Policies and Procedures

For

Boards Commissions and

Committees

ST. Charles Parish

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History of Establishment and Operation

St. Charles Parish's boards, commissions and committees provide an invaluable service to the Parish. Their recommendations on various subjects aid the Parish Council and Parish President in the legislative and executive activities. Effective citizen participation provides a vehicle for the successful operation of Parish Government. Boards, commissions and committees originate from many different sources. The Home Rule Charter of St. Charles Parish provides in Article III, Section A.7.c. that the Parish Council may:

- Require periodic and special reports from all parish officers concerning the affairs of their respective departments, offices, agencies or special districts, which reports shall be submitted by and through the Parish President in the case of departments, offices, agencies and special districts subject to his jurisdiction (HRC Article III, Section A.7.c., iii.)
- By ordinance, abolish or consolidate any parish department, office, agency, board, or commission or provide for the consolidation and transfer of any of the functions of such departments, offices, agencies, boards or commissions. (HRC Article III, Section A.7.c., vi.)
- Provide budgetary, fiscal and other controls over all special boards, commissions, agencies, districts or any device having governmental functions which it or its predecessor has created to insure the maximum possible coordination of government at the local level in St. Charles Parish. (HRC Article III, Section A.7.c., x.)

The Home Rule Charter of St. Charles Parish, Article III, Section C.4., provides for the continuation of the Planning and Zoning Commission. The Charter also defines the powers, duties and functions of the Commission.

Boards in existence prior to June of 1980 were created by the St. Charles Parish Police Jury, predecessor to the St. Charles Parish Council, as provided by State Law. Boards, commissions and committees created since June 1980 by the St. Charles Parish Council usually originated in ordinance or resolution form.

In order to assure maximum productivity and success of every board, commission and committee functioning in St. Charles Parish, it is necessary to adopt uniform rules of policies and procedures.

Structure

Every board, commission and committee has a specific statement of purpose and function which may be re-examined periodically by the Parish Council and Parish President to determine effectiveness. This statement of purpose shall be made available to all members when nominated for the appointment.

The size of each board, commission and committee is generally determined by the Governing Authority based on its needs, duties and responsibilities.

Creation language for board, commission or committee if not specified in the Home Rule Charter shall be contained in an ordinance or resolution. Creation documents creating committees must be specific regarding their function, purpose, make-up, length of service, and meeting schedule; specific language regarding sub-committees shall also include function, purpose, make-up, and length of service. Sub-committees are chaired by committee members and members of the sub-committee are nominated and approved by a majority vote of the committee. Exception: Standing committee of the Parish Council shall be for an undetermined length of time.

Appointments

Members of most boards, commissions and committees are appointed by the St. Charles Parish Council. Some boards, commissions and committees may require appointment by the Parish President (or other agency).

Vacancies on boards, commissions and committees that require Council action, are generally announced on the Council Agenda in advance of the Council accepting nominations so that any interested citizen may express an interest in the position.

Terms vary from one body to another, but in all cases overlapping terms are intended.

When appropriate, nominees to any board, commission and committee are immediately forwarded a confirmation questionnaire along with: a) a copy of the creating ordinance or resolution which outlines the duties and responsibilities; b) regular meeting date and time schedule; c) copy of the Code of Governmental Ethics for Public Servants for the State of Louisiana.

An Oath of Office for board and commission members shall be administered by any Judge, Justice of the Peace or Clerk to any new appointee prior to his participation on the board or commission. Oaths of Office for committees shall be administered by an appropriate Parish Official. This Oath shall be recorded in the Office of the Clerk of the Parish.

New members shall receive a briefing by the chairperson of the board, commission or committee upon appointment. An orientation regarding the duties and responsibilities of the new member shall be provided by a designated administrative staff person. This orientation shall include a review of the "sunshine" law as well as the Ethics Code for the State of Louisiana.

Members may resign any time their personal circumstances change to prevent effective service. Notice of resignation shall be in writing to the governing authority or the appointing authority.

Operating Policies

All boards, commissions and committees must follow the provisions of the Open Meeting Law, the Sunshine Law.

All meetings of boards, commissions and committees are open to the public.

The agenda and notice for the meetings should be posted at the Courthouse at the time it is mailed to members and no later than twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting. A copy of the agenda shall be forwarded to the Parish Council, Parish President and Official Journal of the Parish Council. Separate public notice is required for special meetings and for regular meetings if an annual meeting schedule has not been adopted.

Dates of regular meetings scheduled should be published annually in the official journal of the Parish. Each board, commission and committee shall adopt an annual meeting schedule no later than the second regular meeting. Any changes to that schedule shall be provided in writing to the Parish Council Secretary within twenty-four (24) hours of the meeting date. Committees shall meet quarterly as a minimum requirement.

All boards, commissions and committees excluding Council committees shall have an administrative coordinator appointed by the Parish President who shall be responsible for coordinating all activities of the group.

Operating Policies Continued...

The chairperson is responsible for the agenda of all meetings of boards, commissions and committees. The chairperson is also responsible for all operating policies outlined in this manual.

Official minutes of every meeting must be recorded and forwarded to the members and to the Parish Council and Parish President when approved. Minutes should be concise and only reflect recommendations and decisions except where complete transcripts are mandated.

It is necessary that a quorum, a simple majority of the membership, of a board, commission or committee be present to conduct official business. In accordance with Council Resolution No. 3771, Committee Absence Policy, three (3) consecutive absences from a committee or commission will be considered resignation from the body. At the discretion of the Chairman or other officer of the body, the appointing authority shall be notified of said absences and a replacement requested.

Attendance records for all boards, commissions and committees shall be forwarded to the Parish Council Secretary's Office within ten (10) days of every meeting on a form provided by the Parish Council Office.

All meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order Revised.

All boards, commissions and committees must perform their duties in compliance with the creating legislation. All committees must comply with the scope of authority in the initial resolution.

When addressing the Parish Council or another Body, a board, commission and committee member shall clearly indicate whether he is speaking as an individual or as a member authorized by the board, commission and committee to represent a position.

It shall be the policy of all boards, commissions and committees to elect officers on an annual basis.

Communications

Administrative coordinators are expected to inform their respective board, commission or committee of Parish Council agenda items and decisions that are of interest to these bodies.

Boards, commissions and committees shall forward their meeting agendas and minutes to the Parish Council and Parish President through the Council Secretary for distribution. Agendas shall be forwarded five (5) days prior to meeting date and minutes shall be forwarded within forty-five (45) days of meeting date.

Board, commission and committee members are welcome to attend Parish Council meetings to keep informed of Council action, relative to their respective body.

Commissions and committees must file quarterly reports with the Parish Council Office regarding the activities and status of the body within forty-five (45) days of the end of the quarter.

A final report on the completion of the activities of the commission and/or committee must be filed with the Parish Council and shall constitute the dissolution of the committee.

Miscellaneous

The Parish Council Secretary will compile and keep updated a listing of all members of every board, commission or committee. This listing will be available to all interested parties.

A Certificate of Appreciation will be given by the parish Council to outgoing board, commission or committee members upon completion of their term of office.

Prohibitions

Council Citizen Committees, Parish Council Boards, Commissions and/or Committees shall be prohibited from endorsing any candidate and/or proposition placed on the ballot for any election in St. Charles Parish as determined by the Parish Council.

Established by Resolution Number 3936 on July 26, 1993
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