



City of Festus, Missouri Rules of Decorum

Rules of Decorum

A. Council Intent for Rules of Decorum. The City's business is conducted at City Council meetings by the elected officials of the City. All council meetings are open to the public, but the public's participation is permitted only at formal council business meetings during the time and in the manner set forth in these rules. Public participation is generally not permitted during work sessions and other informal meetings, although the public is encouraged to express comments in writing or other communication prior to those meetings. In order for the Council to conduct its business in a manner completely open to the public, rules of decorum are necessary. The intent of these rules is to:

1. Provide a safe and secure setting for the Council and the public to attend to the City's business.
2. Enable the Council to conduct its deliberative process without interruption in a manner that can be heard and viewed by all in attendance.
3. Ensure that the public has a full opportunity to be heard during public hearings and open comment periods of Council meetings.
4. Facilitate transparency in the conduct of Council meetings so that all persons have the opportunity to observe and hear all of the Council discussion and votes.
5. State specific rules so that all may know the rules in advance and be subject to the same rules.
6. Limit interruptions, unreasonable delay, or duplication of comments, presentations, or discussion.
7. Develop an atmosphere of civility that is respectful of diverse opinions and allows presentation of positions that vary from the position of others at the meeting without insults or intimidation.
8. Balance the need for the Council to conduct effective meetings without the meetings extending late into the night or early morning with the need to give a full opportunity for the public to be heard.
9. Facilitate Council meetings as business meetings, therefore public comments should relate to the business of the City and, as such, be addressed to the Council as a whole, which conducts the business of the City.
10. Adopt these rules of decorum as the standard for conduct of meetings of the City Council and staff of the City.

B. Rules of Decorum for the Public. During all times a meeting of the City Council is being conducted, the following rules shall apply:



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1. Prior to addressing the Council, a person shall sign-up providing information for the council record. A request may be made by contacting the City Clerk's office prior to the meeting, and by completing a request form as provided. Items that may be discussed are in two main categories: Agenda items and Non-agenda items. Requests to speak on Agenda items must be submitted to the City Clerk no later than 2 p.m. on the day of the regular session meeting. Requests to speak on Non-agenda items must be submitted to the City Clerk no later than 4 p.m. on the Wednesday prior to the regular session meeting. Citizens may submit Request to Speak forms on-line at <https://www.cityoffestus.org/FormCenter/City-Hall-8/Request-to-Speak-at-Council-Meeting-64>. All comments are limited to 5 minutes.
2. Remarks to the Council must be on the topic that was indicated on the request to speak form. Remarks should be addressed to the Mayor/Presiding Officer at City Council meetings. Speakers shall refrain from making personal attacks, or from making repetitive or irrelevant remarks.
3. All remarks to the Council shall be at the podium and only after the speaker is acknowledged by the Mayor/Presiding Officer. Speakers with special needs should contact City Hall at (636) 937-4694 to request appropriate accommodations.
4. Remarks are limited to 5 minutes.
5. While in attendance at a Council meeting, no attendee shall disrupt, disturb, or otherwise impede the orderly conduct of any Council meeting by any means in a manner that obstructs the business of the meeting. Disorderly conduct includes; personal attacks, repetitive comments, irrelevant comments, failing to obey any lawful order of the Mayor/Presiding Officer to be seated, leave the meeting room and/or refrain from addressing the Council.
6. Remarks should not be repetitive of any prior speaker but should be new in nature. Multiple parties wishing to address the same issue are encouraged to appoint a spokesperson to advocate their position. If an earlier speaker has already spoken on a speaker's chosen topic, the latter speaker is encouraged to state that they join in the remarks of the earlier speaker, or to focus on aspects not previously presented by earlier speakers.
7. No attendee shall make threats or other forms of intimidation against any person in the Council chambers or meeting room, or possess any weapon or firearm while in the Council chambers or meeting room unless the attendee possesses a valid permit.
8. To maintain the fire code occupancy limits and allow for safe exit, unless addressing the Council or entering or leaving the Council chambers or meeting room, all persons in the audience shall remain seated in the seats provided. No person shall stand or sit in the aisles, nor shall the doorways be blocked.



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9. All persons in the Council chambers or other meeting room, including, without limitation, Council members, staff, and attendees, shall silence all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices to prevent disruption at the meeting.
10. No person at any Council meeting shall be in a state of intoxication caused by the person's use of alcohol or drugs.
11. No sign shall be displayed in Council chambers in a manner that blocks the view of another person or in a manner that would violate subsection 5 above.
12. The Mayor/Presiding Officer may interrupt any speaker who is violating these rules of decorum or disrupting a meeting.

C. Enforcement of Decorum. The Mayor/Presiding Officer of the Council, with the assistance of the sergeant-at-arms, if any attending, shall be responsible for maintaining the order and decorum of meetings. The Mayor/Presiding Officer may order removed from the Council chambers, or other room in which a meeting of the Council is occurring, any person who fails to observe these rules of decorum:

1. The Mayor/Presiding Officer may interrupt any speaker who is violating these rules of decorum or disrupting a meeting.
2. The Mayor/Presiding Officer shall attempt to provide a verbal warning to any attendee or particular speaker that may be violating these rules of decorum, but such verbal warning shall not be required as a condition of removing an offender from the Council chambers or meeting room.
3. These enforcement provisions are in addition to the authority held by the sergeant-at-arms or any other peace officer in attendance, to maintain order pursuant to the officer's lawful authority.
4. Any person removed from the Council chambers or meeting room shall be excluded from further attendance at the meeting from which the person has been removed, unless permission to attend is granted upon the motion adopted by a majority vote of the Council members present.
5. In addition to any other authority of the Mayor/Presiding Officer, they may call a recess during which time the members of the Council shall leave the meeting room.
6. If necessary for the safety of the Council and public, the Mayor/Presiding Officer may order the Council chambers or meeting room cleared of all attendees until the business of the Council resumes. In such event, the meeting may continue only so long as the proceedings are televised or otherwise recorded so that the proceedings of the meeting are available to the public.



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7. Any staff member may request that a police officer assess any person at a Council meeting for intoxication. A police officer may also make such an assessment based on personal observation. If, in the officer's professional opinion, the officer has a reasonable suspicion that a person in attendance at a council meeting is intoxicated through the use of alcohol, the officer may exclude that person from further attendance at that meeting. A person excluded shall be readmitted if the person excluded submits to an alcohol breath test and produces a result below .05 blood alcohol level.