

ORDINANCE 2023-O-010

**ORDINANCE AMENDING PROCESS RELATING
TO OPENING INVOCATIONS BEFORE MEETINGS**

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 2021-O-012, CODIFIED AT CHAPTER 2, SECTION 2.10.002. OPENING INVOCATIONS BEFORE MEETINGS, CITY OF BLANCO CODE OF ORDINANCES, BY AMENDING SUB PARAGRAPHS (d), (d)(2), (d)(5), (d)(6), AND (g); REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES INCONSISTENT OR IN CONFLICT HEREWITH; AND PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY.

WHEREAS the City Council of the City of Blanco (the “City”) wishes to provide for the public welfare and input of the citizens of the City for its proper governance, and in support thereof, the orderly and proper conduct of City Council meetings;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLANCO, STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. FINDINGS OF FACT.

That the facts and matters set forth in the preamble of this Ordinance are hereby found to be true and correct.

SECTION 2. AMENDMENTS TO THE CITY OF BLANCO CODE OF ORDINANCES, AT CHAPTER 2, SECTION 2.10.002. OPENING INVOCATIONS BEFORE MEETINGS, CITY OF BLANCO CODE OF ORDINANCES, BY AMENDING SUB PARAGRAPHS (d), (d)(2), (d)(5), (d)(6), AND (g).

Chapter 2, Section 2.10.002. Opening Invocations before Meetings, is hereby amended by revised sub paragraphs (d), (d)(2), (d)(5), (d)(6), and (g), with the amended sub paragraphs each to read as follows:

(d) The prayer shall be voluntarily delivered by an eligible faith leader in the Blanco Community. To ensure that such person (the “invocation speaker”) is selected from among a wide pool of the Blanco Community faith leaders, on a rotating basis, the invocation speaker shall be selected according to the following procedure:

(d)(2) The congregations list shall be compiled by referencing the listing for “churches,” “congregations,” or other religious or faith assemblies in the annual Yellow Pages phone book(s) published for the city, research from the internet, and consultation with local chambers of commerce. All religious or faith congregations with an established presence in the local community of the city are eligible to be included in the congregations list, and any such congregation can confirm its inclusion by specific written request to the secretary;

(d)(5) Within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this policy, and on or about January 1st, April 1st, July 1st and October 1st of each calendar year thereafter, the secretary shall mail an invitation addressed to the faith leader of each congregation listed on the congregations list, as well as to the individual chaplains included on the congregations list.;

(d)(6) The invitation shall be dated at the top of the page, signed by the secretary at the bottom of the page, and read as follows:

Dear faith leader,

The City Council of Blanco, Texas makes it a policy to invite faith leaders in the Blanco community to voluntarily offer a prayer before the beginning of its meetings, for the benefit and blessing of the council. As the leader of one of the religious congregations with an established presence in the local community, or in your capacity as a chaplain for one of the local fire departments or law enforcement agencies, you are eligible to offer this important service at an upcoming meeting of the council.

If you are willing to assist the council in this regard, please send a written reply or make direct contact at your earliest convenience with the city secretary at the address or phone included on this letterhead. Clergy are scheduled on a first-come, first-serve basis. The dates of the council's scheduled meetings for the upcoming year are listed on the following, attached page. If you have a preference among the dates, please state that request in your written reply.

This opportunity is voluntary, and you are free to offer the invocation according to the dictates of your own conscience. To maintain a spirit of respect and ecumenism, the council requests only that the prayer opportunity not be exploited as an effort to convert others to the particular faith of the invocation speaker, nor to disparage any faith or belief different than that of the invocation speaker.

On behalf of the City Council of Blanco, Texas, I thank you in advance for considering this invitation.

Sincerely,

City Secretary; and

(g) The secretary shall make every reasonable effort to ensure that a variety of eligible invocation speakers are scheduled for the council meetings.

SECTION 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance is effective immediately. The City Administrator shall, within 10 days after such effective date, cause the publication of notice of adoption on the City's website, the local newspaper of general circulation, and by such other and further means necessary to provide notice to the public.

SECTION 4. SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this ordinance shall be adjudged invalid or unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity of this ordinance as a whole or in part, except if the part held or adjudged invalid or unconstitutional.

SECTION 5. REPEALER

Upon adoption, the provisions of this ordinance repeal any inconsistent existing provisions of other City ordinances.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY CITY COUNCIL, CITY OF BLANCO, ON THE 13 DAY OF June 2023.

CITY OF BLANCO



Mayor

ATTEST:

Laurie Cassidy
City Secretary

