

EXHIBIT A

**SARASOTA COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

RULES OF PROCEDURE

SECTION I - BOARD MEETINGS: PREPARATION AND PROCEDURES

1. Preparation of Board Meeting Agenda4
2. Order of Business4
3. Quorum5
4. Required Attendance of Officials6
5. Parliamentarian6
6. Clerk to the Board; Minutes6
7. Sergeant-at-Arms6
8. Rules of Order and Debate7
9. Voting7
10. Policy Determination8
11. Ordinances8
12. Resolutions8
13. Contracts8
14. Motions8
15. Reconsideration of Action Previously Taken8
16. Board Meetings – Regular8
17. Public Hearings8
18. Board Meetings – Special10
19. Board Meetings – Joint11
20. Board Meetings – State of Emergency11
21. Board Meetings – Retreats12
22. Inspection Trips and Site Visits12
23. Board Workshops12
24. Ceremonial Meetings12

SECTION II – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT

1. Board Meetings - Accessibility12
2. Civility Code13
3. Opportunity to be Heard14
4. Board Mail; Circulation; Public Review and Duplication14
5. Creation of Advisory Boards, Commissions, Task Forces, Committees and Councils15

SECTION III - GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Newly Elected Commissioners..... 15

2. Board Chair; Presiding Officer 15

3. Facsimile Signatures 16

4. Legislative Program and Communication with Lobbyists 16

5. Board Appointments to Boards and Committees 17

6. Suspension and Construction of Rules 17

SECTION I - BOARD MEETINGS: PREPARATIONS AND PROCEDURES

1: Preparation of Board Meeting Agenda. The County Administrator or designee shall prepare the agenda; the Board may place items on the agenda by consensus direction.

- (a) Items for inclusion on the Board agenda shall be prepared according to specifications provided by the County Administrator.
- (b) The agenda shall be finalized no later than the Thursday preceding regular Board meetings, at which time the agenda and accompanying documentation shall be posted on the County website and provided to the Commissioners and to the Clerk to the Board.
- (c) For joint meetings, workshops, retreats and special meetings, County Administration shall provide deadlines for participating staff, and the agenda shall be finalized at least two business days prior to the meeting, at which time the agenda and accompanying documentation shall be posted on the County website and provided to the Commissioners and the Clerk to the Board.
- (d) Every effort shall be made to include all relevant information in the published agenda packet. If, however, it becomes necessary to provide supplementary information related to an agenda item after the agenda has been published, this information shall be made available to the Board and the public as soon as practicable, but no later than 4 p.m. on the Monday prior to a regular Board Meeting. A copy shall be provided to the Clerk to the Board at the meeting prior to the item being heard.

2: Order of Business. The conduct of business shall be based upon the agenda created and scheduled for the specific meeting being held. All meeting agendas (except for Ceremonial Meetings, as noted in Section I, item 24) shall include opportunities for public comment (Open to the Public) and Board comments (Other Business). For regular meetings, the order of business shall be as follows; provided, however, that the Chair, absent objection, may rearrange, reschedule or continue items to a future date to more expeditiously conduct the business before the Board:

- (a) Non-denominational Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance
- (b) Proclamations are generally read and presented at 9:00 a.m. Any person may request that the Chair present a proclamation. Proclamations will not appear in the agenda packet and do not require Board action. The Chair or designee may read proclamations.
- (c) Awards, Presentations and Recognitions – Generally presented at 9:00 a.m.
- (d) Open to the Public – Three-minute time limit per person
- (e) Consent Section – Unless pulled for discussion, all matters listed under the Consent Section are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion.
 - (1) Appointments to Advisory Boards and Committees will be scheduled under the Consent Section of the agenda when there is only one applicant per position; otherwise, they will be scheduled under the Discussion Section.

- (2) Authorization to advertise public hearings for Ordinances may be approved on the Consent Section or the Discussion Section, at staff's discretion.
- (f) Discussion Section – Matters which require discussion or debate; these may include, but are not limited to:
 - (1) Consideration of proposed Contracts and Resolutions;
 - (2) Staff reports;
 - (3) Presentations that may require Board direction or action;
 - (4) Authorization to advertise public hearings for Ordinances may be approved on the Consent Section or the Discussion Section, at staff's discretion;
 - (5) Consideration of appointments to advisory councils when there is more than one applicant per vacancy;
 - (6) Advisory Board Annual Report Presentations.
- (g) Public Hearings
 - (1) Items advertised for public hearing may be removed from the agenda only after public announcement at the public hearing time.
 - (2) Public hearings will be advertised for 9:00 a.m., 1:30 p.m., or 5:01 p.m., or as soon thereafter, and will be heard as soon as possible after the advertised time. In no event will public hearings be heard prior to the advertised time.
- (h) Reports Section – The Reports Section is scheduled for the morning session of each Tuesday meeting, but may be heard later in the day, or the next day, at the Board's discretion. This section will include the following:
 - (1) Clerk's Report;
 - (2) County Administrator's Report;
 - (3) County Attorney's Report;
 - (4) Commission and Committee Reports;
 - (5) Outstanding Board Assignments;
 - (6) Review of Board Meeting Schedule.
- (i) Open to the Public – Scheduled for a time certain at 1:30 p.m., three-minute time limit per person.
- (k) Continuation of Discussion Section and Public Hearings
 - (l) Open to the Public – Three-minute time limit per person
- (m) Other Business
- (n) Adjourn

3: Quorum. A quorum for the transaction of business by the Board consists of three Commissioners. Once a quorum has been established, a majority of Commissioners present shall be required to carry a motion, unless by statute, ordinance or other regulation, an extraordinary majority (four-fifths) or super-majority (five of five) of the Board is required for approval of an item.

4: Required Attendance of Officials. In addition to Commissioners, County officials whose regular attendance shall be required at meetings of the Board are the: Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller, County Administrator, County Attorney, or their designees.

5: Parliamentarian. The Chair may request advice on a parliamentary policy or procedure from the County Administrator or County Attorney.

6: Clerk to the Board; Minutes.

- (a) The Clerk to the Board shall make accurate minutes of the proceedings of each Board meeting held within Sarasota County, including regular, special, joint, and emergency meetings, workshops and retreats. For joint meetings held outside the county, the agenda, minutes and audio recording prepared by the other jurisdiction will be filed with the Clerk to the Board as part of the official record.
- (b) The Clerk to the Board is responsible for the audio recordings of the Board meetings, as the official record.
- (c) The Clerk to the Board places the draft minutes in the Consent section of the agenda for approval by the Board. Such minutes stand confirmed at the regular Board meeting without a reading in an open meeting, unless some necessary revision is shown. In such event, an appropriate revision is made.
- (d) At the request of a Commissioner, the Clerk to the Board may be directed to “spread upon the minutes” (enter in the minutes) a portion of the discussion of an issue.
- (e) The Clerk to the Board shall update the meetings section of the County website to post agendas, action agendas, and minutes which link to the Board meeting videos.
- (f) Upon request of the Board, verbatim excerpts from the meeting will be prepared by County Administrative staff.

7: Sergeant-at-Arms. The County Administrator or designee shall serve as sergeant-at-arms at Board meetings for the purpose of maintaining order and decorum. The Sarasota County Sheriff’s Office is authorized to assist the County Administrator in performing this duty and the County Administrator or the Chair, at their discretion, may request a representative of the Sheriff’s Office be present at any Board meeting. The following policy will provide guidance in handling disruptions:

- (a) The Chair has the authority to stop the meeting until order has been restored.
- (b) If an individual refuses to relinquish the podium after being allowed to address the Board, the Chair will inform the individual that his/her time has expired and will direct the individual to leave the podium.
- (c) If an individual causes disruption in the Board meeting site, the Chair will inform the individual causing the disruption to cease the disruptive activity.
- (d) If the disruption fails to stop:

- (1) The Chair will inform the individual causing the disruption that his/her actions are contrary to the orderly function of the meeting and that the individual is to cease such action or the sergeant-at-arms will be instructed to remove the individual from the meeting site.
- (2) If the disruption continues, the Chair shall be authorized to take final action and request that the person be removed from the premises.
- (3) If a law enforcement officer is the person removing the member of the public, the decision of whether to take action shall be made by the law enforcement deputy based on state and federal law.

8: Rules of Order and Debate. Parliamentary rules as outlined in Robert's Rules of Order, as revised, are applicable unless expressly changed herein or waived by the Board.

- (a) Every Board member desiring to speak shall address the Chair and, upon recognition by the Chair, shall be confined to the question under debate.
- (b) The maker of a motion shall be entitled to the floor first for debate.
- (c) A member once recognized should not be interrupted when speaking. Should the Chair determine that the speaker should be called to order, the member shall then cease speaking until the question of order is determined by the Chair. If it is determined that the speaker is in order, said member will be at liberty to proceed.

9: Voting. The votes during all Board meetings should be transacted as follows:

- (a) The Chair shall call for the vote. At the request of any Commissioner, a roll call vote shall be taken by the Clerk to the Board. The roll call vote will be conducted by District.
- (b) When the Chair calls for a vote on a motion, every member who is in the Commission chamber must vote, unless the member has indicated a voting conflict pursuant to Section 112.3143 or Section 286.011, Florida Statutes. The abstaining member must comply with the requirements of Section 112.3143 or Section 286.011, Florida Statutes, including the requirement that Form 8B – Conflict of Interest must be filed with the Clerk to the Board within ten days of the meeting at which the conflict was declared.
- (c) Generally, the passage of any motion, policy or resolution requires the affirmative vote of at least a majority of the membership of the Commissioners who are present and eligible to vote.
- (d) Any Commissioner shall have the right to express dissent from or protests against any ordinance, resolution or policy of the Board, and to have the reason therefore spread upon the minutes.
- (e) If a motion is not carried by at least a majority of Commissioners present, the proposal shall be considered denied.

10: Policy Determination.

- (a) Adoption of policy requires the affirmative vote of three Commissioners.
- (b) Enactment of policy may be accomplished by adoption of an ordinance, resolution, or motion of the Board.
- (c) Implementation of adopted policy shall be the responsibility of the County Administrator.

11: Ordinances.

- (a) An enacted ordinance is a legislative act which prescribes the rules and regulations of the County.
- (b) Emergency Ordinances. By super-majority vote, the Board may without public notice adopt an emergency ordinance. The emergency ordinance shall contain a declaration describing the emergency, and shall be passed in accordance with Section 125.66(3), Florida Statutes.

12: Resolutions. A resolution is an established policy of the Board. Board action shall be taken by resolution when required by law and in those instances where an expression of policy more formal than a motion is desired. A resolution generally does not require a public hearing.

13. Contracts. Various contracts come before the Board for approval. Those related to the contracting of services and goods follow procedures set forth in the Procurement Code, which is adopted by the Board pursuant to Florida Statutes.

14: Motions. An enacted motion is a form of action taken by the Board to direct that a specific action be taken on behalf of the County. A motion, once approved and entered into the record, is the equivalent of a resolution in those instances where a resolution is not required by law. All motions shall be made and seconded before debate. Before a motion has been stated by the Chair, its proposer may change, withdraw, substitute, or amend the motion without the Board's permission, and any member or the Chair may request that the maker withdraw a motion.

15: Reconsideration of Action Previously Taken. A motion to reconsider may be made pursuant to Robert's Rules of Order.

16: Board Meetings – Regular. Unless otherwise advertised, all regular meetings of the Sarasota County Commission are conducted at 9:00 a.m. on the second and fourth Tuesdays and Wednesdays of the month. Generally, meetings will be held at the Sarasota County Administration Center, 1660 Ringling Boulevard, Sarasota, with the exception of the meeting on the first Tuesday of the month, which shall be held at the Robert L. Anderson Administration Center, 4000 South Tamiami Trail, Venice, Florida. Regular meeting times and locations may be adjusted by the Board to accommodate a holiday schedule or other special circumstances. Prior notice of such change shall be provided to the public, the Clerk to the Board and the media.

17: Public Hearings. Generally, public hearings shall be held on the second and fourth Tuesday and Wednesday of the month. Unless otherwise advertised, public hearings are conducted in either the Sarasota County Administration Center or the Robert L. Anderson Administration Center. Public

hearings may be continued from a prior meeting, or scheduled on days or evenings in addition to the second and fourth Tuesday and Wednesday of each month.

- (a) Agenda items under consideration shall be scheduled for the morning (generally commences at 9:00 a.m.), afternoon (generally commences at 1:30 p.m.) or evening (generally commences at 5:01 p.m.). Matters under consideration shall be heard at the designated time: 9:00 a.m., 1:30 p.m. or 5:01 p.m. or as soon thereafter as practicable.
- (b) Public Comment – The public is always invited to speak at a public hearing; however, the following time limits shall apply. (These times may vary due to subject matter; i.e. there may be no petitioner or applicant.)
 - (1) Petitioner presentation – 20 minutes
 - (2) Citizen comments – 5 minutes per speaker
 - (3) Petitioner rebuttal – 5 minutes
- (c) Public Hearings – Presentations Scheduled
 - (1) The Chair reads the statement, “The Sarasota County Charter requires that evidence and testimony presented during public hearings shall be under oath. Persons presenting evidence and/or testimony are required to complete and sign the Request to Speak card.”
 - (2) The Chair reads the description of the agenda item(s) to be considered and opens the public hearing.
 - (3) The staff makes a presentation for the agenda item being considered.
 - (4) The Chair inquires whether there is any discussion or questions of staff.
 - (5) The petitioner makes a presentation, limiting the time to 20 minutes.
 - (6) The Chair inquires whether there is discussion or questions for the petitioner or staff.
 - (7) Public comment follows and unless otherwise determined by the Chair, shall be limited to 5 minutes per speaker. Petitioner rebuttal is limited to 5 minutes.
 - (8) The Chair closes the public hearing and inquires if there is any discussion.
 - (9) The vote is taken.
- (d) Public Hearings – Presentations Upon Request
 - (1) The Chair reads the statement, “The Sarasota County Charter requires that evidence and testimony presented during public hearings shall be under oath. Persons presenting evidence and/or testimony are required to complete and sign the Request to Speak card.”
 - (2) The Chair reads the description of the agenda item(s) to be considered and opens the public hearing.
 - (3) The Chair inquires if any Commissioner desires staff or applicant presentations or if any updates need to be brought to the Board’s attention. If any Commissioner requests presentations, the hearing will proceed as in (c) above.
 - (4) The Chair inquires if any Commissioner has questions or comments on the item(s).
 - (5) The Chair inquires if anyone from the public would like to speak on the item(s).
 - (6) The Chair closes the public hearing and calls for a motion.
 - (7) The vote is taken.

- (e) Quasi-Judicial Hearings – The procedures to be followed for quasi-judicial hearings are generally the same as for Public Hearings, as provided above:
- (1) Florida law requires that the Board’s decision in a quasi-judicial action be supported by competent substantial evidence presented to the Board during the hearing on the application.
 - (2) Ex-parte Communications
 - i. Definition: Written or oral communications regarding quasi-judicial matters pending before the Board received outside the record of the related public hearing.
 - ii. The County Attorney suggests that Commissioners refrain from participating in ex-parte communication whenever possible regarding a quasi-judicial matter to avoid the creation of the presumption of prejudice.
 - iii. The presumption of prejudice may be overcome if the context of the ex-parte communication and the identity of the person are disclosed and made a part of the record at the public meeting before the final action on the matter.
 - iv. A written communication that relates to a quasi-judicial action pending before the Board (such as a zoning decision) shall be made a part of the record before final action on the matter.
 - v. If a Commissioner conducts an investigation or site visit or receives expert opinions regarding a quasi-judicial action pending before the Board, such activities shall not be presumed prejudicial to the action if the existence of the investigation, site visit or expert opinion is made a part of the record before final action on the matter.

- (e) Convening as other Governmental Entities
- In addition to convening as the Sarasota Board of County Commissioners, the Board also sits as numerous other governmental entities, such as the Sarasota County Transportation Authority and the Community Redevelopment Agency. Prior to considering an agenda item related to these other entities, the Chair will recess as the Board of County Commissioners and convene as the appropriate authority. When the action has been taken, the Chair will recess as the other governmental entity and reconvene as the Board.

18: Board Meetings – Special. Special meetings may be held on call of the Chair or County Administrator.

- (a) If possible, the time and place of the special meeting will be added to the Sarasota County Government County Calendar advertisement.
- (b) If there is insufficient time to advertise the meeting, each Commissioner, the Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller, the Sheriff, the County Administrator and the County Attorney shall be given prior notice of the meeting. Such notice shall be provided by any reasonable means, including telephone, cell phone, email or facsimile transmission to the person’s residence, place of employment, or other location, whichever site is most likely to ensure the person’s receipt of the notice.
- (c) If there is insufficient time to advertise the meeting, notice shall also be provided to the business office of each local media organization that has on file a written request for notice of

special meetings by any reasonable means, including telephone, email or facsimile transmission.

- (d) Special meetings may be scheduled on days or evenings in addition to the second and fourth Tuesday and Wednesday of the month.

19: Board Meetings – Joint. Joint meetings may be held on the approval of the Board or recommended by the County Administrator.

- (a) In accordance with Section 380.115, Florida Statutes:
 - (1) The Board may hold a joint meeting with the governing body or bodies of one or more adjacent counties or municipalities to discuss matters of mutual interest;
 - (2) A joint meeting may be held at any appropriate public place within the jurisdiction of any participating county or municipality, provided that Sarasota County citizens have a reasonable opportunity to attend;
 - (3) Due public notice must be provided within the jurisdictions of all participants;
 - (4) The Board must first adopt a resolution authorizing its participation in the joint meeting;
 - (5) No official vote may be taken at a joint meeting;
 - (6) A joint meeting may not take the place of any public hearing required by law.
- (b) Joint meetings may be scheduled on any day or evening of the week.
- (c) An agenda outlining the business to be conducted will be prepared jointly and agreed upon by the Administrator or Manager of each jurisdiction.

20: Board Meetings – State of Emergency. Florida Statute 252 authorizes the waiver of procedures and formalities otherwise required to take whatever prudent action is necessary to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the community in the event of a state of an emergency. Sarasota County's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) is developed consistent with the statutory requirements and provides the authority and process to activate the CEMP and declare a State of Emergency. As part of this process, the County Administrator may call for an emergency meeting of the Board to adopt a resolution that declares a State of Emergency, authorizes expenditure of public funds, and provides for authorization to apply for State and Federal financial assistance. If an emergency meeting is called, the following provisions apply.

- (a) The call for an emergency meeting requires reasonable notice; e.g., posting the time and place of the meeting at the location of the meeting and on Access Sarasota TV.
- (b) Each Commissioner, the Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller, the Sheriff, the County Administrator and the County Attorney shall be given the most reasonable notice available under the circumstances, including notification by telephone, cell phone, email, facsimile transmission or hand delivery.
- (c) The most reasonable notice available under the circumstances of the emergency meeting shall be provided to the business office of each local media organization that has on file a written request for notice of emergency meetings. Such notice shall be provided by any reasonable means, including telephone, email or facsimile transmission.
- (d) Emergency meetings may be scheduled at any time.

- (e) An agenda is not required for an emergency meeting. However, if an agenda is prepared, it will be made available as soon as possible prior to the start of the meeting.

21: Board Meetings – Retreats. The Board will hold an annual Retreat in the month of December.

- (a) The time and place of the Retreat will be advertised.
- (b) Additional Retreats may be scheduled as needed.
- (c) The Retreat may be continued to another date, time and place.
- (d) An agenda outlining the business to be conducted will be prepared by the County Administrator, reviewed with the Commissioners and made available prior to the meeting as detailed in Section I. 1.c.
- (e) The annual Retreat agenda will include the following items for approval:
- The election of a Chair, Vice Chair and Pro Tem for the upcoming calendar year, which take effect as of January 1;
 - Board Meeting Schedule for the upcoming calendar year;
 - Travel and associated expenses for the upcoming calendar year;
 - Committee Appointments for the upcoming calendar year;
 - Other items, as appropriate.

22: Inspection Trips and Site Visits. The County Administrator or the Board may schedule inspection trips or site visits by the Board as needed. Advance notice of these meetings shall be given in the same manner as special meetings. County staff will provide an official record of the proceedings via audio recording or summary minutes.

23: Board Workshops. Board workshops will be scheduled by the County Administrator to accommodate larger policy discussions, such as budget preparations or growth planning.

- (a) Workshops may focus on a single theme or topic or may include multiple discussion topics.
- (b) The time and place of the workshop will be advertised.

24: Ceremonial Meetings. Meetings may be scheduled for ceremonial purposes, such as the swearing in of newly elected or re-elected Commissioners and Constitutional Officers. Such ceremonial meetings will be advertised in accordance with the requirements for special meetings. If the meeting is limited to the ceremonial purpose, Open to the Public will not be required.

SECTION II - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT

1: Board Meetings – Accessibility. All meetings of the Sarasota County Commission shall be open to the public in accordance with the Florida Government in the Sunshine Law, Section 286.011, Florida Statutes.

- (a) The exception shall be those meetings statutorily exempt, such as executive collective bargaining sessions - Section 447.605(1), F.S.; meetings regarding risk management claims - Section 768.28(15), F.S.; and litigation meetings pursuant to Section 286.011(8) F.S. The Board shall follow all statutory requirements for exempt meetings.
- (b) Because of the need to comply with seating capacity requirements of the fire code, there may be occasions when entrance by the public to the Commission Chambers or other meeting rooms is at capacity. In those instances, the Board will make other rooms available for those who desire to participate in the meeting or adjourn and reschedule the meeting to a location to accommodate the public.
- (c) All meetings of the Board will be held in a building that is open to all members of the public. No fee may be charged.
- (d) For public safety purposes, no signs or placards mounted on sticks, posts, poles or similar structures will be allowed in Board meeting rooms. Any signs, placards, or banners that are disruptive or interfere with a person's ability to observe the meeting shall be removed.
- (e) All persons with disabilities shall be provided reasonable assistance to enable them to effectively participate in Board meetings.

2: Civility Code. The Board-adopted Civility Code governs all proceedings held before the Sarasota Board of County Commissioners:

1. All electronic devices, including cell phones and pagers, shall be either turned off or otherwise silenced.
2. Prolonged conversations shall be conducted outside Commission Chambers.
3. Clapping, whistling, heckling, gesturing, loud conversations, or other disruptive behavior is prohibited.
4. Only those individuals who have submitted speaker cards and who have been recognized by the Chairman may address comments to the Board.
5. Comments at public hearings shall be limited to the subject being considered by the Board.
6. Comments at Open to the Public shall be directed to County issues.
7. All public comments shall avoid personal attacks, abusive language and redundancy.
8. No person attending a board meeting is to harass, annoy or otherwise disturb any other person in the room.

Any member of the public whose behavior is disruptive and violates the Sarasota County Civility Code is subject to removal from the Board meeting and such other action as may be appropriate. If a law enforcement officer is the person removing the member of the public, the decision of whether to take action shall be made by the law enforcement deputy based on state and federal law.

3: Opportunity to be Heard. Persons desiring to address the Board must first fill out a Request to Speak card and turn it in to the Clerk to the Board. County employees providing information on Consent or Discussion Section items as part of their official duties are not required to complete a Request to Speak card. Upon recognition and introduction by the Chair, the person may speak. Comments made during a public hearing must be under oath or affirmation and limited to the topic of the public hearing. Any topic may be addressed at Open to the Public. In compliance with Section 286.0114, Florida Statutes, to ensure that everyone has a fair opportunity to participate, the following policies are in effect:

- (a) After being recognized, the person shall:
 - step up to the speaker's rostrum and state his/her name;
 - limit comments to three minutes for Open to the Public and five minutes for public hearings (unless modified by consensus of the Board);
 - address all remarks to the Board as a body, and not a member thereof;
 - make comments and present documents to the Board and the Clerk to the Board;
 - make comments concise and to the point;
 - submit into the record by providing to the Clerk to the Board any data or evidence for the Board to consider.
- (b) No person may speak more than once on the same subject at the same meeting unless granted permission by the Board.
- (c) At the Chair's discretion, a person who has not previously submitted a Request to Speak card may be permitted to speak, but will be required to fill out a Request to Speak card and turn it in to the Clerk to the Board immediately after speaking.
- (d) A person may not complete a Request to Speak card and then allocate their time to another speaker, such that a single speaker is allotted more time than the designated three- or five-minute limit per speaker.
- (e) No person other than a member of the Board and the person having the floor may be permitted to enter into any discussion, either directly or through a member of the Board, without permission of the Chair. No question may be asked except through the Chair.
- (f) The Chair, subject to concurrence of the majority of the Board, is authorized to modify speaker time limits and otherwise control presentations to avoid repetition.

4: Board Mail; Circulation; Public Review and Duplication. All mail addressed to the Chair and the Commissioners, which is received pursuant to law or in connection with the transaction of official County business, is a public record (Chapter 119, Florida Statutes). The public may review and duplicate these records.

- (a) Each Commissioner will be provided a copy of the Chair's mail, which may be done by circulating the original with attachments or by circulating a copy of the correspondence. If the document is time sensitive, copies will be made for each Commissioner. Items of considerable length (such as petitions) will not be copied; instead, a memorandum or email will be distributed which announces the availability and location of the item in the office.

Publications, invitations and lengthy agenda materials for other boards on which Commissioners serve will not be copied; only the agenda will be circulated.

- (b) Each Commissioner will receive the original of items addressed to them. Mail with the words similar to “Personal,” “Confidential” or “For the Addressee Only” shall be deemed County correspondence and opened under the provisions of the Florida Sunshine Law.
- (c) The Chair and Commissioners who receive individually addressed mail will be responsible for replying and may ask the County Administrator to draft a response for their signature or request that the item be placed on the agenda for formal Board consideration. The County Administrator shall be responsible for ensuring that mail addressed to the Chair or the Board and referred to him is properly answered or placed on an agenda.

5: Creation of Advisory Boards, Commissions, Task Forces, Committees and Councils.

- (a) The Board shall have the power to designate or create by ordinance or resolution such advisory commissions, committees, task forces and councils (herein called “Councils”) as may be necessary for the administration of the affairs of the County, and shall provide the duties and powers of the officers and members of such Councils.
- (b) Members of these Councils shall serve without compensation, unless otherwise specified by ordinance or resolution, and all such Councils shall operate in compliance with Florida’s Open Government and Public Records laws.
- (c) All such Councils shall be part of the County government and shall utilize the services of the department most closely concerned with the activity assigned to the Council.

SECTION III - GENERAL PROVISIONS

1: Newly Elected Commissioners. The term of County Commissioners elected to office shall commence on the second Tuesday following the general election as specified in Section 100.41, Florida Statutes. A swearing-in ceremony for newly elected and re-elected Commissioners shall be coordinated by the County Administrator. The County Administrator shall provide an orientation program and additional information as requested for newly elected Commissioners.

2: Board Chair; Presiding Officer. The Chair presides at all meetings of the Board, and is recognized as the head of the County for all ceremonial purposes. In addition to the powers conferred upon the Chair, s/he continues to have all the rights, privileges and immunities of a member of the Board. The Chair shall:

- (a) Call the meeting to order, having ascertained that a quorum is present;
- (b) Recognize all questions and comments to the Board;
- (c) Preserve order and call to order any member of the Board who violates any of these procedures; and, when presiding, decide questions of order, subject to a majority vote;

- (d) Expedite business in every way compatible with the rights of members;
- (e) Maintain or delegate control of the time clock used to impose time limits on speaker presentations and testimony for public hearings and Open to the Public;
- (f) Reserve comment until the other Commissioners have had an opportunity to discuss the matter pending. If the Chair wishes to make a motion, the gavel must be relinquished. Based upon Robert's Rules of Order, the gavel will be relinquished first to the Vice-Chair, then to the Pro Tem, if needed. The gavel shall be returned to the Chair following the disposition of the pending motion.
- (g) Declare the meeting recessed or as appropriate;
- (h) Upon direction of the full Board, send letters to the Sarasota County State and Federal Legislative Delegations and other governmental officials in support of Sarasota County municipality or community-based organization initiatives, such as legislative changes and grant requests.
- (i) Sign all documents following approval/Board action, with such signing attested by the Clerk to the Board.

3. Facsimile Signatures. Upon election of Chair and Vice-Chair, they shall execute Affidavits of Manual Signature and Authorization to Affix Facsimile Signature (rubber stamp signature) for filing with the Secretary of State and with the Clerk to the Board. Use of a facsimile signature is limited to instruments of payment, official orders, proclamations, and any public security or instrument of conveyance to which at least one required signature has been manually subscribed. Facsimile signatures are prohibited on legislative bills and cannot be used on resolutions, contracts or ordinances.

4: Legislative Program and Communication with Lobbyists. The County Administrator shall submit annually to the Board a proposed state and federal legislative program. This program shall be based on Board priorities and legislative concerns submitted to the County Administrator by Sarasota County officials and member municipalities. The County will coordinate with the Florida Association of Counties, the Florida League of Cities, legislative and agency staff, as well as other appropriate and relevant associations, to protect the interests of Sarasota County.

- (a) The final State and Federal Legislative Program will be approved at a Board meeting. Copies of the approved Legislative Program shall be submitted to the appropriate federal and state Legislative Delegation in order to seek favorable legislation and appropriations to further the priorities and goals of Sarasota County.
- (b) As authorized by the Board, the County Administrator or designee may solicit and obtain the services of professional lobbyists to gain approval or favorable consideration of issues within the Legislative Program, or to intercede on behalf of Sarasota County before governmental administrative agencies. The County Administrator shall notify the Board when such services are to be rendered.

- (c) Professional registered lobbyists and county staff members authorized by the County Administrator to advance the County's Legislative Program shall meet all Federal and State legal requirements and conduct themselves ethically and without conflict of interest, as they represent the citizens of Sarasota County. Firms or individuals lobbying on behalf of the County will use the approved Sarasota County Legislative Program as a guide for their activities. New issues shall be approved by the Board for inclusion in the adopted Legislative Program.
- (d) In the event of emergency or circumstances of the legislative amendment process, the County Administrator or designee may direct the County staff or lobbyist(s) to take representative action on bills or amendments that would have a favorable impact on Sarasota County. Such emergency authorizations will be reported to the Board in a timely manner. The County Administrator may assign county employees to the legislative tasks (including attendance in Washington, D.C. or Tallahassee, or appearance before legislative or administrative bodies) to promote the Legislative Program.

5: Board Appointments to Boards and Committees. Members of the Board serve on various boards and committees (e.g., Tourist Development Council, Regional Planning Council, etc.). Appointments are reviewed and made at the Annual Retreat, held in the month of December.

- (a) A list of previous-year appointments will be disseminated to the Board in advance of the meeting so that each Commissioner can determine his/her interest in serving on various boards/committees.
- (b) If there is no nominee or volunteer or if there is more than one volunteer for a vacancy, the Chair will appoint a Commissioner to serve. The Board shall ratify the appointments to boards and committees.
- (c) Employees shall serve as support staff for the various committees as directed by the County Administrator.
- (d) Reports on Boards and Committees on which Commissioners serve are carried out under Commission and Committee Reports.

6: Suspension and Construction of Rules. Temporary suspension of these procedures by consensus or majority vote shall permit the Board to take some action that would otherwise be prevented by a procedural rule already adopted. These Rules of Procedure may be amended or temporarily suspended at any Board meeting with an affirmative vote of a majority of the Board. These rules are for the efficient and orderly conduct of Board business only; no violation of such rules shall invalidate any action of the Board when approved by a majority vote required by law.