

Book	Policy Manual
Section	900 Community
Title	Public Participation in Board Meetings
Code	903
Status	Active
Adopted	August 25, 2014

Purpose

The Board recognizes the value to district governance of public comment from district residents and/or taxpayers on issues involving the district, and the importance of involving members of the public in Board meetings. The Board also recognizes its responsibility for proper governance of the district and the need to conduct its business in an orderly and efficient manner.

Authority

The Board adopts this policy to govern public participation in Board meetings necessary to conduct its meeting and to maintain order.[\[1\]](#)

In order to permit fair and orderly expression of public comment, the Board shall provide an opportunity at each open meeting of the Board for district residents and taxpayers to comment on matters of concern, official action or deliberation before the Board prior to official action by the Board.[\[2\]](#)

The Board shall accept public comment from district residents and taxpayers on matters that are on the Board agenda for that meeting, prior to taking official action, at a time at or near the beginning of the meeting.

The Board shall accept public comment from district residents and taxpayers on any other matters of concern, official action or deliberation before the Board, which are not on the Board agenda for that meeting, at or near the end of the meeting.

If the Board determines there is not sufficient time at a meeting for public comments, the comment period may be deferred to the next regular meeting or to a special meeting occurring before the next regular meeting.[\[2\]](#)

Delegation of Responsibility

The presiding officer at each public Board meeting shall follow Board policy for the conduct of public meetings. Where his/her ruling is disputed, it may be overruled by a majority of those Board members present and voting.[\[3\]](#)[\[4\]](#)

Guidelines

Whenever issues identified by the participant are subject to remediation under policies and procedures of the Board, they shall be dealt with in accordance with those policies and procedures and the organizational structure of the district.

The Board encourages public participation in Board meetings by district residents and taxpayers. However, in the interest of providing equal opportunity to be heard, and in the interest of orderly, businesslike meetings, the Board establishes the following guidelines:

1. All individuals who wish to be placed on the agenda shall notify the Board Secretary five (5) days prior to the regularly scheduled meeting of the topic and the name and address of the presenter.
 2. Individuals who are not on the agenda and wish to be heard by the Board should sign the visitors' log book the night of the meeting and mark the log book that they wish to be heard. In cases of an unusually long agenda or an unusually large number of individuals wishing to be heard by the Board, the Board may limit the portion of the meeting during which the public is invited to speak, and it may not be possible to hear all individuals who are not listed on the agenda.
 3. The Board limits public comment to five (5) minutes for those on the agenda and three (3) minutes for those not on the agenda.
 4. All individuals presenting to the Board shall state their name; their home address; the group or interest they are representing, if any; and the topic of discussion.
 5. In cases of groups of two (2) or more individuals, the Board President may ask that just one (1) representative act as spokesperson for the group; only the representative will be given the opportunity to speak.
 6. No participant may speak more than once on the same topic, unless all others who wish to speak on that topic have been heard.
 7. All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board members individually.
- The presiding officer may:
1. Interrupt or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant.
 2. Request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum.
 3. Request the assistance of law enforcement officers to remove a disorderly person when his/her conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting.
 4. Call a recess or adjourn to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting.
 5. Waive these rules with the approval of the Board.

Electronic recording devices and cameras, in addition to those used as official recording devices, shall be permitted at public meetings under guidelines established by the Board.

No placards or banners will be permitted within the meeting room.

The meeting agenda and all pertinent documents shall be available to the press and public at the meetings.

Legal

[1. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 710](#)

[2. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 710.1](#)

[3. 24 P.S. 407](#)

4. Pol. 006

[65 Pa. C.S.A. 701 et seq](#)