

Select Board Meeting Public Attendance and Public Comment Period Policy

The Select Board is elected by the citizens to perform the people's business. The Board recognizes the value of public comment on municipal issues. To permit fair and orderly expression of such comment, the procedures described in this policy shall be followed. This policy will help ensure that the Board has time to conduct its business in a professional and timely manner.

All Select Board meetings are open to the public for observation. The Board will strive to provide an opportunity for public input by way of a 10-15 minute Public Comment period at a scheduled time during Select Board meetings. Opportunities for Public Comment will be listed on a posted agenda. The Board will also schedule Public Informational Meetings when appropriate for continued public discussion. All other Select Board meeting proceedings are for the Board and invited guests. The public does not have a right to comment during these discussions. If a member of the public wishes to speak to an agenda item, the time to do so is during a scheduled Public Comment period or Public Informational Meetings on the subject. The Select Board does have the right to recognize a member of the public for comment or for information relevant to the topic being discussed during the meeting; however, this is at the discretion of the Select Board.

The public is also encouraged to send comments by way of USPS or electronic mail. Should an organization or private individual wish to have a matter placed on the Select Board agenda, a written request detailing the specifics of the subject shall be submitted to the Board for consideration and possible scheduling.

Whenever possible, members of the public wishing to speak during Public Comment should sign up in advance by contacting the Select Board's office no later than the day before a scheduled meeting. A sign-up sheet will also be available as people enter the meeting room. People will speak in the order in which they sign up.

The Public Comment period may be timed to allow for the meeting to stay on schedule. There is no guarantee that there will be enough time for all members of the public to speak. The Chair has the right to set a time limit for comments.

If you wish to speak, wait until the Select Board Chair has opened the floor to public comments. When the Chair has recognized you, please state your name for the record and the nature of your business.

All comments and questions should be addressed to the Select Board. The Chair may allow a question to be answered only if an answer is easily given. Should a question need further legal research or further discussion, the question will be noted and taken up at a future meeting. Any answers provided by the Select Board during the Public Comment period will be brief and no votes by the Select Board will be taken.

If you are introducing written materials, charts, or other documentation, you are encouraged to provide at least four copies to the Town Coordinator for distribution.

Individuals attending a Select Board meeting will be expected to act in a peaceful and orderly manner. Speakers are asked not to speak over one another. While the Board encourages polite and courteous discussions, they also recognize the importance of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the Articles of the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights.

During both Select Board meetings and Public Informational Meetings the audience shall not disturb the proceedings by whispering, talking or other distractions. If this occurs, the Chair may interrupt the proceedings and ask that the remaining public body be quiet and show courtesy for the speaker.

Continued unwillingness to follow any portion of this policy may result in dismissal from a meeting.

APPROVED BY THE SELECT BOARD 05/16/2023