

**GOVERNMENT REVIEW STUDY COMMISSION  
COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM  
418 EAST SECOND STREET  
WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 3, 2025  
5:30 PM**



- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Communications from the Public - (This time is set aside for the public to comment on items that are either on the agenda, but not a public hearing or on items not on the agenda. City officials do not respond during these comments but may respond or follow-up later on the agenda or at another time. The presiding officer has the option of limiting such communications to three minutes depending on the number of citizens who want to comment and the length of the meeting agenda)
- 3) Approve the August 6, 2025, Minutes
- 4) Review of the Publication of Summary
- 5) Public Comment
- 6) Adjournment



The following Principles for Civil Dialogue are adopted on 2/20/2007 for use by the City Council and by all boards, committees and personnel of the City of Whitefish:

- We provide a safe environment where individual perspectives are respected, heard, and acknowledged.
- We are responsible for respectful and courteous dialogue and participation.
- We respect diverse opinions as a means to find solutions based on common ground.
- We encourage and value broad community participation.
- We encourage creative approaches to engage public participation.
- We value informed decision-making and take personal responsibility to educate and be educated.
- We believe that respectful public dialogue fosters healthy community relationships, understanding, and problem-solving.
- We acknowledge, consider and respect the natural tensions created by collaboration, change and transition.
- We follow the rules and guidelines established for each meeting.

Adopted by Resolution 07-09  
February 20, 2007

# PARLIAMENTARY MOTIONS GUIDE

Based on Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (11th Edition) and [www.jimslaughter.com](http://www.jimslaughter.com)

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.

## PRIVILEGED MOTIONS

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?	RECONSIDER?
Adjourn	I move to <b>adjourn</b>	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	Yes
Take a break	I move to <b>recess</b> for	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
Register complaint	I rise to a <b>question of privilege</b>	Yes	No	No	No	None	No
Orders of the day	I call for the <b>orders of the day</b>	Yes	No	No	No	None	No

## SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?	RECONSIDER?
Lay aside temporarily	I move to <b>lay the question on the table</b>	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority	Negative vote only
Close debate	I move the previous question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	Yes
Limit / extend debate	I move that <b>debate be limited to...</b>	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3	Yes
Postpone to a certain time	I move to <b>postpone</b> the motion to...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Refer to a committee	I move to <b>refer</b> the motion to...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Amend a motion	I move to <b>amend</b> the motion by...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Kill main motion	I move that the motion be <b>postponed indefinitely</b>	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	Affirmative vote only

## MAIN MOTIONS

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?	RECONSIDER?
Bring business to motion	I <b>move that (or “to”)</b> ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes

No order of precedence. Arise incidentally and decided immediately.

## INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?	RECONSIDER?
Enforce rules	<b>Point of order</b>	Yes	No	No	No	None	No
Submit matter to assembly	I <b>appeal</b> from the decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Varies	No	Majority	Yes
Suspend rules	I move to <b>suspend the rules</b> which...	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
Avoid main motion altogether	I <b>object to the consideration</b> of the question	Yes	No	No	No	2/3	Negative vote only
Divide motion / question	I move to <b>divide the question</b>	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
Demand rising vote	I call for a <b>division</b>	Yes	No	No	No	None	No
Pliamentary law question	<b>Parliamentary inquiry</b>	Yes (if urgent)	No	No	No	None	No
Request information	A <b>point of information</b> , please.	Yes (if urgent)	No	No	No	None	No

No order of precedence. Introduce only when nothing else pending.

## RENEWAL MOTIONS

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?	RECONSIDER?
Take matter from table	I move to <b>take from the table...</b>	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
Cancel or change previous action	I move to <b>rescind / amend</b> the motion...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3 or majority w/notice	Negative vote only
Reconsider motion	I move to <b>reconsider</b> the vote on...	No	Yes	Varies	No	Majority	No

**GOVERNMENT REVIEW STUDY COMMISSION  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 6, 2025  
5:30 PM**

1) Call to Order

Commissioner Chair McDowell called the meeting to order at 5:40pm. Commissioners present were Alessi, Dugan, Wurster, Whitman (virtual), Ex-officio/City Clerk Howke, City Manager Smith, and City Attorney Jacobs. Approximately 7 people were in the audience.

2) Communications from the Public - (This time is set aside for the public to comment on items that are either on the agenda, but not a public hearing or on items not on the agenda. City officials do not respond during these comments but may respond or follow-up later on the agenda or at another time. The presiding officer has the option of limiting such communications to three minutes depending on the number of citizens who want to comment and the length of the meeting agenda)

Roger Hopkins, Columbia Falls Study Commissioner, clarified a misunderstanding from the May 7th meeting minutes, which had suggested a commissioner was not interested in making changes. Although he was unable to attend that meeting, he has since communicated with Commissioner Wurster and others in the community. Hopkins reported that the commissioner in question is, in fact, willing to pursue changes and supports moving forward with establishing local government authority. The commission will not pursue a full charter but will recommend the city council adopt a new plan to incorporate self-government powers. He expressed appreciation for the Study Commissioners' engagement with Columbia Falls and congratulated them on their progress.

3) Approval of July 2, 2025, Minutes

**Commissioner Dugan made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Wurster to approve July 2, 2025 minutes. The motion carried.**

4) Public Hearing

a) Local Government Study Commission Final Report

Chair McDowell opened the Public Hearing.

Rebecca Norton, Scott Avenue, thanked the Commissioners for their service. She shared that while reviewing past documents, she found unimplemented recommendations from a previous city manager and interviewed former commissioners. She suggested creating a running list of proposed changes—both to the charter and other public recommendations—to track discussions over time. Norton recommended using the City Council's annual retreat as an opportunity to revisit such ideas, citing examples like adopting a citywide gender-neutral policy. She noted that many issues tend to resurface a decade later.

There being no further public comment, Chair McDowell closed the Public Hearing and turned matters over to the Commissioners for their consideration.

**Commissioner Wurster made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Alessi to approve the Final Report. The motion carried on a 4-1 vote, Commissioner Dugan voting in opposition.**

5) Communication to or from Study Commissioners

Commissioner Alessi stated she is pleased with how everything turned out. She hopes the Council will take the recommendations.

Commissioner Dugan expressed his opposition to the final report and indicated he will sign the minority report. He noted that the process yielded 300 survey responses—a significant number by city government standards. According to the survey, 64% of respondents showed interest in changing local government, which he believes reflects broader public support, as evidenced by the initial vote to conduct a government review. He expressed disappointment that potential changes were not explored further for voter consideration.

Commissioner Wurster thanked the fellow commissioners and the staff for facilitating this process.

Commissioner McDowell emphasized the importance of public participation in government. He thanked attendees for their presence and acknowledged the few community members who have attended recent meetings. He expressed a commitment to increasing public education about local government to encourage broader civic engagement moving forward.

6) Next meeting: September 3, 2025 at 5:30pm.

The Commissioners discussed and agreed that Commissioners Alessi and Wurster will draft the Publication of Summary to discuss and approve at the next meeting.

7) Adjournment

Chair McDowell adjourned the meeting at 5:49pm

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Kevin McDowell - Chair

Attest:

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Michelle Howke, Whitefish City Clerk

## WHITEFISH STUDY COMMISSION

### SUMMARY OF FINAL REPORT

The Whitefish Study Commission recommends **NO CHANGES** to the Whitefish City Charter and offers (5) five recommendations to the City Council for consideration.

1. Adjust committee membership criteria so that qualifications for a majority of committee appointments include some relevant experience or expertise in the subject matter of the committee
2. Require that all Board and Committee meetings be audio and/or video recorded and that such recordings prevail over the written summary minutes.
3. Amend city policy so as to permit qualified potential board and committee members who have relevant expertise to serve as long as they reside within School District #44.
4. Implement or Repeal Section 2.02 (11) of the City Charter as it requires the mandatory creation of a citizen's standing committee that does not exist. The City Council is not in compliance with the provision of the Charter.
5. Correct Article VI, Section 6:03 entitled "Separability" and change it to "Severability" as this section is a standard legal severability clause.

The minority report suggested that two charter changes go before voters

1.—The Minority Report recommends placing questions about term limits and at-large versus districted/ward-based elections on the November 2025 ballot. The minority report highlights that a significant portion of community survey respondents expressed interest in these changes and that a greater number of survey respondents indicated a preference for at least some changes to the government

rather than keeping it exactly the same."Consecutive term limits for the Mayor and/or City Council

2:—

3.1.\_\_\_\_\_Elections be ward based as opposed to at-large