



Town of Chatham

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Select Board Meeting Public Participation Policy

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Approved: August 4, 2020
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Amended: June 29, 2021

Purpose

To balance the interest of the Select Board (the Board), as the elected, policy-making public body, in conducting business meetings of the Town in as efficient a manner as possible and citizens' involvement and participation in these open, public meetings, the Board adopts the following Meeting Public Participation Policy.

Policy

Upon adoption of this policy the Select Board meetings shall be conducted in the following manner.

Chairperson Responsibilities

All meetings will be opened and moderated by the Chairperson of the Board (or Acting Chairperson in the case of the Chairperson's absence) in compliance with Commonwealth of Massachusetts Open Meeting laws.

The Chairperson will alert the public that the meeting is being recorded and will be available for scheduled and on-demand viewing through the Town's website. The Chairperson will establish if anyone else is recording the meeting.

If the meeting is being conducted remotely, the Chairperson will inform the public of the legal authority which allows such conduct and the methods available through which the public may access and participate in the meeting. The Chairperson will conduct a roll call to establish that a quorum of the Board is present and able to participate. All votes will be conducted by roll call.

Minute Approval

The first order of business on all agendas will be the consideration of previous meeting minutes for approval, if applicable.

Public Announcements and Agenda Item Requests

The second order of business on all agendas will be *Public Announcements and Agenda Item Requests*. The conduct of the Board and members of the public under this item are governed by separate policy (attached).

Public Comments on Agenda Items

Public comments will be accepted on all agenda items after public announcements and agenda item request and prior to presentation of the agenda item consent agenda with the exception of committee appointments, personnel issues, or items noted as "Board Discussion."

Comments will be limited to no more than five minutes per person in total, enforced at the discretion of the Chairperson. All individuals recognized by the Chairperson are expected to conduct themselves in a civil manner and direct any questions through the Chairperson. The Chairperson reserves the right to cease accepting public comment if such become repetitive in nature. Individuals seeking to comment more than one time per agenda item will be recognized at the discretion of the Chairperson.

Consent Agenda

The fourth order of business on all agendas will be consideration of the Consent Agenda, if applicable. Consent Agenda items are those that are routine, non-controversial, or administrative matters that require Board action. The Consent Agenda is voted on in a single majority vote.

Any Board member can request an item be removed from the Consent Agenda and added to the regular Agenda. Removing an item from the Consent Agenda does not require a vote. Any items removed from a Consent Agenda will be taken up immediately following the Consent Agenda.

Public Hearings

Public Hearings, if applicable, will be taken up after the Consent Agenda and/or any items removed from the Consent Agenda.

Public Hearings will be opened by the reading of the published Public Hearing notice by the Clerk (or presiding officer in the case of the Clerk's absence). The subject of the public hearing will be introduced by the appropriate party and the Board will have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the subject matter. All questions should be directed through the Chairperson who may ask for a response from the appropriate individual.

The Chairperson will recognize members of the public who wish to offer comments on the subject of the public hearing. Comments will be limited to no more than five minutes per person, enforced at the discretion of the Chairperson. All individuals recognized by the Chairperson are expected to conduct themselves in a civil manner and direct any questions through the Chairperson. Individuals seeking to comment more than one time per public hearing will be recognized at the discretion of the Chairperson.

All written correspondence received by the Board will be read into the record and attached to the meeting minutes.

Business Agenda

The Board shall proceed with its regular business agenda. Discussion is limited to Board members, relevant Town staff, and persons pertinent to a particular agenda item.

Recess and Adjournment

Meetings may be recessed for a set period of time at the Chairperson's discretion.

All meetings will be adjourned upon vote of the majority of the Board.

If the meeting is being conducted remotely, a roll call vote to adjourn is required.