



## **TOWN OF DURHAM**

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**Orientation Session for Newly  
Elected Town Council Members**  
Durham Town Hall Council Chambers  
**March 18, 2024**

**6:00 PM**

1. Durham's Town Council/Manager form of government
  - a. Council adopts legislation called ordinances
  - b. Council approves budget
  - c. Council sets overall policy for Town – Council Goals
  - d. The manager, called the administrator, is chief administrative officer in Durham that hires/fires staff, develops/proposes the annual budget, impartially carries out the policies of the Town Council, and represents the Town as necessary
  - e. The Council can only take action at a publicly noticed meeting in which a majority of members vote in the affirmative on a specific proposal.
2. Town Charter of the Town of Durham – Members can review on Town website, [www.ci.durham.nh.us](http://www.ci.durham.nh.us). Go to “Inside Town Hall” then “Town Council”
3. Role of the Council Chair/Chair Pro-Tem – Sec. 3.3 of Charter – describe roles.
  - a. Preside over Council meetings
  - b. Meet with Administrator to set Council agendas
  - c. Sign resolutions/ordinances
  - d. Official acts/appearances
  - e. Council Chair receives \$2,000 annually (paid out twice a year). Other Council members receive \$1,500 annually (paid out twice a year). Amount determined by the Town Charter.
4. Committee Assignments and Role of Councilors on Committees. The goal is an active feed-back loop.
5. Non-interference with Town Administration- Sec. 4.7 of Charter.
6. Annual budget/CIP process - Administrator brings forward annual budget/CIP proposal by October 31<sup>st</sup>. Town Council approves a budget by last business day in December or TA proposal becomes the budget by default.
7. Process for Issuing Long-Term Debt – Sec. 5.2 of Charter.

8. Council Culture
9. Bringing forward Ordinances/Initiatives/Topics for discussion – Let the Chair, Chair Pro Tem, Todd, or Karen know of items – Sec. 3.8 of Charter
10. Goal Setting – the annual process
11. Town Council meetings – Rules of Procedure
  - a. Robert's Rules
  - b. Quorum
  - c. Right-to-Know Law, E-Mail Issues & Non-Public Sessions
  - d. Voting (a reason must be given for all abstentions per Town Charter)
  - e. Recusal
  - f. Council packets & Communications
  - g. Unanimous consent agenda
12. Other business
  - a. Indemnification of Council members
  - b. Seating at the Council table
  - c. Zoom meeting access
13. Sec. 1.3B Construction – Gender-free terminology
14. Public Comments –  
(\* ) *The public comment portion of the Council meeting is to allow members of the public to address matters of public concern regarding town government for up to 5 minutes. Obscene, violent, disruptive, disorderly comments, or those likely to induce violence, disruption or disorder are not permitted and will not be tolerated. Complaints regarding Town staff should be directed to the Administrator.*
15. Combination for Town Hall entrance