decisions made by the majority of the Council. • Make decisions based on the laws and be consistent. • Do not be misled by the strong demands of special interest groups; find the long-term public interest of the community as a whole. • Do not make promises you cannot deliver; many decisions and actions require the approval of the governing body or must be consistent with adopted policy. • Never allow conflicts of interest to arise between your public duties and your private interests. • Be respectful of differences, accept disagreements, vote, and move on. • Do not personally criticize other Council members who vote against or disagree with you. • Participate in official meetings with the dignity and decorum fitting of those who hold a position of public trust. • Vote yes or no on motions. Do not abstain, except when you have a conflict of interest. • Do not bypass the system. Stick to policy and avoid personal involvement in the day to-day operations of the City. • Be friendly and deal effectively with the news media. Make sure what you say is accurate. Do not give answers when you are not sure. • Respect the letter and the intent of the open meetings law.

## **BLUE RIDGE CITY COUNCIL MEETING RULES OF PROCEDURE**

The City Council Meeting Rules of Procedure shall apply to all regular meetings, special called meetings, townhall meetings or other meeting which meet the definition of an “open meeting” under Georgia’s Open Meetings Act. The purpose of the Meeting Rules of Procedure is to ensure that the elected governing body of the City of Blue Ridge can effectively and efficiently conduct official city business in a productive, professional, and timely manner.

### **The Agenda**

(A) All agenda items must be submitted to the Mayor prior to being added to the agenda. All agenda items must be submitted at least seven (7) calendar days prior to the meeting. However, subject to these Rules, the Mayor may add items to the agenda within the seven (7) days, if deemed necessary.

(B) The Mayor may add a consent agenda. (A consent agenda allows approval of multiple items together without discussion or individual motion.)

(C) The Mayor shall provide the City Council all materials and information for the consent agenda and other agenda items at least five (5) days prior to the meeting. The meeting agenda and information on agenda items shall be available to the public five (5) days prior to the meeting date via the city website ([www.cityofblueridgega.gov](http://www.cityofblueridgega.gov)). The agenda will also be posted at City Hall five (5) days prior to the meeting date.

(D) All agenda items shall be introduced by the Mayor. For agenda items requiring a vote, once the agenda item has been introduced, the Mayor shall request a Motion by a Council Member, if another Council Member does not make an immediate second, the Mayor shall ask for a second and when received, discussion can start. After any applicable discussion, the Mayor shall call for a vote on the motion.

(E) Each agenda item shall be limited to five (5) minutes for discussion.

(F) Agenda items shall be listed in the appropriate category and listed in the following order:

- (1) Call Meeting to Order
- (2) Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance

- (3) Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting
- (4) Approval of Agenda or Motion to Amend Agenda (If Applicable)
- (5) Called Public Hearings (Rezoning or appeals authorized by Ordinance)
- (6) Consent Agenda (Multiply Items for Approval Set by the Mayor)
- (7) Action Agenda Items (Items Requiring the Approval of the Council)
- (8) Discussion Agenda Items
- (9) Reports
- (10) Public Comments
- (11) Executive Session (If Needed)
- (12) Adjournment

### **Public Comments**

(A) Members of the public may address the Council regarding city related business. A maximum of three (3) minutes shall be allowed per individual during public comments.

(B) Except for town-hall meetings, public comments are not allowed for the purpose of asking questions and answers of the Mayor and Council or other City representatives during the meeting. The Mayor or Council Members shall not engage in responding to comments or questions brought forth by individuals under the Public Comments section of the Agenda.

(C) The Mayor may interrupt public comments that relate negatively to others or are otherwise inappropriate.

### **Zoning or Appeal Hearings Procedure**

The following rules of procedure shall apply to any public hearing on a rezoning request and any appeal from a decision of the Zoning Board of Appeals and shall be as follows:

(A) The case shall be called, and the Land Development/Zoning Manager or his/her designee shall describe the request or appeal. If the hearing is a public hearing on a rezoning request, the Land Development/Zoning Manager or his/her designee shall present a Staff recommendation for approval, approval with conditions or denial and state a brief summary to support the recommendation.

(B) Georgia law requires applicants and opponents of cases to complete and file disclosure forms prior to speaking for or against a proposal. The disclosure forms

will be provided at the meeting. No person shall be allowed to speak without complying with Georgia law.

(C) Representatives/applicants, as a group, and representatives/ opponents, as a group, shall be given a maximum of ten (10) minutes for each side to present its case, unless, by unanimous vote, more time is allotted by City Council. The City Attorney and/or the City Clerk shall be responsible for keeping time. Any groups which are present are encouraged to choose a spokesperson to present their views as the time limit is not per speaker but ten (10) minutes collectively.

(D) As each case is called, all witnesses for the applicant and opponents shall first be sworn prior to making their presentations.

(E) Voting on cases will take place as to each case immediately following the close of the public hearing of the same case. However, discussion shall be allowed between members of the City Council.

(F) No further public input will be allowed unless questions come through the City Council. Any question by a Council Member and answer does not count for or against the ten (10) minute time limit set forth above.

### **Decorum in Council Meetings**

Members of the public must comply with the following rules of decorum: Once a meeting has been called to order there shall be no comments allowed from any member of the public including inappropriate, offensive, impertinent, profanity or insulting comments to the Mayor, City Council, or other City Representative or between individuals. There shall be no clapping, cheering, opposition gestures or disruptive actions allowed during the meeting. Cell phone ringers must be set on silent during the meeting.

### **Waiver of the Meeting Rules of Procedure**

Upon proper Motion by a City Council Member, a proper second and a unanimous approval by the City Council, these rules may be suspended for any purpose deemed necessary and appropriate. The suspension may be for one (1) specific item or for numerous items. However, the suspension shall last no longer than the meeting in which these Rules were suspended. In the event of a suspension, and unless other procedures are adopted, Roberts Rules of Order shall be the procedure followed. (Robert Rules of Order Summary Sheet Attached Hereto As Appendix 2).