

RESOLUTION NO. 2017-08-11

A resolution recognizing the significance of a public hearing through an invocation.

1 WHEREAS, legislative prayer, such as an opening prayer at a council meeting,
2 has long been understood as compatible with the Establishment Clause of the U.S.
3 Constitution; and

4 WHEREAS, such a prayer takes place at the opening of legislative sessions,
5 where it is meant to lend gravity to the occasion and reflect values long part of the
6 heritage of the United States; and

7 WHEREAS, prayer that invites lawmakers to reflect upon shared ideals and
8 common ends before they embark on the fractious business of governing serves that
9 legitimate function and is, therefore, constitutional; and

10 WHEREAS, opening prayers seek peace for the nation, wisdom for its lawmakers,
11 and justice for its people, appealing to universal values embodied not only in religious
12 traditions but also in our founding documents and laws; now, therefore,

13 IT IS HEREBY ORDERED AND RESOLVED by the Board of County
14 Councilors of Clark County, State of Washington, as follows:

15 **Section 1.** The County Council finds and determines that invocations offered
16 pursuant to this stated practice will preserve, promote and protect the general health,
17 safety and welfare of the County, and thereby adopts this policy.

18 The information contained in the recital clauses above is adopted as findings and
19 conclusions supporting this Resolution.

20 **Section 2.** An invocation may be offered prior to the weekly public hearings on a
21 rotating, first-come, first-served basis, and be provided for no more than two minutes on

22 a voluntary basis by persons affiliated with local faith-based organizations and ministries.
23 As an alternative, a group or individual having no religious affiliation may request the
24 opportunity to offer a brief statement to reflect on the gravity of the moment, seek peace
25 for the nation, wisdom for its lawmakers and justice for its people, or generally appeal to
26 universal values of our country. Finally any group or individual may request a moment
27 of silence in place of an invocation. The attached Guidance document is adopted to aid
28 in implementing invocations under this Resolution.

29 The policy adopted above supersedes and replaces any existing policies governing
30 invocations currently in place and adopted under Resolution No. 2013-03-04.

31 ADOPTED this 22nd day of August, 2017.

Attest:

Rebecca Jilka
Clerk to the Board

BOARD OF COUNTY COUNCILORS
CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON

By: Marc Boldt
Marc Boldt, Chair

Approved as to form only:
ANTHONY F. GOLIK
Prosecuting Attorney

By: Anthony F. Golik
Prosecuting Attorney

By: _____
Jeanne E. Stewart, Councilor

By: _____
Julie Olson, Councilor

By: _____
John Blom, Councilor

By: _____
Eileen Quiring, Councilor



CLARK COUNTY GUIDANCE

1. Invocations may be provided as a pre-agenda item preceding regular public meetings of the Board of County Councilors (“Council”). The invocation is offered for the benefit of the Council and is meant to add solemnity to the meetings and ask for wisdom and guidance from a higher authority as the Council engages in critical issues that affect Clark County residents.
2. An assigned Council staff person will schedule individuals from local faith-based organizations to offer an invocation on a voluntary basis. The person delivering the invocation shall herein be referred to as a cleric. Clerics wishing to provide the invocation may also call staff at the Clark County Council Office (360-397-2232) or sign up on the Council’s website at www.clark.wa.gov/bocc/index.html.
3. A cleric’s faith shall not preclude his/her ability to give an invocation.
4. A group or individual having no religious affiliation may request the opportunity to offer a brief statement to reflect on the gravity of the moment, seek peace for the nation, wisdom for its lawmakers, and justice for its people, or generally appeal to universal values of our country.
5. The Council serves constituents of all faiths, expresses no faith preference, and recognizes no faith as superior or inferior to others.
6. Invocations or statements shall be given by one person and may not exceed two minutes. All invocations or other statements shall be positive and uplifting and are not an opportunity to disparage other people, organizations, or beliefs. No invocation shall be used to lobby or request funding or support.
7. The Chair of the Council will introduce a person by name and title prior to an invocation.
8. Some Council meetings will not have a person scheduled to give an invocation. In such cases, the Chair, at his/her discretion, may ask for a moment of silence.
9. No member of the Council, public or government at the Council meeting shall be required or expected to participate in an invocation.
10. No remuneration or other compensation shall be given for providing an invocation.