

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-23

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF COWLEY COUNTY,
KANSAS**

**A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A PUBLIC MEETING
THROUGH AN INVOCATION.**

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

WHEREAS, such a prayer takes place at the opening of commission meeting, public hearing, or public gathering for county business, where it is meant to lend gravity to the occasion and reflect values long part of the heritage of the United States; and

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

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Cowley County Board of County Commissioners as follows:

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

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

Section 2. An invocation may be offered prior to the public hearings on a rotating, first-come, first-served basis, and be provided for no more than two (2) minutes on a voluntary basis by persons affiliated with local faith-based organizations and ministries.

As an alternative, the chairperson or designate can offer an individual having no religious affiliation 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.

Finally, any group or individual may request a moment of silence in place of an invocation. The attached Guidance document is adopted to aid in implementing invocations under this Resolution

The policy adopted above supersedes and replaces any existing policies governing invocations currently in place

ADOPTED AND APPROVED this 21st of October 2025.

Wayne Wilt, Chairman

ATTEST:

Jim Maxwell, Vice Chairman

Karen D. Madison, County Clerk

Alan Groom, Commissioner

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COWLEY COUNTY GUIDANCE

1. Invocations may be provided as a pre-agenda item preceding regular public meetings of the Board of County Commissioners ("Commission Meeting"). 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 Cowley County residents.
2. An assigned County 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 Cowley County Administrator's Office (620-221-5402) or sign up on the County website at www.cowleycountyks.gov.
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 Commission 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 (2) 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 Chairperson of the Commission 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 Chairperson, at his/her discretion, may ask a board member to provide invocation or ask for a moment of silence.
9. No member of the Commission, public or government at the Commission meeting shall be required or expected to participate in an invocation.
10. No remuneration or other compensation shall be given for providing an invocation.