

Administrative
Policy and
Procedure

Select Board
Public Comment Policy

Approved September 17, 2018
Amended April 4, 2023

PURPOSE:

To establish a policy of the Select Board (Board) with regard to those persons wishing to speak at meetings of the Board.

POLICY:

The Board welcomes information, concerns, and opinions from those attending Board meetings that are related to matters within the Board’s jurisdiction. The Board hereby adopts this policy: to provide members of the public a fair opportunity to speak; to ensure compliance with the *Open Meeting Law* and other legal obligations; and to facilitate the orderly conduct of the Board’s meetings.

APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all persons wishing to speak at a Board meeting. The Board, at the chair’s discretion, may provide the following opportunities to speak during the meeting: (i) at a “Citizen Speak” period generally scheduled at the beginning of a meeting; and (ii) at designated periods for comment on topics identified on the Board’s agenda. The Board welcomes comments expressing any viewpoint related to the topics of any particular comment period.

PROCEDURES:

- a. The Board will typically schedule time for a “Citizen Speak” comment period at or near the beginning of its meetings. “Citizen Speak” is a limited forum to comment on topics within the Board’s jurisdiction and not otherwise listed on the Board’s agenda.. To ensure compliance with the *Open Meeting Law*, privacy laws, and other legal obligations, Board members will rarely engage with a speaker or with each other during “Citizen Speak” periods.
- b. The Board may also provide time for public comment on topics identified on the Board’s agenda. Comments during such periods are limited to those related to the specific topic under deliberation.
- c. Persons wishing to provide comments to the Board shall first sign the sign-in sheet provided by the Board (if participating in person) and verbally identify themselves by name and address prior to commenting.
- d. All comments shall be addressed to or through the chair or acting chair of the Board.

- e. Each comment period shall not exceed 15 minutes and each speaker shall not exceed three minutes, unless otherwise determined by the chair.
- f. Members of the public are encouraged to keep their comments respectful, despite any differences of opinion on the matters discussed. Threats of violence or comments inciting imminent lawlessness are not allowed. Members of the public shall not disrupt a meeting by interrupting individuals who have been authorized by the chair to speak.

The chair shall provide at least one verbal warning to a speaker if they make a disruptive comment or engage in disruptive conduct. If, after at least one verbal warning, the speaker persists in making disruptive comments or engaging in disruptive conduct, the chair may end that person's privilege of address for that meeting.

DEFINITION:

In-person Meeting: A meeting of a public body that is open and physically accessible to the public, with all participants physically present together in the same place, not on internet, conference call, or video conference.

Hybrid Meeting: A meeting conducted with a subset of the participants attending the meeting in person, while other participants are provided an adequate alternative means of joining the meeting, without limitation, providing public access through telephone, internet, or satellite enabled audio or video conferencing or any other technology that enables the public to clearly follow the proceedings of the public body in real time.

Remote Meeting: A meeting conducted with all members of the public body and public participants attending remotely through telephone, internet, or satellite enabled audio or video conferencing or any other technology that enables the public to clearly follow the proceedings of the public body in real time.

REGULATORY / STATUTORY REFERENCES

Massachusetts G.L. c.30A, §20.

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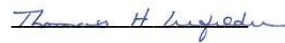
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APPROVED BY SELECT BOARD

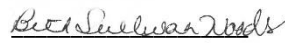
Chair Lise M. Olney



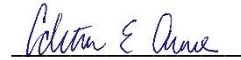
Vice Chair Thomas H. Ulfelder



Beth Sullivan Woods



Colette E. Aufranc



Ann-Mara S. Lanza



Original date: 9/17/18

Revised dates: 4/4/23