

## **Pocket Questions - Council Procedure Manual**

### **What are the racial and equity impacts?**

This is a procedure manual for council members. Racial and Equity impacts could affect those who do not know how to participate in government due to being marginalized for so long.

### **Who is or will experience burden?**

The town council will experience the burden of having to follow these written procedures because they are new and different. The public will also experience some burden in having to follow procedures for public comment. Those that are not familiar with the process may feel some discomfort in having to learn the system.

### **Who is or will experience benefit?**

The residents and town council will experience the benefits of having guidelines to follow for the meeting/agenda process. Established procedures enhance transparency and accountability and serves as a public document, allowing residents to understand the council's operations and how their decisions are made. This transparency fosters trust and accountability between the council and the community.

Newly elected council members can use this resource to quickly grasp the council's structure, procedures, and responsibilities. The manual ensures continuity of procedures and institutional knowledge even as council members change.

### **What are the root causes of inequity?**

This is a new procedure manual and has not been in place before. Some may not feel comfortable learning this process because they do not know how to act or what they need to do to be a part of the process.

### **What might be the unintended consequences of this action or strategy?**

An overly prescriptive manual can stifle creativity, flexibility, and innovation in decision-making. It may create excessive bureaucracy, making it difficult to adapt to changing circumstances or respond to unforeseen issues. Complex or lengthy procedural requirements may discourage public participation, particularly for individuals with limited time or resources. This can lead to a less representative and inclusive decision-making process.

An overemphasis on following procedures may lead to a loss of focus on the substantive issues at hand. Council members may become bogged down in procedural details, losing sight of the ultimate goals and objectives. A highly structured manual may discourage open debate and constructive dissent, potentially leading to a "rubber-stamp" approach to decision-making. A lack of clarity or ambiguity in the manual's language can lead to misinterpretations and disputes, potentially hindering effective communication and collaboration.

Procedures can be misused to manipulate outcomes or exclude certain voices. Clear guidelines and oversight mechanisms are necessary to prevent such abuses. Excessive reliance on the manual may limit the development of council members' judgment and expertise. It can create a culture of compliance rather than critical thinking and problem-solving.

**How is your department planning to mitigate any burdens, inequities, and unintended consequences?**

This manual has uses clear and concise language and avoids jargon to make it easy to understand. This document has been reviewed by many individuals, including the Race and Equity department and those at UNC School of Government. It focuses on achieving goals and objective effectively and encourages open debate and dissent. These procedures safeguard against any one member's abuse of power. Council can periodically review this document to make sure it is meeting the council's needs.