



To: Mayor Alan Webber
Santa Fe City Councilors
From: League of Women Voters of Santa Fe County
Date: December 16, 2021
Re: Proposed Governing Body Procedural Rules

Mayor Webber and Councilors:

Members of the League of Women Voters of Santa Fe County have reviewed the proposed Governing Body Procedural Rules; we support their enactment and implementation. We find that these rules provide clarity for the roles, responsibilities, and processes of the Governing Body. If they are enforced rigorously, they will not only promote civil discourse and transparency but will also help you better carry out the functions of city government.

The League met with the sponsors of the resolution and we thank them for their time and attention to our questions and comments. We appreciate their research into best practices of governing bodies around the country; we also commend the sponsoring team for their patience and thoroughness in the iterative process used to write and revise the rules in light of actual events.

The League supports requiring a complete draft of proposed legislation before it is placed on the Governing Body agenda and, in particular, the League supports the new first opportunity for public input into proposed legislation before it appears on committee agendas. Currently, opportunities for public comment vary across the standing committees, while public hearings at meetings of the Governing Body are scheduled only after the proposals have gone through the committee process. At that point, many councilors have either already made up their minds or are leaning strongly in one direction or another. The proposed process should allow for more meaningful input from the community at the front end so that questions and concerns can be addressed meaningfully by the standing committees.

The removal of specifications for particular agenda items for an afternoon or an evening session, while retaining a convenient time for public comments, should improve efficiency for the city and the public.

Civil discourse is addressed in three sections, those on Decorum, Governing Body Rules for Speaking, and in the Debate section of The Main Motion and Debate. These rules not only specify behavior that is prohibited or discouraged but also provide standards for achieving the overall objectives of governance. The League believes these rules will encourage civil discourse among members of the public as well, by creating an environment that will allow you to conduct your work in a respectful and inclusive manner.

We also like the requirement that the instructions for participating in public hearings be posted on each governing body agenda. We do request that the rules for written communication from the public be

included in writing, either in the new rules, on each agenda or in another location that is readily available to the public.

The League of Women Voters strongly supports passage of these procedural rules. We thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christine Furlanetto". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Christine Furlanetto, Chair
LWVSFC Action & Advocacy Committee
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