



City of Grass Valley City Council Agenda Action Sheet

Title: Code of Conduct Update

CEQA: Not a project

Recommendation: That Council review and adopt the attached revised Code of Conduct.

Prepared by: Tim Kiser, City Manager

Council Meeting Date: 03/25/2025

Date Prepared: 03/20/2025

Agenda: Administrative

Background Information

The City of Grass Valley recognizes the importance of public participation in the governance process and values transparency and civic engagement. The City's Code of Conduct establishes guidelines to ensure orderly, respectful, and efficient public meetings while balancing the need for open dialogue and maintaining decorum.

As part of ongoing efforts to refine City governance practices, staff has reviewed and updated the City's Code of Conduct, specifically regarding Public Participation in Council and Commission Meetings. These updates align with best practices for public engagement, comply with the Ralph M. Brown Act, and aim to foster a positive and productive environment for City Body meetings.

The proposed updates clarify the public's rights and responsibilities when participating in City Council and Commission meetings, outline the rules for speaking at meetings, and establish expectations for civil discourse. A summary of the key modifications include:

1. Clarification on Public Comment Opportunities:

- Each member of the public may address the City Body once per agenda item, once on the consent agenda, and once during general public comment for non-agenda matters.
- Public comment must be relevant to the agenda item under discussion.

2. Public Comment Procedures:

- Comments shall be directed to the City Body through the Mayor or Chair and not to the audience or staff.
- Speakers shall use designated locations, including podiums or virtual platforms.
- Individuals may not yield their speaking time to another person.

3. Conduct During Public Meetings:

- The Mayor or Chair is responsible for ensuring orderly and respectful public comment sessions.
- Disruptive behavior, including personal attacks, hate speech, and threats, is prohibited.
- Members of the public must adhere to established speaking procedures and may not approach the dais without authorization.

4. Recess and Meeting Disruptions:

- The Mayor or Chair may call a recess if necessary to restore order.
- Law enforcement may be engaged if individuals fail to comply with meeting conduct rules.
- If a disruption occurs, City Body members, the City Manager, and other officials will relocate to a designated area until order is restored.

5. Agenda Items:

- The purpose of the agenda is to provide a framework within which meetings of a City Body can be conducted to effectively implement the approved Council goals, financial plan and budget, and other programs, objectives and business of the City as established by the present or earlier City Councils.
- Agenda items must be directly related to and affect the City of Grass Valley.

6. Use of Electronic Communication During Meetings:

- City Body members shall not use electronic devices for personal communication during meetings, except in cases of emergency.

7. Handling of Last-Minute Supporting Documents:

- Late submissions of supporting documents must include a **justification** for the delay.
- The City Manager or City Clerk will notify the City Body of any late submissions when appropriate.

The updates to the Code of Conduct are necessary to improve the structure of public meetings, enhance civic engagement, and ensure compliance with state laws such as the Brown Act. By clarifying the rules for public participation, the City aims to:

- Promote fair and equal access to public comment.
- Minimize disruptions while respecting First Amendment rights.
- Provide clear guidelines for meeting decorum to facilitate productive discussions.
- Ensure City Body members, staff, and the public can participate in a safe and respectful environment.

Staff recommends that the City Council review and adopt the proposed updates to the Code of Conduct. If approved, these updates will take immediate effect and will be integrated into all future Council and Commission meetings. Additionally, the City Clerk will ensure that the revised guidelines are routed to all City Bodies covered by the Code of Conduct for signature to affirm the individuals have read and understand the updated Code of Conduct.

Council Goals/Objectives: The execution of this action attempts to achieve the following Strategic Goals:

GOAL #5 - High Performance Government and Quality Services

Fiscal Impact: No fiscal impact associated with this action.

Funds Available: N/A

Account #: N/A

Reviewed by: City Manager

Attachments:

- The updated Code of Conduct includes revisions, which are underlined for easy review and identification of changes.