



**To:** Mayor and City Council  
**From:** Mark O. Lambert, City Attorney  
**Date:** November 18, 2025  
**Subject:** Amendment to Council's Standards of Decorum

At a recent City Council meeting, a person speaking on an agenda item refused to give his name. The Mayor allowed him to speak without identifying who he is. Afterwards, Mayor Haila asked me if we can require that people give their names and not allow them to speak if they refuse to identify themselves.

My reply was that legally we could tell the person they could not speak, but I would feel better about that if we had it in our Standards of Decorum for Council meetings, so that residents would be informed in advance of this requirement. Upon checking with other city attorneys around Iowa, I discovered that several cities have policies that require members of the public speaking to the Council to identify themselves, and do not allow the person to speak if they refuse to do so.

A City Council meeting (or other City board or commission meeting) is a public event. In order for the Council to hear concerns from a community member, it is important that the person identify themselves so that follow-up assistance can be provided if necessary. Doing so can also provide greater context for the individual's relation to the City (e.g., resident, business owner, etc.). Anonymity of speakers does not foster community engagement and communication.

The City of Ames Standards of Decorum, adopted by the Council, addresses expectations regarding behavioral issues at Council meetings, so this is where the City should state this requirement. The Standards of Decorum can be found here: [Standards of Decorum - City of Ames, Iowa](#)

**It is recommended that the following language be added as a new Number 3 on the list (while renumbering the rest of the paragraphs):**

***“Persons offering comments at a public meeting must state their name; any person refusing to identify themselves will not be allowed to offer comments.”***

**Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution adding a requirement to the Standards of Decorum that persons speaking to the Council (or at City board/commission meetings) must identify themselves prior to being allowed to give comments.**