

City of Lorenzo, Texas
City Council Decorum Policy

I. Authority

Pursuant to Section 22.038 of the Texas Local Government Code, the governing body of the City of Lorenzo, Texas, a Type A General Law Municipality in the State of Texas, shall determine the rules of its proceedings. Pursuant to Section 551.007 of the Texas Government Code, a governmental body may adopt reasonable rules regarding the public's right to address the body during a meeting. To that end, the City Council now desires to adopt the following City Council Decorum Policy, which shall be in effect upon their adoption by the City Council and until such times as they are amended or new rules adopted.

II. General

During Council meetings, Council Members shall preserve order and decorum, shall not interrupt or delay proceedings, and shall obey the rules of the Council. Council Members shall demonstrate respect and courtesy to one another, to City Staff, and to members of the public appearing before the Council. Council Members shall seek to phrase and communicate all writings, publications, and speeches in a professional and constructive manner. All members of the Council agree to uphold the intent of this Policy and to govern their actions accordingly.

III. Mayoral Responsibilities

The Mayor shall serve as the Chair of all meetings. The Mayor Pro Tempore shall preside in the absence of the Mayor. The Chair is responsible for preserving order and decorum and shall keep the meetings orderly by recognizing each Member for discussion, limiting speaking items, encouraging debate among Members, and keeping discussion limited to the agenda item being considered.

IV. Council Member Responsibilities

- a. While the Council is in session, the Members must preserve order and decorum. A Member shall neither, by conversation or otherwise, delay or interrupt the proceedings or the peace of the Council. No Member shall disturb any other Member while speaking or refuse to obey the orders of the Council or its Chair. When a member of the public is speaking during a Public Comment period, Public Hearing period, or other period for which they have been recognized by the Chair, the Members of the Council shall be respectful and shall not delay or interrupt the citizen's remarks.
- b. When addressing an agenda item, the Council Member should, after being recognized by the Chair, confine comments to the question under debate, avoid personal attacks on the the

integrity or motives of any other Council Member or Staff member, and strive to be respectful in all statements.

- c. All personal communication devices should be placed in a silent mode during any City Council meetings. Personal communication devices shall not be used for communicating City-related business during City Council meetings.

V. Attendee Responsibilities

- a. City Council meetings are formal, legislative events that are entitled to respect and decorum. At meetings of the City Council, the business of the City of Lorenzo is conducted between the members of the Lorenzo City Council and those members of the City Staff, and third parties requested to be present and participate. In order to ensure that meetings of the City Council are conducted in a way that allows the business of the City to be effectively conducted, the public's participation shall be limited to the role of observers, except during the Public Comment portion or the Public Hearing portion of the meeting.
- b. The Mayor and Council Members will endeavor to ensure that meetings are conducted in a courteous manner and in an atmosphere free of defamation, intimidation, personal affronts, profanity, or threats of violence.
- c. Persons attending Council meetings shall remain seated or may stand in the back and come and go so long as it does not disrupt the meeting. Persons in attendance shall not carry signs, placards, or other items which could block the view of those behind them or be disruptive to the proceedings.
- d. No person attending any Council meeting shall delay the proceedings or refuse to obey the orders of the presiding officer.
- e. Persons may not engage in discussions with the Council during Council deliberations unless specifically asked a question by a Council Member. Persons who have been asked a question by a Council Member must be recognized by the Chair before being allowed to speak. The Chair may end any question-and-answer session between Council Members and a member of the public in order to facilitate the order of business.
- f. Reactions from the audience following the recognition and rewarding of citizens and special guests is considered appropriate and encouraged. Disruptive verbal and nonverbal reactions from the audience during staff presentations to the Council and during debate between Council Members are inappropriate and are not permitted. The Chair will ensure that the decorum of the meeting is maintained and is appropriate.
- g. Members of the public shall not engage in any of the following behaviors in the meeting room during a City Council meeting:

- i. Shouting, unruly behavior, distracting side conversations, or speaking out when another person is talking.
- ii. Defamation, intimidation, profanity, threats of violence, or any other act prohibited by law.
- iii. Booing, hissing, foot stomping, ripping of paper, parading, signing, or other similar behavior that impedes or disrupts the orderly conduct of the meeting.
- iv. Attempts to provide direction regarding rules of procedure, order of business, or otherwise direct the City Council on how to properly conduct a meeting.

VI. Addressing the City Council

- a. **Public Comments.** Persons wishing to address the Council during the Public Comment period of a meeting shall register the City Secretary prior to the beginning of the meeting. Speakers shall approach the podium or other designated speaker's area and give their name and address before making their comments. Only comments regarding meeting's agenda items will be allowed. Speakers shall address all public comments to the Mayor and Council with civility that is conducive to appropriate public discussion. Each speaker will be allowed three minutes to speak, and no person shall be allowed to address the Council more than once. (However, this rule does not restrict anyone from also speaking at any public hearing.) Unused time may not be "yielded" to other attendees. Only the Council and the speaker shall be permitted to enter into any discussion. Attendees must be physically present at a meeting to address the City Council; comments by telephone, video conference, or proxy are not allowed.
- b. **Public Hearings.** Public hearings provide municipal residents and affected parties an opportunity to be heard, typically on certain land use items, final ordinance readings, the annual adoption of the municipal budget, and the annual adoption of the tax rate. No registration is required for public hearings at City Council meetings. Only comments regarding the public hearing agenda item may be made during a public hearing. Each person that wishes to address the Council during the public hearing shall raise their hand to notify the Chair that they would like to speak. Once acknowledged by the Chair, the person shall approach the podium or other designated speaker's area and give their name and address before making their comments. Each speaker will be allowed three minutes to speak. Unused time may not be "yielded" to other attendees. Only the Council and the speaker shall be permitted to enter into any discussion. Attendees must be physically present at a meeting to address the City Council; comments by telephone, video conference, or proxy are not allowed.

VII. Staff Responsibilities

- a. The City Manager will exhibit the highest professional and ethical behavior. The City Manager is responsible for the professional and ethical behavior and discipline of the City Staff. All Staff members shall show one another, each Council Member, and the public,

respect and courtesy at all times. They are also responsible for making objective, professional presentations to ensure public confidence in the process.

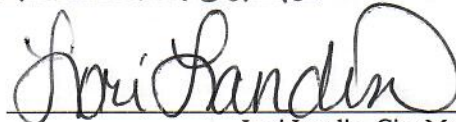
VIII. Enforcement

- a. A violation of these policies may cause the transgressor to be removed from the meeting. The Chair of the meeting shall exercise control over persons who disrupt the meeting in the following ascending order of action:
 - i. Call the person to order, advising that person of the infraction.
 - ii. Advise the person that the infraction must cease immediately or the person will be ordered to leave the meeting.
 - iii. Order the person to leave the meeting.
 - iv. A police officer may remove an individual or individuals for disrupting a meeting as authorized by Texas Penal Code Section 42.05.\
- b. If the offending person is a member of Council, the Chair shall call for a vote on the expulsion of that member from the meeting, and such vote requires a majority for adoption.
- c. The Chair may request a police officer (or designee) to serve as a Sergeant-at-Arms of the Council meetings. He/she shall carry out all orders and instructions given by the Chair for the purpose of maintaining order and decorum at the Council meeting. Upon instructions of the Chair, unless otherwise directed by a majority vote of the Council, it shall be the duty of the designated Sergeant-at-Arms to remove any person who violates the order and decorum of the meeting.

IX. Non-Exclusive Policies

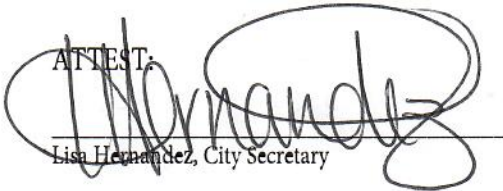
The policies set forth are not exclusive and do not limit the inherent power and general legal authority of the City Council, or of its presiding officer, to govern the conduct of the City Council meetings as may be considered appropriate from time to time, or in particular circumstances, for purposes of orderly and effective conduct of the affairs of the City.

APPROVED by the City Council of the City of Lorenzo on November 12th, 2024.



Lori Landin, City Mayor

ATTEST:



Lisa Hernandez, City Secretary