

## **City of Eastpointe Board and Commission Manual**

### **Introduction**

Welcome and thank you for taking an interest in your local government and helping us to achieve great things in the City of Eastpointe! City staff designed this guide to help you navigate your new role in public service. This document will introduce you to the key information that you will need to serve on your Board or Commission.

The City of Eastpointe is a Council-Manager form of government. Under this system, the City Council (including the Mayor) sets policy, while the City Manager is the chief executive who implements the policies and manages the daily operations of the City. The City has 123 full-time employees and 43 part-time City employees to deliver exceptional service to our residents and businesses.

Most Boards and Commissions are created by city resolution or ordinance and serve as advisory bodies to the City Council or City Manager. They provide information, analysis, and recommendations to inform the City Council's and City Manager's decisions on matters pertaining to the Board or Commission's specialized knowledge. A few Boards and Commissions have specific authority to make binding decisions in certain areas, such as the Zoning Board of Appeals. These bodies generally derive their decision-making authority from state laws.

Each Board and Commission play an important part in city government. Appointees to Boards and Commissions perform a public service to their community and have both an obligation and an opportunity to provide useful and appropriate input that will help shape their government. This requires a thorough understanding of their Board or Commission's role as well as a willingness to engage constructively with other Board members and staff.

### **Application Submission**

While applicants are not required to interview nor appear before City Council prior to appointment, the submission of a complete application is required either on the City website or at City Hall located at 23200 Gratiot Ave., Eastpointe, MI 48021. Applications are presented to Council on a rolling-basis and are kept on file for one year after submission.

## Process for New Appointments

Appointees who have been confirmed must take an Oath of Office and be sworn in through the City Manager's Office. You will be contacted by the office to schedule a date and time and will also receive a welcome letter/email and packet from the City Manager's Office with the following information:

- ✓ Board and Commission Manual
- ✓ Confirmation of appointment
- ✓ Contact information for staff liaison
- ✓ Term start and end date
- ✓ The schedule of the meeting dates
- ✓ Bylaws
- ✓ Open Meetings Act Handbook



## Process for Re-Appointments

Members who are interested in continuing to serve on a Board and/or Commission shall submit a new application to the City Manager's Office, which will then be shared with City Council. The appointing member (Mayor, Council or the City Manager) is the entity to recommend an appointment and will place on a City Council agenda for a confirmation. You will be contacted by the City Manager's Office to schedule a date and time for an Oath of Office for the new appointment.

## Before Your First Meeting

Prior to your first meeting, you should familiarize yourself with the bylaws of your Board or Commission and review the upcoming agenda materials. You may also wish to review materials or videos from prior meetings. See the "Agendas and Minutes" tab on the website to review previous meetings. Your staff liaison will be available to answer any questions or assist with receiving the necessary documentation.

## General Duties and Responsibilities of Appointees

-  Act courteously during meetings and treat other members, the public and City Staff with respect  
While members may disagree, appointees are expected to remain civil and focus on issues rather than personal differences.
-  Observe good parliamentary practice  
The chair's role is to run an efficient meeting while allowing all points of view to be heard and a full discussion to take place in an orderly fashion. A quorum is required to have a formal meeting and agendas must be adhered to.

✚ Attend all scheduled meetings

Absences can cause a meeting to be cancelled if not enough members are present to establish a quorum. Three or more absences in a calendar year shall be grounds for removal of a board member for neglect of duty.

✚ Come prepared

Review proposed minutes, agenda packets and other required information ahead of time to allow for informed deliberation and discussion.

✚ Represent your Board or Commission appropriately

As an appointee, people may believe that you speak on behalf of the city or your board or commission outside of regular meetings. Do not speak for your Board or Commission unless appropriately authorized to do so. Make clear when you are speaking in your personal capacity if there could be any doubt.

## **Duties of Specific Members and Information about Member Types**

Legislation and bylaws are important documents that identify membership types. Below are short descriptions of the various attendees who regularly participate in meetings other than general members.

**Officers:** Boards and commissions often authorize members elected to offices such as chair, vice-chair, treasurer or secretary to carry out specific functions to serve the Board or Commission. Major systems of parliamentary procedure define these functions, such as the duty of the chair to preside over and keep the decorum during meetings.

**Ex-Officio Members:** Ex-officio non-voting members are typically staff or council liaisons who serve in non-voting roles and are usually in attendance to facilitate the meeting, answer questions and assist in planning or discussion. Ex-officio voting members retain all rights of membership, including the right to make motions and join in deliberation.

Being a non-voting member restricts certain privileges of membership. These restrictions come from the lack of ability to vote and are consistent for voting members and non-voting members. *Example: A non-voting member can never make a motion to re-consider, as a non-voting member cannot vote on the prevailing side of a motion. The lack of authority to make a motion to reconsider is equally restricted from voting members who did not vote on the prevailing side.*

## **Governing Rules**

A few key resources provide structure for operating an optimal board or commission. It is important to be knowledgeable about legislation surrounding Boards and Commissions.

## Open Meetings Act

City Boards and Commissions are expected to conduct themselves according to the procedures contained in the Michigan Open Meetings Act (“OMA”). City Boards and Commissions deliberate and make all their decisions during public meetings, which can include a full discussion of the reasons for those decisions. Commissioners must avoid emailing, talking or otherwise communicating with a majority of other members outside of a public meeting about how they will vote, reasons for voting a particular way, or the pros and cons of an issue that may come before the commission.

Discussion between commissioners outside of a public meeting may be necessary (Example: developing a draft policy recommendation for the full commission). In such cases, the discussions should involve as few commissioners as possible and should never involve a quorum. If the matter warrants substantial discussion with multiple commissioners outside of the regular meeting schedule, a subcommittee may be appropriate, the meeting of which would be posted and open to the public.

Basic Rights of the public during a meeting governed by the **Open Meetings Act**:

- The public can attend without a requirement to sign in or identify themselves
- The public can address the assembly under the rules prescribed for public comment
- The public can get a full picture of the decision-making process; members must avoid exchanging written notes, secret ballots, electronic messages, or telephone calls during meetings

## Freedom of Information Act

Records of the City are subject to disclosure under the Michigan Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Email communications about Board and Commission business are generally considered to be public records subject to disclosure under FOIA. For this reason, email correspondence regarding the Board or Commissions business should generally copy the staff liaison so that the City has a record of the correspondence. Commissioners are otherwise responsible for retaining and producing emails and other records, including text messages related to the Board or Commission business that they have in their possession, upon request by the City’s FOIA Coordinator or the City Attorney’s Office.

## Social Media Etiquette

All Board and Commission members are expected and required to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the City’s policies and standards of conduct. Members should be honest and accurate when posting information and

quick to correct any mistakes or misstatements. Members shall not post or share information known to be false about the City, its employees or public officials. Members should never represent themselves as a spokesperson for the City Council, a Board or Commission, City Administration or any specific City department.

Members should be mindful that posting content regarding City-related matters could inadvertently result in the violation of the Open meetings Act. Members are prohibited from deleting posts and related comments regarding City-related matters to avoid a violation of the Open Meetings Act.

## Meeting Document Rules

### Meeting Notices

Advanced public notice of meetings must be provided by physically posting notice and listing the meeting on the City Website no less than 18 hours before a meeting.

There are two types of meetings: regular meetings and special meetings. Boards and commissions schedule regular meetings at the start of each year, if applicable. When necessary, commissions may reschedule regular meeting dates by vote at a meeting throughout the year. Special meetings supplement the regular meeting schedule and often focus on special topics.

Key points for scheduling meetings:

- Avoid scheduling meetings on dates identified as Regular City Council meeting days, City holidays and/or other recommended holiday observances.
- Advanced notice of meetings is required for all meetings: regular meetings and special meetings. Work with your staff liaison to make sure these are published and distributed appropriately.

### Agendas & Agenda Packets

Agendas are critical documents for keeping meetings on topic and progressing in an orderly manner. With the exception of subcommittee meetings, agendas are **required** to be posted online for all meetings at least 18 hours ahead of each meeting. Staff liaisons help Boards and Commissions publish agendas online prior to the meetings.

Agenda packets are supporting documents related to items on the agenda and encompass any materials distributed to members for review and action. Under record retention rules, the City keeps all agendas and agenda packets created as part of the permanent record of each meeting.

## Meeting Minutes

Board secretary's or staff liaisons prepare minutes and the proposed minutes must be available for the public and members to review at the following meeting. Boards and Commissions can review, correct and approve proposed minutes at the next regular meeting.

Both regular and special meetings are documented by minutes. Minutes provide a record of the date, time, place and attendance of members at a meeting along with a record of any decisions made or roll call votes conducted at a meeting. Minutes are not a transcript or a set of notes recording discussions leading up to decisions. For convenience, minutes are typically available on the City Website.

## Role of City Staff

**Staff Liaisons:** Each Board and Commission has an assigned staff liaison that provides professional and administrative support. Staff liaisons are the primary conduit for members of Boards and Commissions to communicate with the City. Your staff liaison should be your first contact if you have any questions related to your Board or Commission. Staff liaisons perform a variety of roles, including:

- ✓ Serving as a channel of communication between the board/commission and other staff
- ✓ Creating meeting notices, preparing minutes, and creating agendas
- ✓ Scheduling meetings and booking meeting locations
- ✓ Maintaining board/commission records
- ✓ Coordinating the collection and distribution of information requested by the Board or Commission

**City Manager's Office:** The City Manager's Office provides a wide range of support and oversight to ensure meetings and records relating to Boards and Commissions are accurate and meet applicable requirements, including:

- ✓ Maintaining rosters by updating as needed with appointments and resignations
- ✓ Assisting with reviewing and posting meeting notices provided by staff liaisons
- ✓ Arranging accessibility accommodations requested for accessibility at public meetings
- ✓ Notifying the City Council of Board and Commission terms set to expire
- ✓ Emailing all new appointees; the expiration date of the appointee's term; and other information the City Manager's Office deems appropriate

## Conclusion

We hope the information contained in this document will assist you in preparing to serve on a City Board or Commission. If you have additional questions, there are many people who can help, including your staff liaison, the City Manager's Office and the chair or other members of your board or commission.

*Online Resources*

**Agendas & Minutes:**

<https://eastpointecitymi.documents-on-demand.com/>

**Boards and Commissions:**

[https://www.cityofeastpointe.net/government/boards\\_\\_commissions/index.php](https://www.cityofeastpointe.net/government/boards__commissions/index.php)

**Charter and Ordinances:**

[https://library.municode.com/mi/eastpointe/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances](https://library.municode.com/mi/eastpointe/codes/code_of_ordinances)

**City Website:**

<https://www.cityofeastpointe.net/>

**Open Meetings Act:**

[https://www.mml.org/resources/information/oma\\_foia.htm](https://www.mml.org/resources/information/oma_foia.htm)

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