



AMENDMENT TO GOVERNING STANDARDS

RS-19-008

January 15, 2018

Background

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- The City Council has followed an informal prayer policy for many years.
- In light of current USSC guidance, the City Council reviewed its current policy and reached a consensus that a formal policy and practice is needed.

Governing Standards & Expectations

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- ❑ Contains a section through which the City Council gives policy directives to the City Manager.
- ❑ On January 8th, City Council passed a Motion of Direction for the City Manager to bring back an amendment to the Governing Standards which directs the City Manager to develop a constitutional prayer procedure.

Sec. 4-140. Directive to Develop Invocation Procedure (proposed)

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- To solemnize its proceedings, it is the policy of the City Council to open its meetings with an invocation. In order to respect the constitutional rights of all persons, participation in the invocation or prayer will be voluntary; no one in attendance will be required to participate, and no one demonstrating appropriate respect and decorum will be excluded from participating. Everyone will be treated equally in all respects whether they choose to participate, or not participate, in the prayer or invocation.

Sec. 1-140, con't.

- In order to ensure compliance with this policy and with the law, the City Manager is directed to establish appropriate procedures to allow for an invocation at the beginning of City Council meetings.
- This policy, and the procedure implementing the policy, is not intended, and shall not be implemented or construed in any way, to affiliate the City Council with, nor express the City Council's preference for or against, any faith, belief, or religious denomination. Rather, this policy is intended to acknowledge and express the City Council's respect for the diversity of denominations, faiths, and beliefs represented and practiced among the citizens of Killeen.

Alternatives

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- ❑ Adopt proposed amendment to Governing Standards, which directs City Manager to implement a new, constitutional prayer procedure;
- ❑ Observe a moment of silence, rather than prayer;
- ❑ Remove prayer from meeting;
- ❑ Continue current practice.

Recommendation

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- Staff recommends that City Council adopt the proposed amendment to its Governing Standards and Expectations, as it is in compliance with Council's Motion of Direction.