



# Women's Rights Commission Legal Training 2025

Presentation for educational and discussion purposes only and not intended as legal advice.

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# Types of Boards

- Advisory boards
- Decision-making boards

# Advisory Boards in General

- Inform City Council on specific issues related to their Board
- Make recommendations to City Council
- Serve as sounding board for proposed public policy
- Link between the public and City Council
- Do Not Create or administer policy/programs/ services
- Do Not Enforce policies/rules
- Do not direct City Staff

## City Code Title 2

### Chapter 2.04

- 2.04.010 Meetings- Excessive absences
  - 3 consecutive meeting absences--- Mayor and CC may remove member
- 2.04.020 Recordkeeping requirements for Meeting minutes
  - Meeting minutes filed with clerk
- 2.04.040 Holding Over prohibited
  - Maximum 30 days after term expires.

# **WOMEN'S RIGHTS COMMISSION (WRC)**

# WRC's authority

- Resolution passed June 22, 2022 by City Council established the WRC

# WRC Purpose

- To serve as an advisory body to City Council concerning the needs and issues of women in the El Paso Region that are within the purview of City Council.
- Recommend legislative initiatives, policies, programs, studies and projects
- Alleviate inequities in social, health, education, economic, vocational pursuits
- Help eliminate discrimination on the basis of sex

# WRC in general

- 9 members
- Terms of Office: 2 years beginning September through August
- No more than 2 terms
- Quorum is a majority of those appointed, but no less than 3 members
- Members must reside in district of appointing Council member
- Not involved in litigation against the City nor financial obligation to City
- Holdover no more than 30 days

## WRC's duties

- Issues impacting women in the City that are within the purview of the Council
- Practices that ensure equality in City programs, services, policies and practices for all persons.
- Annual report on activities presented to City Council.
- Strategic document is a guide of the operations of the Board, including rules and regulations.

# Role of City Attorney's Office

- Advise board as a whole, not individual members.
- Monitor board to minimize risk of liability for the City
- Monitor board is in compliance with applicable laws

# Rules of Order

# PURPOSE

- A procedural guide
- For the benefit of the Committee- provides structure.

# PRESIDING OFFICER

The Chair is the presiding officer and is responsible for maintaining decorum at all times.

The Vice Chair presides in the Chair's absence.

# PRECEDENCE OF MOTIONS



When a motion has been made and seconded, the Chair will restate the motion and call for the vote once debate has ended.

When the voting has ended the chair will announce the result.

Certain motions must be voted on first.

Robert's Rules of Order provides additional guidance for order of motions

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debate	Amendable	Vote Needed
Adjourn	"I move that we adjourn"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Recess	"I move that we recess until..."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Complain about noise, room temp., etc.	"Point of privilege"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair Decides
Suspend further consideration of something	"I move that we table it"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
End debate	"I move the previous question"	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Postpone consideration of something	"I move we postpone this matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move that this motion be amended by..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce business	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

# TEXAS OPEN MEETINGS ACT

# Purpose

- To make government decision-making accessible to the public
- Meetings must be open to the public
- Liberally construed in favor of open government

# Common Law Principles

- Decisions entrusted to Gov't must be made by whole body at a properly called meeting;
- Each member may express his or her views
- Decision are “composite judgment of the body as a whole”  
*Webster v. Tex & Prac. Motor Transp. Co., 166 S.W.2d 75, at 76-77 (Tex. 1942).*

# Notice Requirement

- Time of Meeting
  - Date
  - Hour
- Place of Meeting
- Subject matter of meeting
- Must post 72 hours before the meeting

# Minutes required

- Must prepare and keep minutes or make a recording of each open meeting.
- Minutes must state subject of discussion, indicate each vote, order, decision or action taken.

# Public Comment

- Must allow public to speak on agenda items before or during discussion of that item.
- May have a reasonable rule to limit speakers' length of time (3 minutes)
- May require members of the public to sign up for public comment.

# What is considered a “Meeting”

- Discussion
  - Quorum of members;
  - Exchange information about public business or policy; and
  - Body has authority or control regarding topic.
- Informational
  - Quorum of members;
  - Receive or give information to or from a third person; and
  - Topic over which the body has authority or control.

# Walking Quorum

- A member commits offense if:
  - Knowingly communicates among a series of communications outside of a properly noticed meeting regarding an issue within the authority of the body, and the members engaging in the series of communications constitute a quorum
  - Knew at that time that:
    - Involved or would involve a quorum; and
    - Would constitute a deliberation once a quorum engaged in the series

# ETHICS

## City Code 2.92 Ethics

- Applies to “Officers” and employees of the City.
- Members of a board appointed by city council are “Officers”
- “Duty to the citizens of the City to be ethical in fulfilling the responsibilities of their position.”
- “At the very least, being ethical includes being disposed to comply with all laws that apply to one’s position.”

# PERSONAL LIABILITY

- Ultra Vires Actions: Acts of committee members without legal authority/ beyond their granted authority.
- Ultra Vires Actions expose the member to personal liability for their acts. Not protected under the protections the City has.



## Mission

Deliver exceptional services to support a high quality of life and place for our community



## Vision

Develop a vibrant regional economy, safe and beautiful neighborhoods and exceptional recreational, cultural and educational opportunities powered by a high performing government



## Values

Integrity, Respect, Excellence, Accountability, People