

Procedures For Public Comment at Cleveland City Council Meetings

(as approved by Cleveland City Council on September 20, 2021 _____)

• **All meetings of Cleveland City Council are open to the public.** Members of the public shall always conduct themselves appropriately with reasonable decorum and are prohibited from engaging in any conduct that is disruptive or distracting, and that substantially and unreasonably interferes with the business of the Council, and the safe and orderly use, operation or administration of the Council Chambers. Any person who violates any of the above is subject to immediate removal may be immediately removed from the Council Chamber and may be ticketed issued a citation under the Codified Ordinances of the City.

• **PUBLIC COMMENT.** A portion of the regular Council meeting is set aside for public comment. **Speaker comments shall be limited to one item currently under consideration by Council.** "Item currently under consideration" means any legislation that has been introduced or pending before Council, or a matter that is currently in discussion before all or part of the Council body.

• **ALL SPEAKERS MUST PRE-REGISTER.** Any person wishing to participate in the Public Comment portion of a regular Council meeting shall register using the registration form made available and provide the following information: name, ward/neighborhood or city of residency, phone number, email address, topic to be addressed, and whether the speaker is being paid to speak and/or is representing an organization. The registration form must be submitted by email, U.S. mail, personal delivery, or website. Registrations to make public comment at any regular Council meeting must be submitted between Wednesday at 12:00 noon and Monday at 2:00 pm, before a regular 7:00 pm Council meeting. Registrations will only be accepted for making comments at the next meeting; registrations for any future meeting will not be accepted until the Wednesday before the meeting. Registrations with false or incomplete information will not be accepted. and provide the following information: name, ward/neighborhood or city of residency, phone number, email address, the item currently under consideration to be addressed, and whether the speaker is being paid to speak and/or is representing an organization. Registrations should be made using the form available on Council's website or at Council offices at City Hall.

The registration form must be submitted by email, U.S. mail, personal delivery, or website. Registrations to make public comment at any regular Council meeting must be submitted between Wednesday at 12:00 noon and Monday at 2:00 pm, before a regular 7:00 pm Council meeting. Registrations will only be accepted for making comments at the next regular meeting; registrations for any future meeting will not be accepted until the Wednesday before the meeting. Registrations with false or incomplete information will not be accepted. Registrations to speak on a topic other than an item currently under consideration will be denied.

• **SPEAKING.** The presiding officer of the meeting will call on each speaker. No more than ten (10) speakers shall speak at any meeting; each speaker may speak for no longer than three (3) minutes. Speakers may not yield their time to other speakers.

» _____ Speakers shall only address the topic they registered to speak as stated on their registration form.

» _____ Speakers shall not use indecent or discriminatory language.

» _____ Speakers shall address the Council as a body and may not address any individual council member or other person.

» _____ Speakers shall not engage in electioneering for any candidate or specific ballot issue.

» _____ Speakers shall not endorse or promote any product or service.

» _____ While speaking, speakers shall not wear anything that promotes any candidate, campaign, issue, product or service; this includes but is not limited to visible logos, slogans, messages, words.

- **SPEAKING.** The presiding officer of the meeting will call on each speaker. Up to ten (10) speakers may speak at any meeting; each speaker shall speak for no longer than three (3) minutes. Speakers may not yield their time to other speakers.

- Speakers shall only address the item currently under consideration they registered to speak about.
- Speakers comments shall not be frivolous, repetitive or harassing in nature.
- Speakers shall not use language that is obscene or threatening.

- **SIGNS PROHIBITED IN COUNCIL CHAMBER.** Signs, posters, banners, placards and similar items are strictly prohibited in the Council Chamber.

- **PRESIDING OFFICER WILL MAINTAIN ORDER.** The presiding officer of the meeting will maintain order and preside over the Public Comment period according to these Procedures for Public Comment ~~and the Rules of Council.~~ The presiding officer shall have the authority to terminate the remarks of any individual who does not adhere to these Procedures.

- ~~Any person who violates these Procedures for Public Comment will not be allowed to speak and may be asked to leave the Chamber.~~ Any person continuing to violate these Procedures during a Council meeting shall be considered disruptive and may be subject to immediate removal from the Chamber.

The presiding officer is authorized to request assistance from law enforcement officers in the removal of a person when that person's conduct disrupts the orderly progress of the meeting in violation of these Procedures.

The presiding officer may immediately and temporarily suspend public comment in his or her discretion for a violation of these Rules and Procedures.

- **PERSONS NEEDING ASSISTANCE.** Any person seeking reasonable accommodations – such as for a disability or language assistance – must make the request at least three business days in advance. Council will make every effort to make reasonable accommodations.

- **PUBLIC INFORMATION.** All registration information is considered public record. All public comments made at the Council meeting are considered a public record.