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# MEMO

**To:** Mayor and City Council  
**From:** Brian Phillips, Assistant City Manager  
**Date:** March 11, 2022  
**Subject:** Code of Conduct for Public Meetings

The City Council has identified certain expectations for participants in public meetings (e.g., adhering to a speaking time limit, silencing mobile phones, etc.), which are listed on meeting agendas. However, these expectations are not comprehensive and are not all listed in one location. Therefore, staff has prepared a draft “Code of Conduct,” which describes a comprehensive set of expectations for maintaining decorum at meetings (attached).

Ideas for this list have been borrowed from those in place in other communities. **Additionally, where possible, staff has included within this list the explanation of why these rules are important.**

Municipal Code Section 2.25, in discussing meetings of the City Council, states that “The mayor, mayor pro tempore or other presiding officer shall preserve decorum [...]” Section 2.18 of Municipal Code provides that “the council shall determine the rules of its own proceedings consistent with the laws of the State of Iowa.” Having a clear set of rules in place for conduct at meetings ensures 1) that participant expectations can be made clearly known, and 2) that follow-up actions can be taken to address behaviors that violate these expectations, if necessary.

**If the City Council wishes, it can place this draft Code of Conduct on a future Council meeting agenda to consider adoption.**

## Code of Conduct at Public Meetings

The Ames City Council is committed to respectful, participatory dialogue regarding issues facing the community. In City Council and other public meetings, the City Council requests that members of the public who wish to speak respect one another by following these rules for conduct:

1. The time for each speaker may be limited to ensure an opportunity for each person to be heard. Please conclude your remarks before the time limit has been reached.
2. At no time is it appropriate to use profane, obscene, or slanderous language, or to engage in personal attacks against another person.
3. To ensure an orderly discussion, comments delivered from the public should be addressed to the City Council, not the gallery (audience), and should be delivered from the podium. It is not appropriate to speak from the gallery or to applaud or make other gestures that interfere with the proceedings, unless invited by the Mayor to do so.
4. Audience members must remain seated during discussions, unless it is necessary to move from one part of the room to another. At no time is it appropriate to stand on tables or chairs, or to approach the City Council dais beyond the podium.
5. To ensure other attendees and broadcast viewers are able to see the proceedings, signs and posters are not permitted in the Council Chambers without advance permission. If a speaker wishes to refer to a drawing or text, they may request that a staff person place the document on the projector during the discussion.
6. Out of respect to all, please silence mobile phones and other devices. If you must engage in a conversation or answer a call, please step into the hallway.
7. The Mayor may announce modifications to this code of conduct or additional procedures as necessary to ensure orderly proceedings.