



City of Valley Falls

Established 1854

City of Valley Falls – Public Comment Policy (Compliant with Kansas Open Meetings Act requirements) Adopted February 18, 2026

1. **Purpose:** City Council meetings are official business meetings of the governing body for the City of Valley Falls. The purpose of this policy is to ensure public comment opportunities are conducted in an orderly, respectful, and lawful manner while preserving the Council's ability to conduct city business efficiently. Meetings are open to the public as required by the Kansas Open Meetings Act (K.S.A. 754317 et seq.).
2. **General Public Comment (NonAgenda Items):**
 - a. The request must include: name, and a brief description of the topic or nature of the request.
 - b. Each speaker is allotted up to three (3) minutes.
 - c. Speakers must clearly state their name before beginning their remarks.
 - d. This portion of the meeting is intended for citizens to express their views.
 - i. City Council Members will not engage in dialogue with speakers during public comment.
 - ii. No formal action will be taken on general public comment items during the meeting.
 - iii. Staff will review comments and provide followup during regular business hours as appropriate.
 - e. Belligerent, rude, disruptive, or offensive conduct—including personal attacks—is not permitted. The Presiding Officer may end a speaker's time immediately if behavior violates decorum rules. KOMA requires meetings to remain open and orderly; disruptions can lawfully be addressed to maintain the business meeting.
3. **Public Comment on Agenda Items:**
 - a. Public comment related to a specific agenda item will be taken only when that item is called.
 - b. Citizens wishing to address the Council on matters appearing on the agenda must sign up in advance.
 - c. Requests must be submitted to the City Administrator before Tuesday at noon preceding the meeting.
 - d. Questions raised during public comment on an agenda item may be addressed by:
 - i. A City Council Member while the agenda item is under discussion, or
 - ii. City staff, with followup provided during regular business hours if needed.
 - e. Speakers are limited to three (3) minutes.
 - f. Speakers must state their name.

4. **Expectations for Conduct and Communication:**

- a. All speakers must follow established rules of decorum. Failure to do so may result in the loss of speaking privileges for that meeting.
- b. Public comment is not a back-and-forth discussion.
 - i. The Council may ask clarifying questions during agenda items, but they are not required to do so.
 - ii. Citizens should contact Council Members outside of meetings for personal or extended discussions.

5. **The Mayor or Presiding Officer may:**

- a. Enforce time limits
- b. Interrupt or end comments that violate policy
- c. Maintain meeting order as required by KOMA's expectation for orderly open meetings.

6. **Compliance With Kansas Law:**

- a. The Kansas Open Meetings Act requires that meetings of the governing body remain open, accessible, and conducted transparently, but it does not require a public comment period. Allowing comment is a discretionary policy of the City.
- b. This policy ensures that when comments are permitted, they do not interfere with the Council's ability to conduct official business and that no unlawful interactive deliberation occurs outside the agenda process.

7. **Amendment of Policy:** The City Council may amend this Public Comment Policy by majority vote at any regular meeting.