

City Council Policy 2023-48

Council Recognition of Individuals, Organizations and/or Events

Policy Purpose

This policy is designed to establish consistent criteria and procedures for official City Council recognition of individuals, organizations, and/or events and to recognize the contributions to the City from individuals, groups and organizations.

Policy Statement:

It is the policy of the City to recognize noteworthy contributions and achievements of individuals and organizations through letters, proclamations, and resolutions in accordance with the criteria contained in this policy, and at the discretion of the Mayor or the City Council where noted. These forms of recognition are not intended for partisan, commercial or narrow individual purposes; as such purposes are inconsistent with the overall policies of the City Council.

1. Letter of Recognition

A Letter of Recognition is used to acknowledge individual or group achievement or contributions to the community, or to recognize a noteworthy event or occasion. Letters of Recognition are also prepared for outgoing members of City Council, Planning Commission and City Council appointed committee members that have served for less than two terms (less than 8 years continuously) in good standing. All letters are signed by the Mayor only.

Letters of Recognition on behalf of the entire City Council do not require City Council approval and are issued at the discretion of the Mayor provided that the receiving individual or group does not represent views or opinions contrary to established City Council policy or positions. Individual Councilmembers may request through the Mayor that letters be prepared and issued by the City.

2. Proclamations (Ceremonial Resolutions)

Proclamations are also reserved for accomplishments and/or events of significant importance to the community. Proclamations (Ceremonial Resolutions) are less formal than official Resolutions of the City Council. Proclamations are presented at City Council meetings at the designated place in the agenda, but do not require formal vote or action by the City Council and are not numbered and filed by the City Clerk. Proclamations are used for various forms of recognition, including:

- A. Recognition of individuals and organizations whose contributions and achievements have community-wide significance.
- B. Recognition of Cotati residents on the occasion of their 100th birthday.
- C. To call public attention to a significant community event, service or cause.

- D. To highlight a special period of observance, celebration, or recognition for community, regional, state, or national occasions.

All requests, including the proposed text, for Proclamations must be directed to the City Manager's office for review and placed on the agenda consistent with the process in the current City Council Rules. A copy of each Proclamation is maintained in the City Manager's office.

The Mayor shall determine whether a proclamation is read in its entirety at the City Council meeting, or only the proclamation title and what is proclaimed. The City Council member requesting the proclamation shall work with the City Manager's office to arrange for a representative to receive the proclamation at the appointed City Council meeting.

3. Formal Resolutions

A formal Resolution of recognition or appreciation is the highest Council honor reserved for individuals and organizations that have made extraordinary, lasting, and significant contributions to the community, including City Council, commission and City Council appointed committee members that have served for two terms or longer (8 years or more continuously) in good standing.

All requests, including the proposed text, must be requested through the Mayor and placed on the agenda consistent with the process in the current City Council Rules. Formal resolutions are approved by action of the City Council at a Council meeting.

4. Display of Flags

The flagpole in front of City Hall maintains an outdoor display of the United States flag and the California State flag, as well as the ability to display a third commemorative flag.

- A. Conformance with Federal and State Regulations. Flags shall be displayed in accordance with Federal and State statutes and regulations, including, but not limited to, United States Code, Title 4, Chapter 1 and California Government Code section 430 et seq., and this Policy.
 - a. Per California Government Code section 431(a), the Flag of the United States and the Flag of the State of California shall be prominently displayed upon or in front of public buildings of the City.
 - b. Per California Government Code section 434.7, any Flag of the United States or Flag of California that the City purchases must be made in the United States.
 - c. The United States Flag may only be flown at half-staff in accordance with the guidelines set forth at <https://www.usa.gov/flag>. The State of California Flag shall be flown at half-staff if the United States Flag is flown at half-staff.
- B. Commemorative Flags at City Hall. A commemorative flag is any flag other than the United States Flag or the State of California Flag. The display of commemorative flags constitutes official governmental speech. The display of commemorative flags serves solely as an expression of the City's official sentiment and shall not create or serve as a forum for public expression.

- a. At a noticed and agenda City Council meeting, a majority of Council Members must agree to display a commemorative flag through a resolution or affirmative vote. The annual schedule for commemorative flags is typically approved by the City Council once per year to ensure coordination for the following 12 months. The City will not display a commemorative flag based on a request from a third party, nor will the City use its flagpoles to sponsor the expression of a third party.
 - b. Commemorative flags must be either purchased by the City or temporarily donated for the City's use and must be clean, without holes and tears, and be made of an all-weather fabric. Commemorative flags must be the same size or smaller than the United States and California flags that are flown and must be below the California flag. The City will not be responsible for the condition of the commemorative flag once flown.
 - c. Commemorative flags shall be displayed for a period of time that is reasonable or customary, but no longer than thirty-one (31) continuous days.
 - d. If any other flag is flown at half-staff, the commemorative flag will also be flown at half-staff.
 - e. A "commemorative flag" shall be consistent with the City's vision, mission and priorities. The following are not allowed as Commemorative Flags and will not be considered by the City Council:
 - i. Flags of a particular religious movement or creed to avoid the appearance of City government endorsing religion or a particular religious movement or creed;
 - ii. Flags of a political party to avoid the appearance of City government endorsing a political party; and
 - iii. Flags advocating a certain outcome in an election.
- C. Flag Raising Ceremonies
- a. Authorization. The City Council approves a City of Cotati Commemorative Flag calendar through a resolution or affirmative vote. The City Council will also designate by resolution or affirmative vote which, if any, commemorative flags will also include a flag raising ceremony. The ceremony does not authorize expenditure of public funds outside of the listed City Staff Support provided in this policy, unless explicitly included in the City Councils' authorizing motion.
 - b. Ceremony Logistics. The Mayor is the organizing lead for flag raising ceremonies or if unavailable, the Vice Mayor (Organizing Lead). The Organizing Lead may also select a delegee from among the City Council to assist and shall inform the City Manager of the delegee. The Organizing Lead will coordinate with the City Manager's office to set the date and time of the ceremony, and be the lead for event coordination, including inviting speakers, providing any requested event information for public marketing. The Organizing Lead shall also inform the City Manager as soon as possible of any potential public safety issues as they become known.

Any vendor assisting with, providing food to, or performing at the event will be required to sign a hold harmless agreement and may require insurance (depending on scope of activity). If food is served, it must be pre-wrapped. The Organizing Lead must coordinate all decorations, food servers, tablecloths, napkin, utensils and clean-up crew to ensure proper trash disposal. Information tables may not sell any product, wares, or memberships. The Organizing Lead is responsible for event clean-up, except for City supplied materials.

- c. Ceremonies. Flag Raising Ceremonies are outdoor events held in in front of City Hall (201 West Sierra Avenue). Ceremonies are limited to one hour maximum and can accommodate approximately 30 people. Flag raising ceremonies can only be scheduled during normal City Hall working hours, at a date and time available to be supported by City staff.
- d. City Staff Support. City staff will support flag raising ceremonies with the following services, if requested by the Organizing Lead:
 - Obtain flags.
 - Conduct the flag raising.
 - Provide a Podium.
 - Provide up to two tables.
 - Simple sound system (speaker's handheld microphone and speakers)
 - Police security, as needed.

No seating will be provided. City staff will set up and remove all City provided materials and equipment. The City Manager's Office will provide public notice of the event through posting on the City's website and social media channels prior to the event. No physical flyers will be produced by the City.