

TOWN OF ALTON

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS

The primary purpose of the Board of Selectmen's meetings is to conduct the business of the Town. The Board encourages residents to attend Board meetings so that they may become acquainted with the operation and programs of the Town. All official meetings of the Board shall be open to the press and the public. However, the Board reserves the right to meet and to adjourn or recess a meeting at any time. The Board also reserves the right to enter non-public session at any time, in accordance with the provisions of RSA 91-A:3.

Public participation in the Board's regular meetings is a privilege that the Board has adopted in order to assure that persons who wish to appear before the Board and either discuss agenda items or who schedule an appointment to bring new matters to its attention may be heard. At the same time, in order to assure that it may conduct its meetings properly and efficiently, the Board adopts as policy the following procedures and rules pertaining to public participation at Board meetings:

1. At regularly scheduled Board meetings, the agenda will reflect two (2) times during the meeting that allows for public input subject to these procedures:
 - a. Speakers will be allotted three (3) minutes per person to speak to an agenda item, only during the first public input session unless extended by approval of the Board on any matter.
 - b. Speakers will be allotted five (5) minutes per person to speak to a non-agenda item during the second public input session.
 - c. Complaints regarding individual employees, other individuals and/or any matter that may, in the opinion of the Board infringe on another person's rights of privacy will not be allowed, such matters must be directed to the Town Administrator during normal business hours at Town Hall.
 - d. When addressing the Board, all speakers are to conduct themselves in a civil manner. Obscene, slanderous, defamatory, disruptive, repetitive, disorderly or violent statements will be considered out of order and will not be tolerated. The Board Chair may terminate the speaker's privilege to address the Board if the speaker does not follow these rules of order.
 - e. If a speaker does not follow these rules after being warned to do so by the Board Chair they may be removed from the meeting. Persistent violations of these rules may result in loss of the privilege to address the Board.
 - f. Public Input will be allowed only for items on the agenda. If someone wishes to speak on any other subject, they must first contact the Selectmen's Office in writing for scheduling an appointment to address the Board. The written statement shall summarize the topic or subject matter that the person wants to discuss with the Board or bring to the attention of the Board. Scheduling an appointment shall be within the sole discretion of the majority of the Board. If an appointment is granted the person will be placed on the next available agenda.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to provide the Board with an opportunity to receive directly from citizens any concerns, desires, or hopes they may have for the community, while keeping the discussions civil and orderly and protecting the rights of others.

Procedure:

- A. Persons wishing to be heard on agenda matters during the first public input session must state their name(s), and address and state which agenda item they wish to be heard on. Persons wishing to be heard on any matter during the second public input session must state their name(s), and address and state the subject matter or matters they will be discussing.
- B. Persons should speak directly to the issue, as briefly and fully as possible.
- C. Persons should be specific about what they want acted upon, if that is the case, by the Board.

Ground Rules:

- A. The Chairman of the Board conducts public input.
- B. The Chairman indicates how much time will be allowed for public input.
- C. The Chairman will call on those wishing to be heard.
- D. The Board will make no decisions during Public Input.
- E. Any person whose conduct is in violation of the rules set forth above will be ordered to cease and desist such behavior. Should their behavior continue after due warning, they will be removed from the meeting room.

Adopted: January 14, 2015
Amended: March 16, 2015
Amended on: June 22, 2016