

**ALEPPO TOWNSHIP**  
**RULES FOR MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**ORIGIN, PURPOSE, AND APPLICABILITY OF RULES**

1. The purpose of these rules is to organize our meetings, provide everyone with a fair opportunity to speak, and keep discussions on target.
  
2. These rules are not to be used to confuse issues or cause commissioners to be hampered by needless procedural questions. Should these rules create such confusion, the moderator may choose to ignore any rule without majority objection to move the meeting along.
  
3. At all times, the First Class Township Code shall supersede any rule stated in this document.
  
4. With the consent of a majority of commissioners present, reference may be made to the most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order as a general guide for parliamentary procedure.
  
5. The board may temporarily dispense with any rule at any time provided all commissioners present agree. Lack of objection by any commissioner is sufficient to indicate agreement. However, a permanent change to any rule or permanent removal of a rule or procedure from these rules can only be made by a majority vote of the board after a formal motion.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

6. As prescribed by the First Class Township Code, the board must elect a president and vice-president at its bi-annual organization meeting. (First Class Township Code § 701.)

7. The solicitor shall serve as moderator of the organizational meeting until a president is elected. Once the president is elected, the solicitor shall yield the role of moderator to the newly elected president. The newly elected president shall then moderate the remainder of the meeting, including election of vice-president and any other officers necessary.

8. Voting for president and vice president will proceed in the following manner:

a. The moderator shall open the floor to nominations. A nomination need not be seconded.

b. The moderator will continue to call for nominations until a commissioner makes a motion to close nominations. This motion requires a second to proceed. A simple voice vote is sufficient to approve the motion.

c. At the discretion of the moderator, commissioners will vote on the candidates either by roll call vote or by paper ballot.

d. The nominee with the most votes wins. If there is no winner, all nominees are dropped but the two highest and a vote is taken again on the remaining candidates until one receives more votes than the other.

e. The same voting procedure will apply to the nomination and election of a vice president.

9. If the president and vice president are both absent from a meeting, the moderator of that meeting shall be the commissioner who has served on the board for the longest.

#### MODERATOR

10. The moderator alone shall decide questions on order without debate, although two members of the board may appeal and ask for an immediate vote on the decision.

11. The moderator may discuss all issues brought to the floor by other members and may make a motion without relinquishing the chair to another officer. The moderator is bound by the same rules for speaking on a motion as prescribed in these rules.

12. Ordinarily, commissioners need not address the moderator to be recognized before speaking. If, however, a tense conversation calls for more heightened formality, the moderator may direct commissioners to address the moderator in order to be recognized before speaking. Remarks must always be courteous in language and deportment.

### MOTIONS

13. Motions should be made either during the section of the meeting to which they pertain or during new business.

14. All motions must have a second before discussion on an item may commence. If there is no second, the motion fails for lack of a second and business moves forward. Motions that fail to obtain a second may not be immediately reconsidered unless another member makes the same motion.

15. Once seconded, the moderator may restate the motion (or ask the person proposing the motion to restate it), type it into the Activity Log, rule it out of order, or call for debate or questions on the motion.

16. Discussion is limited to the topic of the motion. All other comments are out of order. The moderator may establish time limits for the course of the discussion consistent with limits imposed on other motions unless otherwise stated in these rules.

17. Each commissioner shall have the right to speak once until all members of the board interested in speaking have been given the opportunity to do so.

18. The moderator shall allow the member making the motion the first opportunity to speak followed by the member who seconded the motion. The member making the motion is also entitled to speak last.

19. The presiding officer shall call for “any further discussion” from the commissioners. Following that, the presiding officer shall call for public comment on the motion. If these calls for comment are made without anyone wishing to speak, discussion is automatically closed (unless the member making the motion has a final statement) and the vote is taken.

20. Types of motions with order of precedence are listed in a table at the end of these rules. This table shall serve as the model for all motions and govern consideration and precedence of any motion. Should a type of motion be made that is not listed in the table, the moderator shall refer to Robert’s Rules for a determination of its appropriateness. If Robert’s Rules is unavailable or if a search is time consuming in the estimation of the moderator, the moderator may rule on the motion in this instance only.

21. A motion or amendment may be withdrawn at any time before the vote by the person proposing it.

22. A motion that appears intended to distract the board from resolving legitimate business may be objected to and ruled out of order by the moderator without debate.

#### VOTING

23. Voice votes may be taken on any matter at the discretion of the moderator. The presiding officer must publicly announce the results of any vote.

#### RECORDING OF MEETINGS

24. When possible, all Aleppo Township meetings shall be streamed live on the internet and recorded and made available for later on-demand viewing. However,

duly advertised meetings may still be held when personnel or equipment are not available to facilitate live streaming or recording.

25. At the beginning of any meeting that is being live streamed or recorded, the Moderator will make an announcement alerting all participants of that fact.

### CITIZENS' COMMENTS

26. Citizen participation is not only required by the Sunshine Law, it is encouraged for good government. Accordingly, the board shall provide time during the meeting for members of the audience to speak on any issue.
27. Ordinarily, the public shall be welcome to participate in discussion during the main meeting. If, however, a tense conversation calls for more heightened formality, the moderator may direct citizen participation to take place only during the specified portion of the meeting.
28. The board shall also provide time for pre-written comments from residents not in attendance to be read to the board, provided they identify the author. Pre-written messages should be directed to the Communications Chair and may be sent by email or delivered to the Township Office by mail or in person.
29. When practical, no vote will be taken on any motion until the full text of the motion has been published on the township website and residents have been given an opportunity to comment. This rule shall not apply when—in the moderator's sole discretion—time is of the essence on any motion, the motion is too routine to be of significant public interest, or the motion arises out of a debate that was held in an appropriately held executive session.
30. The moderator may limit the time an individual has to speak to a maximum of three minutes. Each citizen addressing the board shall state his or her name and address and to spell the last name for the record. Citizens shall stand and speak from the podium and microphone located at the front of the audience so that he or she may be heard by all and live streamed and recorded. Comments shall be directed to the moderator who may or may not refer them to a commissioner for comment.
31. Groups of citizens in attendance who have business before the board should select a spokesperson beforehand to present the group's views. The spokesperson will be limited to a maximum of ten minutes at the discretion of the presiding officer. The spokesperson may call on another member of the group to speak during his or her allotted time at the discretion of the presiding officer. The spokesperson shall be guided by the same rules as those for individual citizens as described above. Comments that are repetitive of those already expressed are discouraged and may be interrupted by the moderator in the interest of time.

### MINUTES

32. Minutes are taken to record the substance of each public meeting. They are not transcripts detailing what each person said but a summary of official actions. Audio recordings of each meeting may be made for the convenience of the secretary but are not considered the official record. Similarly, the video recording of the meeting is not the public record. Copies of the minutes are available on the township website after the board has approved them.

33. Following a voice vote, a member may specify that he or she wants to ensure that his or her vote is recorded as an “yes” or “no” in the minutes. Otherwise, the minutes will simply state the results of the vote as determined by the moderator.

### EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

34. Executive sessions may be called during a meeting or at the end of the regular business of a meeting.
35. The moderator shall state the basis for the executive session before the board enters an executive session. The discussion in the executive session must never exceed the scope of the announced basis for that executive session.

### MEETING AGENDAS

36. Ordinarily, the agenda for a regularly held and duly advertised meeting shall be posted on the township’s website 72 hours prior to the meeting to give the public notice of the topics to be discussed. However, a duly advertised meeting may still be held if the agenda is not posted in accordance with this rule.
37. It is the moderator’s prerogative to set the agenda for the meeting. However, the moderator shall not unreasonably refuse to add any requested item to the agenda.
38. The moderator shall follow the printed agenda as presented. The moderator shall rule out of order any motion or debate that deviates from the agenda unless otherwise permitted by a motion that takes precedence.
39. The board may consider items not on the agenda under new or old business or may add an item to a committee report during that report.
40. The format for a meeting agenda will, at minimum, include the following items in order:
  - a. call to order
  - b. pledge of allegiance
  - c. roll call
  - d. announcement of recording
  - e. approval of minutes
  - f. reports
  - g. communications report
  - h. old business
  - i. new business
  - j. citizen comments
  - k. announcement of executive session (if necessary)
  - l. adjournment

Items may be added to the above list by the general consent of the board without formal amendment of these rules.

41. Committee reports by the chair of each respective committee (or, in the chair’s absence, another committee member) may contain motions approved by the

committee and a general report on committee activities. Motions may be added to the agenda during a committee report if appropriate to the committee's business as long as the appropriate public comment is permitted. Likewise, items may be added to the published general report of the committee as the chair sees fit.

42. Board meetings are scheduled to start promptly at 7:00 PM on the published dates, or as otherwise specified by the board. Public hearings may be scheduled before the meetings or within the context of the meeting. This time may be changed by board action for any and all meetings without amending these rules.

### QUORUM

43. A majority of the membership of the board then in office shall constitute a quorum. If, after taking roll at any public meeting, a quorum is not present, the presiding officer shall wait fifteen (15) minutes from the call to order before adjourning or recessing the meeting.
44. When referred to in these rules, "a majority of the board" refers only to those members present and voting.

### *ABSTENTIONS*

45. Commissioners are not permitted to abstain from a vote unless casting a vote would be an ethical breach. When a commissioner abstains, the basis for his or her abstention must be stated on the record. The solicitor will be the sole decider about whether a stated basis for an abstention rises to the level of a bona fide ethical breach.
46. In the event that the solicitor rules that a voting would constitute an ethical breach, the abstention does not count as for or against the motion. If, however, the commissioner fails to state a basis for an abstention or the solicitor rules that the basis is inappropriate and the commissioner still fails to vote, that commissioner's vote will be recorded as "no".

Adopted by the Board of Commissioners: August 19, 2019