

Questions and Answers on Proposed Rule Change:

Allowing A Councilmember to Cause a One Week Postponement of a Resolution Approving a Contract

How many times may this power to postpone be used on any contract?

- The original draft has been revised to more clearly reflect the intention of the committee discussion, that this power be allowed only once on each contract, and no further.

How does this new power to postpone relate to other motions?

- It would take precedent over all other motions, except a motion to postpone to a date-certain. If a motion to postpone to a date-certain succeeds, then the goal of a delay is achieved. If a motion to postpone to a date-certain fails, then a councilmember can still invoke this rule for a one week postponement.

Is discussion allowed before/after a request for postponement is made?

- The first draft was not clear on this point, but a revised draft suggests that debate will continue, with the President taking action on the postponement only at the end of discussion. So for example, others could ask questions, share why they do or do not want to vote for the item, or propose alternatives that the requestor may want to consider (for example, a proposal to postpone to a date certain further out than just a one week delay). The only limitation on debate would be that no other motion would be allowed, except a postponement to a date certain.

Will the power to postpone result in undue delays in contracts?

- The Power only allows a member to delay a vote one time until the “next regularly scheduled meeting” – in most cases one week, unless there is a holiday, in which case 2 weeks.
- The effect of the new power is no different than the current two reading system where a bill is heard on first reading one week, and then on final reading at the next regularly scheduled council meeting.
- The 30 day charter provision allowing administrative action if Council fails to act still applies, and a revision to the draft rule clarifies that a postponement will not be granted if doing so would push the vote beyond the 30 day deadline.

How does this new power to postpone relate to parliamentary procedure and other Council rules?

- Most parliamentary procedure is based on majority rule, so this rule change is unusual.
- Other similar places in the Council rules where the Council grants power to one member include:
 - Power to request a courtesy public hearing (currently very unclear in our rules, but has customarily been subject to approval by the President, not a vote)
 - Power to remove an item from the consent calendar and have it heard in committee.