

# Public speaking guidelines

David Zokaites

December 20, 2016

# Need to keep meetings calm

- Mutual respect encourages productivity
- Remain courteous while disagreeing
- We all must stay civil, realistic
- Recent issues with some city employees
- Pause the meeting, correct disrespect, resume

## **Notes on public speaking (draft)**

To be hopefully posted on the city website and distributed with city council meeting agendas

The city of Sioux Falls proudly invites public input at City Council meetings. We're glad that citizens are passionate about our city and wish to speak out on relevant issues. We understand that many citizens are not experienced public speakers so we wrote this little guide to help you get going.

# **1) Understand your goals**

Sometimes people are upset about government and want to let off steam. Other times citizens want to address city policies. These two goals do not work well together. It is best to release frustrations elsewhere and focus on policy during council meetings. This focus makes it much easier to address issues and help guide city policy.

## **2) Try to stay calm**

Staying calm truly helps keep our meetings peaceful and productive. When people are calm, even about emotional subjects, it is much easier to deal with the underlying issues. When people are angry, they usually get tuned out because anger is difficult to address.

### **3) Focus on one topic**

It is best to limit your talk to one major topic. This helps to solidify your presentation and clarify your ideas. When people speak on multiple subjects, it's hard to make progress on any of them. If there are several topics on your mind, we invite you to come back and speak on them individually at upcoming meetings.

## **4 Look at the big picture**

City leaders have limited resources that are pulled in multiple directions. This makes it impossible to make everyone happy and impossible to completely solve all the problems we have. The best we can do is make a good compromise among divergent goals.

## **6) Be persistent**

It's a busy world at city council with many concurrent problems.

Realistically speaking, sometimes valid concerns are accidentally lost in the crowd. Being persistent helps to prevent this from happening.



## **7) Remember that politicians are people too**

We usually don't completely agree with each other, but try to remember that we're all in this world together and we should show as much respect to each other as possible - even when we are upset.

## **8) It helps to practice**

If you practice your presentation by giving it to your friends and family, your public talk will be much improved. But you don't have to worry about making a perfect speech. We're interested in your input, just do the best you can.

## **9) Limit your talk to 5 minutes**

So that council meetings can be completed in a reasonable amount of time, we have to limit each speaker to 5 minutes. Once in a long while, there are so many citizens who wish to speak on a topic that we need to close public input before they're all done. Don't be offended if this happens, we just need to be practical.



Good evening Sioux Falls :-)

