



## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT AT OPEN MEETINGS**

Prior to the start of any regular or special meeting, the Mayor, as the chairperson of the meeting, or the Acting chairperson of the meeting, as applicable, may elect to review these general guidelines for public comment at open meetings. At the Mayor's direction, the Town Clerk will make a copy of these guidelines available to all members of the public in attendance at regular or special meetings of the Board of Trustees ("Board").

Participation by members of the public in open meetings of the Board is welcomed and encouraged. Adherence to these guidelines is expected.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD GUIDELINES**

- ❖ Speakers must be physically present at Town Hall (or the location of the regular or special meeting) to provide public comment to the Board. Speakers unable to attend in person are encouraged to submit written comments to the Town Clerk for distribution to the Board.
- ❖ There are two (2) public comment periods provided on the agenda of each regular and special meeting of the Board.
  - The first public comment period shall be limited to individuals who wish to address specific agenda items for which there is not a separate public hearing scheduled. The first public comment period shall be noticed on the meeting agenda generally as follows: "**Public comment: 3 minute time limit. Comment is for any item on the agenda unless it is set for public hearing.**"
  - The second public comment period shall be available to individuals who wish to make general announcements, address a topic whether it is on the agenda or not, or who wish to address specific agenda items for which there is not a separate public hearing. The second public comment period shall be noticed on the meeting agenda generally as follows: "**Public comment: 3 minute time limit. Comment is for any item whether it is on the agenda or not unless it is set for public hearing.**"

- ❖ Each public comment period is limited to fifteen (15) minutes. If any individual is unable to address the Board due to the 15-minute time limitation, the individual is encouraged to submit comments in writing to the Town Clerk for distribution to the Board.
- ❖ All individuals who wish to speak during a public comment period on the agenda must sign in using a sheet made available by the Town Clerk. The sign-up sheet shall contain columns for each speaker's name and address.
- ❖ Speakers are requested to keep comments short. Each speaker will be given a maximum of three (3) minutes to address the Board. Individuals representing a group, such as a homeowners' association or property owners' association, shall be given up to five (5) minutes to speak.
- ❖ Speakers shall be heard in the order in which they signed up to do so (on the sign-up sheet).
- ❖ Speakers should come to the podium to speak. Speakers are requested to speak into the microphone; giving their name and address before addressing the Board. All comments shall be addressed to the Board as a whole and not to any individual Board Members.
- ❖ Each individual may speak only once during each public comment period.
- ❖ Written materials that a speaker believes might be appropriate for the Board's consideration should be submitted in advance to the Town Clerk.
- ❖ The Board of Trustees retains the authority to vary these guidelines as may be necessary during the course of any public comment period and retains the authority to deviate from these guidelines as necessary. If the Board varies these guidelines for one speaker (such as waiving or extending the three-minute time limit), the variance shall generally be applied to all speakers, the intent being that all speakers are treated equally.
- ❖ The Mayor may permit public comment during any agenda item provided that such invitation does not hinder the ability of the Board of Trustees to conduct official Town business in an efficient manner. Any public comment permitted during any agenda item shall conform to these guidelines.

*Updated January 29, 2024.*