

RESOLUTION NO. 25-01

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A POLICY REGARDING OPENING INVOCATIONS BEFORE THE REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF MANTENO

WHEREAS, the Village of Manteno ("Village") is an Illinois municipal corporation duly created and existing under the laws and Constitution of the State of Illinois;

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of the Village ("Village Board") is an elected legislative and deliberative public body of and serving the citizens of Manteno, Illinois;

WHEREAS, the Village Board is desirous of availing itself of the United States Supreme Court's recognition that it is constitutionally permissible for a deliberative public body to "invoke divine guidance" on its work (*Marsh v. Chambers*, 463 U.S. 783, 792 (1983); and,

WHEREAS, the Village Board believes it appropriate to adopt a policy for opening invocations at its meetings to solemnize public occasions, express confidence in the future, and to encourage the recognition of what is worthy of appreciation in society.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Manteno, Kankakee County, Illinois, as follows:

Section 1

That the following policy regarding opening invocations before the regular meetings of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Manteno is hereby approved and adopted:

POLICY REGARDING OPENING INVOCATIONS BEFORE THE REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF MANTENO

Section 1. It is the policy of the Board of Trustees ("Village Board") of the Village of Manteno ("Village") to allow for an invocation, which may include a prayer, a reflective moment of silence, or a short solemnizing message, to be offered by a third party before its regular meeting. This policy is intended to acknowledge and express respect for the diversity of religious faiths and denominations represented and practiced among the citizens of the Village and is not intended as an affiliation with or preference for any religious faith or denomination.

Section 2. When scheduled, the invocation shall be listed as an agenda item before roll call. The representative's name may be listed, and the following statement shall be printed below:

"The Village of Manteno does not endorse religious faith, nor does it have a an affiliation with any particular faith, denomination, or speaker. Participation in the invocation is not expected or required."

Section 3. No official or employee of the Village, nor any other person in attendance at a meeting, shall be required to stand or otherwise participate in an invocation. Participation in an invocation shall have no impact on the ability of the person to actively participate in the business and affairs of the Village.

Section 4. No official or employee of the Village shall: (a) direct any person to stand for an invocation or to otherwise participate (including the manner of participation) therein; (b) make public note of a person's presence or absence from, or his/her attention or inattention to, an invocation; or (c) expressly or implicitly communicate that the decisions of the Village Board will in any way be influenced by a person's participation or acquiescence in the invocation.

Section 5. The invocation shall be voluntarily delivered by a clergy member of a religious organization located in or serving the Village and, to ensure that such persons (the "invocation speaker") are selected from a diverse pool of representatives, shall be selected on a rotating basis according to the following procedures:

(A) The Village Clerk shall compile and maintain a database ("Assembly List") of the religious organization with an established presence in the Village that regularly meet for the primary purpose of sharing a religious perspective (hereinafter referred to as a religious assembly).

(B) The Assembly List shall be compiled using reasonable efforts, including research from the Internet, to identify all churches, synagogues, congregations, temples, mosques or other religious assemblies in the Village. All religious assemblies with an established presence in the Village are eligible to be included on the Assembly List, and any religious assembly can confirm its inclusion by a written request to the Village Clerk.

(C) This policy is intended to be and shall be applied in a way that is all-inclusive of every religion and denomination serving the citizens of the Village. The Assembly List is compiled and used for purposes of logistics, efficiency, and to ensure there exists an equal opportunity for all the community's religious leaders to participate. The Village Clerk shall refer to the criteria used by the Internal Revenue Service in its determination of whether a religious assembly would qualify for tax-exempt status under I.R.C. § 501(c)(3) in the event there a question as to its authenticity.

(D) The Assembly List shall also include any religious assembly located outside the Village if such assembly is regularly attended by at least one (1) resident of the Village and such resident requests its inclusion by written communication to the Village Clerk.

(E) The Assembly List shall be updated by reasonable efforts of the Village Clerk in November of each calendar year.

(F) On or about December 1 of each calendar year, the Village Clerk shall mail an invitation addressed to the "religious leader" of each entry on the Assembly List.

(G) The invitation shall be dated and signed by the Village Clerk, and shall read as follows:

Dear Religious Leader,

The Board of Trustees of the Village of Manteno makes it a policy to invite members of the clergy or religious representatives of religious organizations in the Village of Manteno to voluntarily offer an invocation before the beginning of its regular meetings, for the benefit and blessing of the Village Board. You are eligible to offer this important service as a representative of a religious organization with an established presence in the Village of Manteno.

Enclosed with this letter is a schedule of regular meetings of the Village Board scheduled for the upcoming calendar year. If you have any interest in giving an invocation before one or more of these meetings, please send a written request to my attention. If you have a preference among the dates, please state that preference in your written response. Representatives will be scheduled on a first-come, first-serve basis.

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, the Village Board respectfully requests that the opportunity not be exploited to convert others or to disparage any particular faith or belief that is different from your own.

Thank you in advance for considering this invitation.

Sincerely,

Village Clerk

(H) Only one (1) invocation speaker shall be scheduled for each meeting, and each shall be scheduled on a first-come, first-serve basis. Provided, however, a particularly scheduled invocation speaker that has provided an invocation one (1) or more times in the current calendar year may be moved or cancelled to allow for the participation of an invocation speaker of a new or previously unknown religious assembly, or to ensure a diverse group of religious assemblies are provided an opportunity.

(I) In the event an eligible representative of a religious assembly believes that the Village Clerk has not complied with the terms of this policy, the representative may seek review of that decision or deviation from the Village Board.

Section 6. No invocation speaker shall receive compensation for his/her service.

Section 7. No guidelines or limitations shall be issued regarding the content of an invocation, except that the Village Board requests that no invocation should proselytize, advance, or disparage the religious faith or non-religious views of others.

Section 8. The Village Clerk shall make every reasonable effort to ensure that a variety of eligible invocation speakers are scheduled for the Village Board's meetings.

Section 9. No official or employee of the Village shall engage in any prior inquiry, review of, or involvement in, the content of any invocation to be offered by any invocation speaker.

Section 2

This Resolution shall be in full force and effect from after its adoption.

This Resolution was adopted and deposited in the office of the Village Clerk of the Village of Manteno this ____ day of June, 2025.


KERRI ROLNIAK, Village Clerk

APPROVED by me this 19th
day of June, 2025.


ANNETTE LAMORE, Village President