

Changes may constrain public

Jail, fines may await those who 'disturb' council if Code of Conduct is passed

On the Net

Want to read the proposed Code of Conduct? Go to www.lebanondailyrecord.com and click on the Community. Then go to Community Links and click on the City of Lebanon Code of Conduct.

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Disgruntled members of the public need to think before they react at a Lebanon City Council meeting.

A newly drafted Code of Conduct, if passed, will give the mayor the authority to have anyone disturbing a meeting fined or jailed.

A draft of the code, presented to the Lebanon City Council on Monday, comes as a result of one-on-one conversations between the mayor and council members and discussions that have taken place at open meetings, according to Mayor C.P. Craig.

Some sections are changes in language from existing

city ordinances, and some are based on state statutes. Other sections are new.

While the majority of the Code of Conduct draft relates to council members, new sections also give guidelines on how the public is to address the council.

The code Section 2-58 will name the chief of police as the sergeant-at-arms. His purpose will be to maintain order and decorum as needed and directed by the mayor. Lebanon Police Chief Joe Brauer already regularly attends the council meetings.

A note next to this section on the draft refers to the February 2008 shooting during a Kirkwood City Council that left five people dead.

Along that same line, Sec-

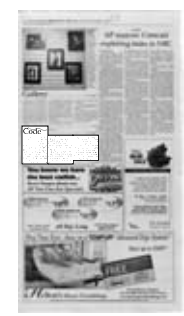
tion 2-58 states that anyone "disturbing" a meeting can be fined from \$5 to \$500 or jailed for up to three months — or both.

If the code passes without changes, during the "Public Comments" part of the meeting, "residents" may address the council on any issue but first must have completed a "Public Comment Form."

On Monday, Craig explained that this is so that the clerk will have the proper spelling on the speaker's name for the records. The speaker must also provide an address and list the topic they wish to speak on.

See 'Code' / page 6

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From Page: 1
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Code

Subsection (b) asks that anyone wishing to address the council must submit their request to the city clerk by the close of business on the Tuesday before the Monday meeting so that they can be placed on the agenda.

The request must include the issue to be discussed, the date the individual wants to appear and provide any documentation that will be

included in the discussion.

Currently speakers are asked to step up to the podium and state their names. The new proposed code asks them to stand at their seat instead.

Any documentation that goes along with the speaker's topic is to be handed to the sergeant-at-arms, who will then hand it over to the council.

The person is asked to limit their talk to matters pertaining to city business and not be repetitive.

The section allows for individuals to communicate with council members in writing by sending all correspondence to the city clerk, who will then distribute that correspondence.