

Assembly Invocation Policy – Clean Copy of Proposed Changes

Resolution 2018-053

IX. ASSEMBLY MEETING

D. Invocations.

1. It is the intent of the assembly to allow a private citizen to solemnize the proceedings of the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly. It is the policy of the assembly to allow for an invocation, which may include a short prayer or a solemnizing message, to be offered at the beginning of its meetings for the benefit of the assembly to accommodate the spiritual needs of the public officials.
2. No member or employee of the assembly or any other person in attendance at the meeting shall be required to participate in the invocation that is offered and such decision shall have no impact on the ability of the person to actively participate in the business of the assembly.
3. No member or employee of the assembly will direct the public to stand, bow, or in any way participate in the invocation, make public note of a person's presence or absence, attention or inattention during the invocation, or indicate that decisions of the assembly will in any way be influenced by a person's acquiescence in the invocation opportunity.
4. The invocation shall be voluntarily delivered by a resident of the Kenai Peninsula Borough.
5. To ensure that the opportunity to give an invocation is available to a wide pool of representatives the invocation speaker shall be selected according to the following procedure:
 - a. The Clerk's office shall keep a calendar for all dates of assembly meetings. A person wishing to give an invocation must submit a dated, written request for an invocation to the clerk's office for only one invocation at a time.
 - b. The policy is intended to be applied in a way that is all-inclusive and diverse to represent the faiths of the residents of the Kenai Peninsula Borough. Should a question arise as to the qualification of a person requesting to give an invocation, the

assembly president shall make the decision by referring to this policy, and may request clarification from the applicant if needed.

- c. The respondents to the notice shall be scheduled on a first-come, first-serve basis to deliver the invocation, provided each respondent may only ask to provide one invocation at a time, with subsequent requests only made after the date of previously scheduled invocation has passed. In any event, no respondent shall be scheduled to offer an invocation at consecutive assembly meetings or at more than four assembly meetings in any calendar year. These limitations are intended to help ensure that a variety of speakers are given an opportunity to provide an invocation and that there is no appearance that the assembly favors or promotes any one faith over another.
 - d. In the event an eligible individual from the Kenai Peninsula Borough believes that the Clerk or President has not complied with the terms of this policy, the individual has the right to have the matter reviewed by the Assembly.
 - e. If an individual scheduled to offer an invocation is not in attendance at an assembly meeting when the invocation is scheduled to be given, the assembly President or an assembly member may be asked by the President to provide the invocation or the meeting may proceed without an invocation being offered.
- 6. No invocation speaker shall receive compensation for his or her service.
 - 7. No guidelines or limitations shall be issued regarding an invocation's content, except that the assembly shall request by the language of this policy that no invocation should proselytize or advance any faith, or disparage the religious faith or non-religious views of others.
 - 8. No assembly member nor employee in the clerk's office shall engage in any prior inquiry, review of, or involvement in the content of any invocation to be offered by an invocation speaker.
 - 9. To clarify the assembly's intentions, the following disclaimer shall be included on any printed assembly meeting agenda for a meeting during which an invocation may be provided immediately below the invocation:

"Any invocation that may be offered at the beginning of the assembly meeting shall be a voluntary offering of a private person, to and for the benefit of the assembly. No member of the community is required to attend or participate in the invocation."

10. This policy is not intended, and shall not be implemented or construed in any way, to affiliate the assembly with, nor express the assembly's preference for, any faith or religious denomination. Rather, this policy is intended to acknowledge and express the assembly's respect for the diversity of religious denominations and faiths represented and practiced among the residents of the borough.