

CITY OF EUREKA

Category: ADMINISTRATION

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Subject: INVOCATIONS AT CITY
COUNCIL MEETINGS

Date Adopted: May 1, 2012

File 1.25

Date Revised: July 15, 2014

Number

PROCEDURES

1. In order to solemnize proceedings of the City Council, it is the City's policy to allow for an invocation or prayer to be offered at its meetings for the benefit of the City Council and the community.
2. No member of the City Council or City employee or any other person in attendance at the meeting shall be required to participate in any prayer that is offered.
3. The prayer shall be voluntarily delivered by an eligible member of the clergy/religious leader in the City of Eureka. To ensure that such person (the "invocational speaker") is selected from among a wide pool, on a rotating basis, the City Clerk shall utilize the following procedures:
 - a. The City Council meets the first and third Tuesday of each month.
 - b. A database shall be compiled and maintained (the "Congregations List") of the clergy/religious leaders in the City of Eureka.
 - c. The Congregations List shall be compiled by referencing the annual Yellow Pages phone book(s) published for the City of Eureka and research from the Internet. All religious congregations with an established presence in the local community of Eureka are eligible to be included in the Congregations List, and any such congregation can confirm its inclusion by specific written request to the City Clerk.
 - d. The Congregations List shall be updated annually by reasonable efforts of the City Clerk, which will include mailing an invitation to the names included on the Congregations List. The invitation shall be signed by the City Clerk and read as follows:

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Dear religious leader:

The City of Eureka invites members of the clergy in the City of Eureka to voluntarily offer a prayer before the beginning of its meetings, for the benefit and blessing of the City Council. As the leader of one of the religious congregations with an established presence in the local community of the City of Eureka you are eligible to offer this important service at an upcoming meeting of the City Council.

If you are willing to assist in this regard, please send a written reply at your earliest convenience to the City Clerk at the address included on this letterhead. Clergy are scheduled on a first-come, first-serve or other random basis. The dates of the City Council's scheduled meetings for the upcoming year are listed on the following, attached page. If you have a preference among the dates, please state that request in your written reply.

This opportunity is voluntary, and you are free to offer the invocation according to the dictates of your own conscience. We ask that the invocation be three minutes or less. To maintain a spirit of respect and ecumenism, we request only that the prayer opportunity not be exploited as an effort to convert others to the particular faith of the invocational speaker, nor to disparage any faith or belief different than that of the invocational speaker.

Thank you in advance for considering this invitation.

- e. As noted in the invitation letter, paragraph 3d, the respondents to the invitation shall be scheduled on a first-come, first-serve or other random basis to deliver the prayers.
 - f. If the selected invocation speaker does not appear at the scheduled meeting, the Mayor may ask for a volunteer from among the Council or the audience to deliver the invocation.
4. No invocational speaker shall receive compensation for his or her service.
 5. The City Clerk shall make every reasonable effort to ensure that a variety of eligible invocational speakers are scheduled for the City Council meetings. In any event, no invocational speaker shall be scheduled to offer a prayer at consecutive meetings of the City Council, or at more than three (3) City Council meetings in any calendar year.

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6. Neither the City Council nor the City Clerk shall engage in any prior inquiry, review of, or involvement in, the content of any prayer to be offered by an invitational speaker.

7. This policy is not intended, and shall not be implemented or construed in any way, to affiliate the City with, nor express the City's preference for, any faith or religious denomination. Rather, this policy is intended to acknowledge and express the City's respect for the diversity of religious denominations and faiths represented and practiced among the citizens of Eureka.

I have read and understand the City's policy regarding invocations at meetings of the City Council of the City of Eureka.

Name

Date

Affiliation

Address

City

Zip