

Policy 2024-001

Public Comment

Public comment is an important part of a township working with its constituents and the township does not wish to deny the public's right of free speech. However, neither Michigan Open Meeting Act 267 of 1976 nor Robert's Rules address how Public Comment and Public Involvement are governed during the execution of a township meeting. Because of this, the Township of Boardman, Michigan seeks to clarify how the public can be involved in the business of the township during the monthly board meeting, specifically the Public Comment period(s).

The Township of Boardman, Michigan adopts as policy the following Public Comment and Public Involvement rules:

1. The public comment period will be shown as an agenda item on the agenda distributed prior to the commencement of any public meeting or as amended during the public meeting.
2. Public comment by any individual is limited to 3 minutes per comment period on the agenda. Each person receives one opportunity of 3 minutes during any Public Comment period.
3. Public comment is limited to township agenda items or items relevant to the township as a whole.
4. If off topic comments are brought up during the Public Comment period, the township supervisor can request the speaker to cease.
5. Public comment time cannot be "donated" to another member of the public.
6. Public comment is just that, public comment. It is the public's opportunity to address subjects that are important to the citizens and relevant to the township. It is not a question and answer period. The speaker should address the supervisor and not other members of the board and they should not expect any interaction of board members during the comment time.
7. Any board member can bring factual information to the public's attention during the Public Comment time period but is NOT required to do so.
8. Questions of the comment speaker may be asked by board members, but they are not required to do so during the Public Comment period. If this occurs, additional time can be added to the speaker's allotment at the discretion of the supervisor.
9. Seated board members may utilize Public Comment periods as long as the items discussed are not already part of the board's meeting agenda. Ideally, these items should be put onto the agenda and discussed at the appropriate agenda time period.
10. Outside of the Public Comment agenda time period, the public should refrain from engaging the board. If experts are recognized by the board during agenda item discussions, a board member may request information from a member of the public.
11. Disruptions of the board meeting by the public that creates an atmosphere of threat of violence or harassment may result in removal of the person from the meeting and legal action as per Michigan Penal Code Act 328 of 1931 Section 750.170.