

City of Bellaire Boards Handbook

2012

Bellaire City Council

Phil Nauert
Mayor

Roman F. Reed
James P. Avioli, Sr.
Corbett D. Parker
Pat McLaughlan
Andrew Friedberg

Mandy Nathan

Administrative Staff

Bernard M. Satterwhite, Jr., City Manager

Diane K. White, Assistant City Manager

Adopted by City Council August 20, 2012 – reference Ordinance 12-038

Preface

In 2010, Bellaire City Council created a Sunset Review Committee (“SRC”) (Ord. 10-078) as an ad hoc committee for the purpose of reviewing the City’s boards, commissions and committees (collectively, “Boards”), as well as reviewing and, as needed, updating the City’s *Boards Handbook*. The Handbook had been previously created by a prior ad hoc committee in 1996 to assist appointees in performing their functions on the Boards; it was updated in 2002 to achieve uniformities and to add a sunset review requirement.

Bellaire City Council appointed the following citizens to serve on the SRC (with one representative from each Board and two citizen appointees):

Andrew Friedberg	City Councilman and Chair, <i>ex officio</i>
Jeff Addicks	Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Win Frazier	Planning and Zoning Commission
Terry Leavitt-Chavez	Bellaire Cultural Arts Commission
Lynn McBee*	Bellaire Citizen Representative
Pat McLaughlan	Bellaire Citizen Representative
Iola Pickul	Bellaire L.I.F.E. Advisory Board
Randy Pollard	Board of Adjustment
Kristin Schuster	Building and Standards Commission
Bill Stone	Recycling Committee
Diane White	Assistant City Manager, Staff Liaison

** Served as Secretary of the SRC*

The SRC met throughout 2011, approximately twenty times, often twice and three times a month, plus sub-committee meetings.

The SRC researched, reviewed and considered other cities’ boards and handbooks, invited input from current board members as to their views and suggestions, consulted with city staff, received a presentation by the City Attorney on the “Council-Manager Form of Government” and consulted further with the City Attorney concerning legal issues, and extensively brainstormed as a committee. All agenda packets and minutes of SRC meetings were accessible to the public and posted to the City’s website.

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I.

INTRODUCTION

This *Bellaire Boards Handbook* is provided as a general reference tool to help new Board members in the performance of their duties. This reference collection is intended to briefly outline the purpose and role of Boards as they relate to the overall development of policies and programs for the City of Bellaire. Things not covered may be found on the City's website. Other resource information is also referenced to the City's website.

A. A Capsule History of the City of Bellaire

Bellaire was founded in 1908 by W. W. Baldwin to be a “garden city” of homes and farms in the then-open prairie of southwest Harris County. Bellaire was created as Westmoreland Farms, of which Bellaire town site was the center. Both began as suburban homes, farms, and small businesses and incorporated as a general law city on June 24, 1918 with an estimated population of 200.

In 1939 Bellaire enacted its first zoning code. A post-WW II building boom took place throughout Harris County beginning in 1945. Houston began annexing properties adjacent to West University Place (WUP); then WUP tried to annex Bellaire and Southside Place, but lost to legal appeals in 1946. In 1949, when its population reached 5,000, Bellaire enacted a Home Rule City Charter, a council-manager form of government and a controversial new zoning map on April 2, 1949. Supporters of residential zoning for a “City of Homes” prevailed over extension of existing business sections. Before Bellaire could square off its new municipal boundaries, the Houston City Council met late on December 31, 1949 and annexed a 400-foot strip entirely around the City, halting all future Bellaire expansion.

In the early 1960s, construction of Loop 610 by the State caused loss of over 200 homes along what was then Post Oak Road. High rise office development along Loop 610 began, which led to another land use controversy over higher density. The density issue led to the recall of some members of the City Council in 1977.

Land use zoning has always been a significant issue in the three and one-half square mile community of Bellaire. Comprehensive land use plans for the City's desired future development were enacted in 1939, 1949, the late 1960s, 1982, 1996 and 2009. The population of Bellaire reached its peak in 1960 at 19,872; was 19,009 in 1970, dropped to 14,950 in 1980, to 13,842 in 1990, rose to 15,962 in 2000 and to 16,855 in 2010 with 6,427 dwelling units.

B. City Government

1. City Charter. Bellaire is a home rule city with its own city charter [link to Charter](#) and operates under a council-manager form of government, all as authorized

pursuant to the Texas Constitution, Art. 11 (Municipal Corporations), and the Texas Local Government Code. The City Council (as the executive and legislative branches) enacts legislation, adopts budgets, establishes policies, and appoints and evaluates the performance of the City Manager, City Clerk, City Attorney, and Municipal Court personnel.

2 City Council. Bellaire has a Mayor and six Council members, all elected at large and on a non-partisan basis. The Mayor is elected for terms of two years and is limited to four consecutive terms; Council members serve staggered four-year terms, not to exceed two consecutive terms. The Mayor and members of the Council have equal authority. They are not employed by the City, and are not provided offices in city buildings, but have e-mail addresses on the City's website.

3 Elections. Local citywide elections are held on the first Tuesday in November of each odd-numbered year. Elections are typically conducted in conjunction with federal, state, county and school district elections. The City is divided by Harris County into five voting whose polling locations are subject to change for each election. Bellaire voting precincts are currently located as follows. [\[link to voting precinct map\]](#)

Please reference the link above for the most current information with regards to voting locations.

4 City Council Regular Meetings. City Council meetings are held at the Bellaire Civic Center, 7008 South Rice Avenue, on the first and third Mondays of each month at 7:00 pm. Special meetings, workshops and public hearings are scheduled as needed. All meetings are open to the public, with agendas posted at least 72 hours in advance on the City website and the City Hall bulletin board (outside rear of City Hall). Members of the public who wish to speak before regular Council meetings may sign-up either in advance of the meetings, by e-mail to the City Clerk [\[link online staff directory\]](#) or in person, or just before the meeting on sign-up forms at the entrance to the City Council Chambers [\[link to sign-up form\]](#). Written comments may be submitted to the City Clerk, in advance of regular Council meetings, and requested to be read into the record during the public comment period.

5 Agendas and Information About City Council Meetings. Agendas and information about City Council or Board meetings are on the City's website. A "Notify Me" option is on the website to select automatic emails of agendas for all meetings and other topics of interest [\[link to "Notify Me" sign-up\]](#). A City Calendar of events is also posted on the website. Meetings of the City Council and Statutory Boards are preserved in streaming video and can be viewed via computer from the website by selecting "Meeting Agendas, Minutes & Videos Portal" [\[link\]](#) on the home page.

6 City Manager. The City Council appoints and supervises a City Manager to be the chief administrative officer of the City. The City Manager is charged with implementing the policies of the City Council, is responsible for the operations of the City, hires and appoints the directors of City Departments (currently eight) and is directly

responsible for all City employees. Inquiries or complaints about City services should first be directed to the Office of the City Manager [\[link online staff directory\]](#).

7. Municipal Court. The Bellaire Municipal Court hears Class C misdemeanor offenses, violations of city ordinances, and of certain state laws. Court convenes on Tuesday evenings and Wednesday mornings with jury trials held on Tuesday mornings [\[link court schedule\]](#). The Court is located in the Police Department and Municipal Courts Building at 5110 Jessamine, across the street from the Library and Fire Department.

C. Procedure for Application, Selection, Appointment and Training of Board Members

1. Application. The City offers residents many opportunities for voluntary service on its Boards [\[link to application\]](#). Individuals interested in serving on a Board should contact the City Manager's Administrative Assistant at 713-662-8276 or by e-mail [\[link online staff directory\]](#).

2. Selection. City Council interviews applicants during May and June. Applications are accepted and appointments made at other times throughout the year when vacancies occur. Appointments are made by ordinance at a City Council meeting.

3. Appointment. Appointments are made in June and, generally, terms begin on July 1 of each year. Following the selection, letters of appointment are sent to each appointee with information concerning meetings and trainings. Oaths of office are administered prior to or at the beginning of each appointee's first Board meeting. Those who are not selected are urged to reapply for any other Boards.

4. Training.

(a) Open Government Training. Newly appointed members of all Boards must, within 90 days of appointment, take an online course required by the State of Texas concerning the Texas Open Meetings Act and Texas Public Information Act [\[link to "Open Government" videos\]](#) as soon as possible after appointment. This is available online 24/7 at no cost. A certificate of completion must be provided to the City Clerk.

(b) General Training for Appointees and Applicants.

(i) Newly appointed and reappointed members of all Boards must attend a general training orientation at the start of each new term. This training is provided and conducted by the City at no cost to the appointee. Topics may include, but are not limited to, legal topics, recent innovations, nationwide trends, what is working and not working, and methods to improve effectiveness and implementation of goals.

(ii) Additionally, this general training orientation shall be made available to all Board applicants, to give them an understanding of the operation of Bellaire's government and to define the objectives and functions of specific city Boards, as well as to familiarize them with the council-manager form of government, the City Council's function, City finances and an overview of the City (population, boundaries, etc.). This requirement may be satisfied by a live presentation, or in the alternative, provision of a video recording of the most recent general training orientation. In making appointments to the Boards, the City Council shall consider whether applicants have attended or viewed such training prior to their interview.

(c) Specialized Training for Appointees to Statutory Boards. Newly appointed members of the Boards governed by state law (Board of Adjustment, Building and Standards Commission, and Planning and Zoning Commission) must additionally attend a specialized training orientation, concerning the laws and procedures governing those Boards, following the general training orientation for all Board appointees.

D. Categories, Terms, Officers and Meetings of Boards

1. Categories. There are two categories of Boards in the City of Bellaire:

- (a) Those required and governed by state law (the "Statutory Boards"), and
- (b) Those not governed by state law, but which are created by the City Council by Charter, Ordinance or Resolution (the "Advisory Boards").

2. Terms. All Boards (except the Audit Finance Board) are comprised of seven members, with staggered terms of two years, and members are limited to three consecutive two-year terms.

3. Officers. All Boards elect their own Chair and Vice-Chair for one-year terms. These officers preside, vote and have administrative duties to facilitate the work of the Boards.

4. Meetings. Boards regularly meet in the evening on a designated day of the month (*see* schedule of Board meetings in Appendix and at [link to schedule](#)).

E. Brief Overview of Boards

There are currently eight ongoing Boards:

1. Statutory Boards

(a) Board of Adjustment. The Board of Adjustment (“BOA”) considers applications for variances or special exceptions to the Zoning Code (Chapter 24 of the Bellaire Code of Ordinances) [\[link\]](#). Landowners or their agents may submit applications to the City Building Official. Formal dockets, which must be legally advertised, are scheduled for the BOA. Meetings are held and testimony is taken on the applications. The BOA determines the outcomes of all applications. Pursuant to state law, decisions denying an application may be appealed only to a Harris County District Court; thus the BOA is considered to be a quasi-judicial body. State law requires that action may be taken only by a supermajority of 75% (six of the seven members). [\[link to Code of Ordinances, Ch. 2, Div. 2, BOA\]](#)

(b) Building and Standards Commission. The Building and Standards Commission (“BSC”) is responsible for making recommendations to the City Council regarding the review of administrative actions of the City Building Official, quasi-judicial enforcement of state statutes and city ordinances concerning health and safety, implementation of federal floodplain management regulations, variances from certain regulations that are within its purview, [\[link to Code of Ordinances, Ch. 9\]](#) and the issuance of advisory opinions pertaining to building codes and City policies. [\[link to Code of Ordinances, Ch. 2, Div. 2, BSC\]](#)

(c) Planning and Zoning Commission. The Planning and Zoning Commission (“P&Z”) makes recommendations to the City Council regarding the physical development of the City, including the Comprehensive (Land Use) Plan [\[link to Comp Plan\]](#) that serves as the basis for the City’s zoning regulations [\[link to Ch. 24 zoning regulations\]](#). It also reviews and approves applications for subdivision plats and replats. P&Z’s advisory recommendations to the City Council must conform to the Comprehensive Plan and, for zoning ordinances, follow a legally advertised public hearing. Only City Council may approve applications for zoning changes, following receipt of a recommendation from P&Z and a second legally advertised public hearing before the City Council. [\[link to Code of Ordinances, Ch. 2, Div. 2, P&Z\]](#)

2. Advisory Boards

(a) Audit Finance Board. The Audit Finance Board (“AFB”) is responsible for recommending to the City Council an auditor as needed, reviewing the audit of the City prior to its submission to the City Council, and assisting the auditor and city staff with the presentation of the audit to the City Council. The AFB is composed of three (3) members of the City Council, a citizen appointee with financial and/or audit experience, as well as the City Manager and the Chief Financial Officer of the City. The council

members are appointed by the Mayor and one citizen member is appointed by the entire City Council to a one-year term commencing February 1 each year through January 31 of the following year, with a maximum of three consecutive terms. The AFB reports to the City Council at the time the audit is presented and at any other time as the AFB deems appropriate. Meetings are as needed, but at least annually. [\[link to Code of Ordinances, Ch. 2, Div. 3, AFB\]](#)

(b) Cultural Arts Board. The Cultural Arts Board (“CAB”) enhances the quality of life in Bellaire through visual and performing arts that transform the places our citizens live, work, and play [\[link to Arts Plan\]](#). It attempts to create more welcoming and beautiful environments through the integration of artistic styles. Such created environments attempt to reflect a vibrant image of Bellaire as a contemporary and progressive city. The CAB submits to the City Council recommendations for public art projects and improvements for public spaces within the City. [\[link to Code of Ordinances, Ch. 2, Div. 3, CAB\]](#)

(c) Environmental and Sustainability Board. The Environmental and Sustainability Board (“ESB”) reviews and makes advisory recommendations to the City Council in the initiation, prioritization and development of public education programs, policies, and actions relating to environmental sustainability, including but not limited to energy and natural resource conservation and recycling. The ESB regularly hosts a Learning Academy [\[link\]](#). [\[link to Code of Ordinances, Ch. 2, Div. 3, ESB\]](#)

(d) L.I.F.E. Advisory Board. The L.I.F.E. (Living, Information, Fun and Enrichment) Advisory Board (“L.I.F.E. Board”) provides input to the Parks and Recreation Department from the community regarding services and programs that have been or could be implemented by the City for the benefit and assistance of mature adults (aged 50 and older). [\[link to L.I.F.E. page and newsletter\]](#). [\[link to Code of Ordinances, Ch. 2, Div. 3, L.I.F.E.\]](#)

(e) Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (“PRAB”) advises the City Council and the Parks and Recreation Department regarding policy matters pertaining to City Parks and Recreation. It may undertake studies of the park facilities and public recreation programs for their improvement and makes recommendations to the City Council. [\[link to Code of Ordinances, Ch. 2, Div. 3, PRAB\]](#)

F. Ad Hoc Committees.

The City Council may from time to time establish and appoint ad hoc committees for specific advisory purposes where such committees’ existence is limited to a period of one year or less. Examples of ad hoc committees are the Charter Review Commission, the Sunset Review Committee, and Council Committees on Facilities and Infrastructure Improvement, Strategic Plan & Development, Budget/Finance, Citizens’ Health, Safety

and Welfare and City Manager's Drainage committees. [link to Code of Ordinances, Ch. 2, Div. 3](#)

II.

RESPONSIBILITIES, CONDUCT AND LIABILITY OF BOARD MEMBERS

A. Responsibilities

City-appointed Board members are considered to be local public officials and as such hold a public trust to advance the public interest. Standards of ethical behavior are addressed in the Bellaire Code of Ordinances, Bellaire Code of Ethics [\[link to Code of Ethics\]](#). Although the specific duties of the Boards may vary widely, there are certain responsibilities that are common to all members. The following is a summary of those responsibilities:

1. General. Understand the role and scope of his or her responsibilities and be cognizant of the individual Board's purpose and of its operating procedures.
2. Majority View. Be careful not to speak outside of Board meetings about topics of interest to the Board without clearly identifying his or her individual opinions as such; the Board itself speaks as one whole and individuals speak only for themselves.
3. Public Interest. Represent the public interest and not special interest groups.
4. Consensus. Members are in a position to serve as liaison between opposing viewpoints and to build a consensus around common goals and objectives. Members serve as a communication link between the community, staff, and city, presenting recommendations and providing a channel for citizen expression.
5. Preparation. Review the agenda packet and contact the Board chair or city staff with questions. Be thorough in preparation and recommendations, and, if possible, personally view situations under consideration prior to the meeting. Be fully prepared to discuss, evaluate, and act on all matters scheduled for consideration.
6. Good Relationships. Establish a good working relationship within the group, respect individual viewpoints, allow other members time to present their views fully before making comments, be open and honest, and welcome new members.
7. No City Employment. Employees of the City may not be appointed to a Board.
8. No Multiple Appointments. Appointees may serve on only one Board at a time except when a sitting Board member is appointed to fill an unexpired term on another Board, and both the City Council and the Board member desire that the member serve out the remainder of his or her term on the first Board as well.

9. City Council. All recommendations of the Boards to City Council should be in written form. Oral communications with the City Council should be addressed publicly to the full body to be included in the record.

10. City E-Mail. Use City e-mail addresses assigned to all Board members for communications concerning Board business.

11. City Staff. Boards are encouraged to work with City staff and with the appropriate department staff assigned to the Board by the City Manager. City staff provides general assistance, such as preparation and posting of agenda materials and packets in consultation with the Board chair, posting of meeting minutes, preparation of annual reports of Board member attendance, records retention and the performance of limited and other studies. To avoid violations of open meetings requirements, Board members are encouraged to send e-mail to assigned city staff for distribution to the entire Board rather than to communicate directly with other members of their Boards outside of posted meetings.

B. Conduct Governed by State Law

1. **Texas Open Meetings Act** (Ch. 551, Tex. Gov't Code [\[link\]](#)). Texas law requires that meetings of the City Council be open to the public. In Bellaire, this requirement is extended to include all Boards as well.

(a) Notices. A posted notice and an agenda of each City Council and Board meeting is required to be posted on the City's official bulletin board (behind City Hall) at least 72 hours preceding the scheduled time of the meeting. Only those matters posted can be discussed and acted on by the governmental body. Agendas are also posted on the City's website and can be downloaded at will or sent automatically upon request ("Notify Me" [\[link\]](#)) by any interested person.

(b) Minutes. Written minutes are required or, in the alternative, a tape recording made of each open meeting. Minutes must state the subject of each deliberation and indicate each vote, order, decision or other action taken, and include a record of the votes cast for and against by each member. Minutes are available to the public on the City's website [\[link to Board minutes\]](#). [\[link to archived minutes\]](#).

(c) Texas Open Meetings Act. The Act allows for closed or executive session meetings on a few limited subjects. Generally, Boards will not have occasion or legal basis to meet in closed or executive session. Closed meetings are allowed only for the purpose of discussing pending litigation, consultation with an attorney, certain personnel matters, and the lease, sale or acquisition of land. Specific state law procedures control such closed meetings.

(d) Penalties. State law provides penalties for violations of the Open Meetings Act [\[link to penalty provisions of statute\]](#). Conspiring to circumvent the

provisions of the Open Meetings Act by meeting or communicating in numbers less than a quorum or serially for the purpose of secret deliberations is a violation of the act.

2. Public Information Act (Ch. 552, Tex. Gov't Code [\[link\]](#)). Texas law also provides that virtually all information held by a governmental body is subject to the Texas Public Information Act. If a request for information or copies of documents is received by a Board, the City Clerk should be notified for the proper procedure.

3. Penal Code (Ch. 39, Tex. Penal Code [\[link\]](#)). The Texas Penal Code, Abuse of Office, prohibits several kinds of conduct by a public official involving intent to obtain a benefit for oneself or to harm another. It prohibits a public official from intentionally or knowingly engaging in any of the following:

- (a) An unauthorized exercise of official power;
- (b) An act that exceeds his or her power;
- (c) A failure to perform his or her duty;
- (d) A violation of a law relating to his or her office; or
- (e) Theft or misapplication of anything of value belonging to the governmental body.

Other provisions of Title 8, Texas Penal Code (Offenses Against Public Administration), concerning such topics as bribery, gifts to public servants, tampering with governmental records, misuse of official information, disrupting meeting or procession, official oppression, official misconduct, nepotism, disclosure of interest in property and abuse of office, also apply to City Board members. *See* Title 8, Texas Penal Code [\[link\]](#).

4. Conflicts of Interest. Texas law governing conflicts of interest of local government officials applies to members of City Boards, and is found in Chapter 171, Texas Local Government Code. [\[link to Ch. 171, Texas Local Government Code\]](#)

C. Liability Protections for Board Members

1. No Personal Liability. Board members cannot be held personally liable for erroneous acts while honestly exercising the functions of their offices in good faith and within the bounds of state law, city ordinances and procedures.

2. Indemnification. The City Charter provides for the indemnification of all elected and appointed officers, including members of the City Boards, against claims, demands, causes of action and judgments that may be brought about as a result of their performance of their duties for and on behalf of the City, except for any such claims, demands or judgments incurred by reason of willful, intentional or illegal acts. *See* City Charter, Art. 1, Sec. 12, Indemnification [\[link\]](#).

III.

OTHER PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL BOARDS

A. Removal Procedures. Board members are appointed and reappointed by the City Council. Members of the Statutory Boards, to which certain legal protections apply, may be removed by the City Council only for cause. Members of the Advisory Boards may be removed by the City Council at will.

B. Absence Policy. It is the duty and obligation of Board members to attend all of their Board meetings. Absences will be recorded in the minutes of each meeting. Annual reports of absences will be maintained by each Board's staff liaison. Because the functions of the Boards require active participation of all the members, excessive absences may be considered an inability of an individual member to fulfill the duties with which he or she has been charged. Three (3) or more consecutive absences shall be reported to the City Council for its consideration.

C. Council Liaisons. City Council members are assigned by the Mayor to serve as liaisons to the Boards for a period of one year beginning January 1 and ending December 31. The purpose of the Council liaison is to serve as a communication link with the City Council. It is important that the lines of communication be kept open between the Boards and the Council. Council liaisons will be available during Board meetings to answer questions regarding current Council policies and goals, and to ensure that reports, recommendations and requests to City Council are scheduled for Council agendas. Assignments may be rotated among the various Boards in order to provide City Council members insight as to the various Boards

The duties and responsibilities of the Council liaisons are to:

- (a) Strive to attend all assigned Board meetings;
- (b) Participate in special activities, workshops and events of the assigned Board;
- (c) Monitor the involvement of the assigned Board members and inform them of relevant educational seminars;
- (d) Advise Board members on City Council goals and objectives as they develop throughout the year; and
- (e) Provide status reports from the assigned Board to the City Council as a whole.
- (f) Listen to Board proceedings but not dominate, lead or direct Board action.

IV. MEETINGS

A. Types of Meetings

1. Regular Meetings. Held monthly; formal action may be taken on matters properly described and posted on the agenda.

2. Special Meetings. May be called by the chair, vice-chair, or by a majority of the members of the Board, at times other than on regular meeting dates, but are otherwise governed the same as regular meetings.

3. Public Hearings. Open and legally-advertised hearings that allow interested members of the public an opportunity to express their opinions on specific issues. It is desired that Boards hear and consider all sides of an issue and alternative recommendations to assist in their decision-making process.

4. Workshops. Intended for informal discussions of an item; no action may be taken in a workshop meeting.

B. Procedures for Conducting Meetings

1. Rules of Procedure. In order for meetings of the City's Boards to function properly and in a fair and orderly manner, certain rules and procedures must be followed. [\[Link\]](#)

2. Principles. *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* states: "PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES ARE BASED ON A REGARD FOR THE RIGHTS:

- of the majority,
- of the minority, especially a strong minority – greater than one third,
- of individual members,
- of absentees, and
- of all of these together."

3. Generally. Rules of Procedure (Rules of Order) refer to written rules of parliamentary procedure formally adopted by an organization that relate to the orderly transaction of business in meetings and to the duties of officers.

4. Board Rules. Each Board shall adopt its own Rules of Procedure to govern the conduct of its meetings, and shall review and update their Rules of Procedure at least annually. A copy of each Board's Rules of Procedure should be submitted to the Administrative Aide to the City Manager and made available for the public [\[link to Board rules\]](#). If a Board has not formalized its Rules of Procedure, it will be governed

by the Rules of Procedure that have been adopted by the City Council. A copy of the Council's Rules of Procedure may be obtained from the City's website [\[link\]](#).

C. Role of the Chair

The function of the Chair is to provide leadership to the Board. The Chair has certain duties and responsibilities that he or she must perform:

1. Ensure that the meeting is conducted in accordance with the established Rules of Procedure.
2. Recognize each member by formally acknowledging his or her desire to speak; members should avoid speaking unless first recognized by the Chair.
3. Keep the meeting and agenda progressing timely and in an orderly manner. If the Board is indecisive, the Chair should exercise leadership and make suggestions.
4. When debate occurs the Chair should summarize the major points made.
5. Maintain order and bring to a conclusion the matters before the Board.
6. Ensure all members have had the appropriate training and received the necessary materials for their service on the Board.

D. Suggestions for Conducting Meetings

1. One Topic. The Board should discuss only one agenda topic at a time. Issues not on the agenda should not be discussed. They properly should be addressed under New Business for scheduling on a future agenda.

2. Chair Recognizes Speakers. The Chair should recognize the person or persons who wish to speak and only they should be allowed to speak; others should hold their comments until they have been recognized by the Chair.

3. Repeat Motions. Motions made and seconded, together with any amendments, after discussion and deliberation among the Board members, should be repeated prior to the taking of a vote. The Chair should announce the results of the vote and the names of the members voting for and against the motion, or abstaining, for inclusion in the minutes.

4. Additional Resources. See Appendix 2, "Presiding Officers-Efficient-Courteous-Impartial," and Appendix 3, "Parliamentary Motions Guide" [\[links\]](#). The City will provide additional brochures related to Leadership, Successful Meetings and Parliamentary Procedures.

E. Committees. Boards may establish and appoint committees comprised of no more than three Board members (to avoid a quorum of the Board). Committees may also include non-member citizens who have particular knowledge and/or interest in the subject matter to be addressed by the committee.

F. Quorum Requirements. A quorum is the minimum number of members needed to officially conduct the business of the Board. In some instances state law provides the quorum that is required (for example, in proceedings before the BOA), but in general, for seven-member Boards a quorum is a simple majority of the Board, or four of the seven members. In the case of a Board committee comprised of a maximum of three Board members, a quorum would be two members of that committee.

APPENDIX

1. [Bellaire Boards Monthly Regular Meetings Schedule](#)
2. Presiding Officers-Efficient-Courteous-Impartial
3. [Parliamentary Motions Guide](#)
4. Training: Annual August Orientation Recommended Agenda
5. Specialized Biennial September Trainings for Statutory Boards
6. Relationships of Boards to Council & Staff
7. [Application to Serve on a City Board or Commission](#)

See Also:

City Website – <https://www.bellairetx.gov/>

- Application for Board Appointment [\[link\]](#)
- Bellaire Street Map [\[link\]](#)
- Bellaire Parks Information [\[link\]](#)
- Bellaire Voting Precincts Map [\[link\]](#)
- *Charter of the City of Bellaire and Code of Ordinances* (Municode Corp.) [\[link\]](#)
 - Chapter 2 – Administration: Division 1- Generally [\[link\]](#)
 - Division 2 – Statutory Boards (3) Charges [\[link\]](#)
 - Division 3 – Advisory Boards (5) Charges [\[link\]](#)
 - Chapter 9 – Buildings [\[link\]](#)
 - Chapter 27 – Streets, Sidewalks and Public Places [\[link\]](#)
 - Chapter 24 – Planning & Zoning Regulations (rev. 2010) [\[link\]](#)
- *Development Services Department*
 - Comprehensive Land Use Plan, rev. 2009 (Ord. 09-076) [\[link\]](#)

1. Bellaire Boards
Monthly Regular Meetings Schedule

CITY COUNCIL	1st & 3rd Mondays 7:00 pm	Council Chamber
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT	3rd Thursday 7:00 pm	Council Chamber
BUILDING AND STANDARDS COMMISSION	4th Wednesday 7:00 pm	Council Chamber
CULTURE AND ARTS BOARD	2nd Wednesday 6:30 pm	Conference Room 201
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY BOARD	1st Wednesday 6:30 pm	Conference Room 201
L.I.F.E. ADVISORY BOARD	4th Thursday 11:30 am	B.L.I.F.E. Activity Room
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD	3rd Wednesday 6:00 pm	CenterPoint Energy Community Center
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION	2nd Tuesday 7:00 pm	Council Chamber

Council Chamber
Conference Room 201
CenterPoint Energy Community Center
B.L.I.F.E. Activity Room

7008 S. Rice
7008 S. Rice
7001 5th Street
7008 S. Rice

2.

**PRESIDING OFFICERS
EFFICIENT – COURTEOUS - IMPARTIAL**

To be efficient, courteous, and impartial a presiding officer should remember to do the following:

Be at the meeting early in order to organize his/her material, to answer questions, and, to see that everything is ready for the meeting.

Begin on time. Opening exercises can be conducted even without a quorum.

Have a copy of the bylaws and standing rules.

Have a list of members to consult for committee appointment.

Have a list of committee members to avoid duplication.

Have an agenda prepared ahead of the meeting.

Check off business as completed.

Take vote by general consent when the majority are in favor.

Keep control of the meeting. Do something even if it proves to be wrong (within reason).

Talk so that everyone can hear what is said, after the meeting opens. Don't have a private conversation with the secretary or anyone else.

Have a chart of motions to which you can quickly refer if necessary, unless you have a competent parliamentarian.

Notify committees that are to report before the meeting.

Give information to the members on method to use to dispose of a motion or expedite business.

Discourage repetitious discussions by remarks such as, "Are there any new points to be brought out? If not, we will vote on the question. (pause) All those in favor..."

Discourage discussions on controversial issues or ones on which all should express opinions. The Chair may say, "This question concerns all of us, and we should like each to express his/her opinion," or ask two members to summarize negative and favorable considerations regarding the issue, then allow others to present any additional points to be considered.

Encourage members to permit the Chair to close nominations or adjourn the meeting without a motion to that effect.

Be sure members know what they are voting on. Restate the question when taking the vote.

Listen attentively to discussion.

Tell a member why his/her motion is not in order at the time, then recognize him/her when it is in order.

Help members who do not understand parliamentary procedure by wording the motion or informing them how to proceed.

Show objectivity by attitude, expression, voice and word.

Recognize members speaking to either side of the question.

Parliamentary Motions Guide

Based on *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*

The motions below are listed in order of precedence. Any motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion.

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2 ND ? ¹	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§21 Close meeting	I move to adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§20 Take break	I move to recess for	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
§19 Register complaint	I rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	None
§18 Make follow agenda	I call for the orders of the day	Yes	No	No	No	None
§17 Lay aside temporarily	I move to lay the question on the table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§16 Close debate	I move the previous question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
§15 Limit or extend debate	I move that debate be limited to ...	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
§14 Postpone to a certain time	I move to postpone the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§13 Refer to committee	I move to refer the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§12 Modify wording of motion	I move to amend the motion by ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§11 Kill main motion	I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
§10 Bring business before assembly (a main motion)	I move that [or "to"] ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

¹ Some more formal requirements, like seconds to motions, may not apply in smaller boards or any size committee.

Jim Slaughter, Attorney, Certified Professional Parliamentarian-Teacher, Professional Registered Parliamentarian
 Author, [Robert's Rules of Order Fast Track](#) and [Notes and Comments on Robert's Rules, Fifth Edition](#)
 Web site: www.jimslaughter.com

Side 1

Parliamentary Motions Guide

Based on *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition)*

Incidental Motions - No order of precedence. Arise incidentally and decided immediately.

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§23 Enforce rules	Point of order	Yes	No	No	No	None
§24 Submit matter to assembly	I appeal from the decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Varies	No	Majority or tie sustains
§25 Suspend rules	I move to suspend the rules which ...	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
§26 Avoid main motion altogether	I object to the consideration of the question	Yes	No	No	No	2/3 against consideration
§27 Divide motion	I move to divide the question	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
§29 Demand rising vote	I call for a division	Yes	No	No	No	None
§33 Parliamentary law question	Parliamentary inquiry	Yes (if urgent)	No	No	No	None
§33 Request information	Request for information	Yes (if urgent)	No	No	No	None

Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly - no order of precedence. Introduce only when nothing else pending.

§34 Take matter from table	I move to take from the table ...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§35 Cancel or change previous action	I move to rescind/ amend something previously adopted ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Varies
§37 Reconsider motion	I move to reconsider the vote ...	No	Yes	Varies	No	Majority

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Side 2

4. Training: Annual August Orientation Recommended Agenda

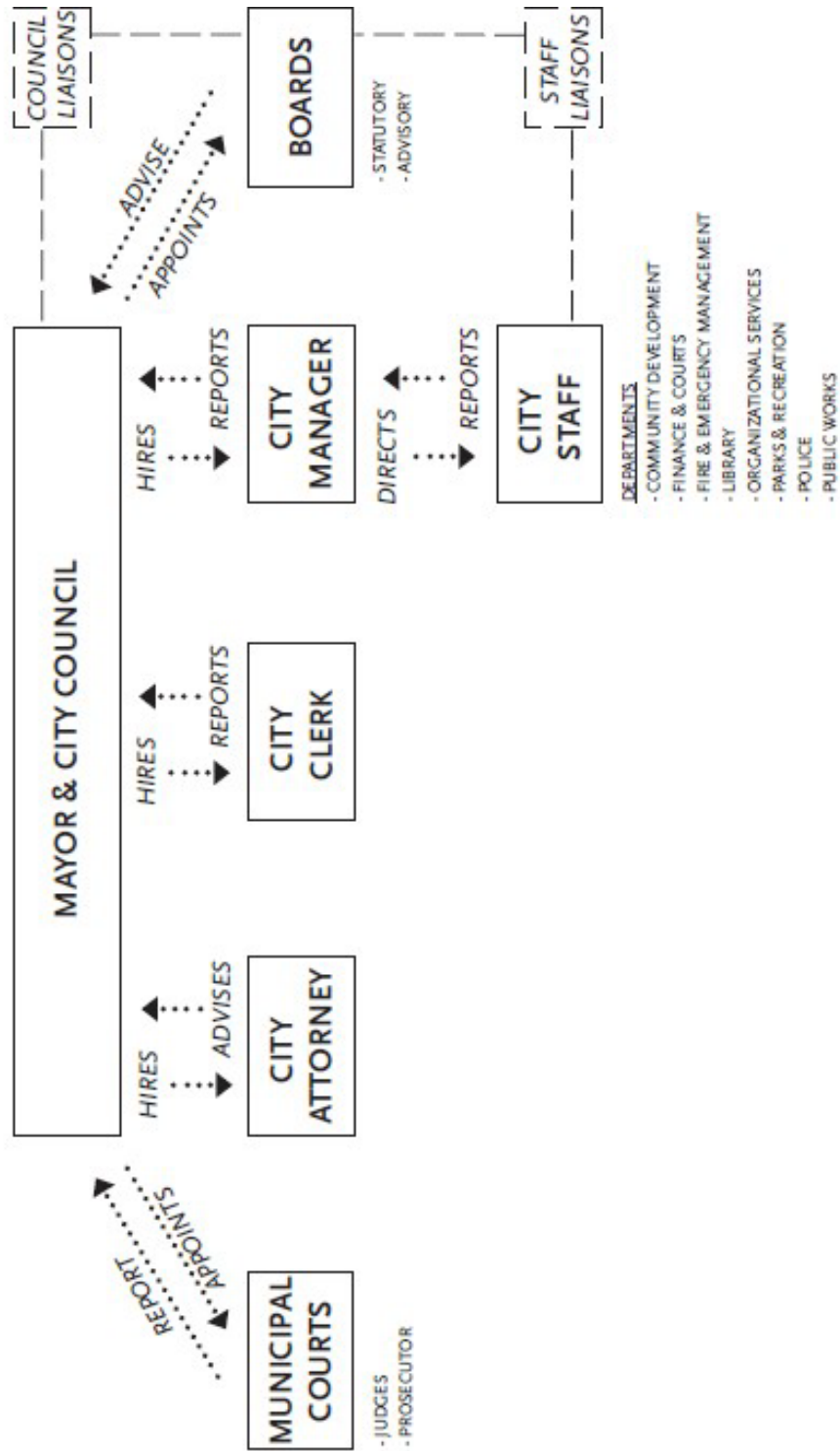
- I. Introduction – Mayor
- II. Swearing in of new members
- III. Speaker Presentations
 - A. Review of Board References
 - 1. City Website
 - 2. Board Handbook
 - 3. Agendas and Minutes
 - B. City Legal Structure – Council/Manager Form of Government
 - 1. Role of Boards – Created by City Council
 - 2. City Council – Receive recommendations, reports and requests
 - 3. Staff Liaisons, Council Liaisons – Serve Boards’ needs
 - 4. Boards – Types: Statutory/Advisory
 - 5. Relationship of City with External Entities (e.g., Patrons for Bellaire Parks)
 - C. City Manager
 - 1. Supervises Staff, receives compliments and complaints
 - 2. Assigns Staff Liaisons and Staff Secretaries to Statutory Boards
 - 3. Receives requests for Agenda items before City Council
 - D. City Finance pertaining to Boards
 - 1. No Budgets without request and approval of City Council
 - 2. Reimbursements: Council-approved expenses
- IV. Questions and answers/discussion
- V. Distribute Handbooks
- VI. Adjourn

5. Specialized Biennial September Trainings for Statutory Boards

Review of Statutes and Recent Judicial Decisions

- I. Board of Adjustment
- II. Building and Standards Commission
- III. Planning and Zoning Commission

CITY OF BELLAIRE RELATIONSHIPS OF BOARDS TO COUNCIL & STAFF



6.

7. Application to Serve on a City Board or Commission

[\[link\]](#)