



City of Valley Falls

Established 1854

City of Valley Falls – Public Participation & Decorum Policy Adopted February 18, 2026

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to ensure that public participation during City Council meetings is conducted in an orderly, respectful, and lawful manner. This policy fulfills the requirements of the Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA), which mandates open and accessible meetings but does not require public comment; the opportunity is granted at the discretion of the City Council. This policy establishes clear expectations for
 - a. How and when the public may participate;
 - b. Appropriate conduct for speakers;
 - c. Appropriate conduct for audience members; and
 - d. How the Presiding Officer maintains order and ensures the meeting proceeds efficiently.
2. **Opportunities for Public Participation:** The council shall approve a public policy as it relates to public comments on non-agenda and agenda items. Such policy shall control the manner in which members of the public may comment upon the same.
3. **Rules of Decorum for Speakers:**
 - a. All speakers addressing the City Council must adhere to the following decorum rules:
 - i. Identification and Process:
 1. State your name before beginning comments.
 2. Speak clearly into the microphone or at the podium.
 3. Address the Council as a body, not individual members, staff, or audience.
 4. Documents for the Council must be submitted through the City Clerk.
 - ii. Conduct Requirements:
 1. Speakers must:
 - a. Speak respectfully and civilly.
 - b. Avoid profanity, personal attacks, disruptive behavior, or inflammatory remarks.
 - c. Avoid shouting, interruptions, or engaging Councilmembers from their seats.
 - d. Comply immediately with directions from the Presiding Officer.
 - iii. Public comment is not a back-and-forth discussion.
 - b. Enforcement of Rules of Decorum for Speakers:
 - i. The Presiding Officer may:
 1. Interrupt, limit, or end comments that violate decorum rules;
 2. Rule a speaker out of order; or

3. Direct a speaker to leave the podium.
 - ii. Persistent violations may result in removal from the meeting.
4. **Rules of Decorum for Audience Members:**
- a. Audience members must always maintain respectful and nondisruptive behavior. The following behavior is prohibited:
 - i. Clapping, shouting, booing, or audible reactions.
 - ii. Side conversations or noise that disrupts the meeting.
 - iii. Approaching or addressing Councilmembers without recognition.
 - b. Audience members may not participate in discussion unless recognized by the Presiding Officer.
 - c. A citizen recognized during an agenda item may speak only from the podium if allowed.
 - d. Enforcement:
 - i. The Presiding Officer has full authority to:
 1. Issue warnings;
 2. Call individuals out of order;
 3. Require disruptive persons to leave; or
 4. Direct law enforcement to escort individuals out if necessary.
5. **Presiding Officer Authority:** To maintain compliance with KOMA and ensure orderly proceedings, the Presiding Officer may:
- a. Enforce time limits;
 - b. Interrupt or end comments that violate policy;
 - c. Limit the number of speakers;
 - d. Maintain order to ensure meetings remain open, transparent, and efficient.
6. **Amendments:** The City Council may amend this Public Participation & Decorum Policy by majority vote at any regular meeting.