

BEDH - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

Category: Recommended

Related Policies: BEDB, KE & KEB

The primary purpose of School Board meetings is to conduct the business of the Board as it relates to school policies, programs and operations. The Board encourages residents to attend Board meetings so that they may become acquainted with the operation and programs of the schools. All official meetings of the Board shall be open to the press and public. However, the Board reserves the right to meet and to adjourn or recess a meeting at any time. The Board also reserves the right to enter non-public session at any time, in accordance with the provisions RSA 91-A:3.

In order to assure that persons who wish to appear before the Board may be heard and, at the same time, assure that the Board may conduct its business and meetings properly and efficiently, the Board adopts as policy the following procedures and rules pertaining to public participation at Board meetings.

Rules of Order

1. The Board will provide no less than thirty minutes to hear public comments at the beginning of each regular Board meeting. This period may be extended by a majority vote of the Board. Additionally, the Board may include additional public comment period for specific agenda items with a time limit for public comment specified on the pertinent agenda.
2. Individual speakers will be allotted three minutes per person. Speakers may not relinquish allotted time to another speaker. For specific meetings and/or specific agenda items, the Board may at the outset of the public comment period increase the individual time limit for all speakers.
3. The Chair will recognize speakers on a first come basis.
4. In order to comply with the minute requirements of RSA 91-A:2, II, speakers shall identify themselves clearly for the record.
5. Persons appearing before the Board are reminded that members of the Board are without authority to act independently as individuals in official matters. Thus, in most instances, any board response will be deferred pending consideration by the full Board.

Virtual Public Comment

In an attempt to open public comment period to a larger audience, the Board may accept live comments from the public through its official streaming platform. While the Board will attempt to allow the public to participate remotely, it is not responsible for technical failures that may impede communication. The Board encourages all residents that would like to comment during public time to attend in person. In addition to the above, the following rules apply to Remote Public Comments:

1. Comments from people present in person will be taken first, then the remaining time will be allotted to remote comments.

BEDH - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

2. To comply with the requirements of RSA 91-A:2, II, comments will only be accepted orally, and a participant's camera must be turned on.
3. A participant's display name on the streaming platform must include their full legal name and town of residence.
4. Upon speaking, the participant must state their full name and town of residence.

With the aim of maintaining focus on the issues in discussion, it is desired that all speakers strive to adhere to ordinary norms of decorum and civility.

Legal References:

RSA 91-A:2, Meetings Open to the Public

RSA 91-A:3, Non-Public Sessions

U.S. Const., 1st Amendment

Revised: March 9, 2023

Revised: November 10, 2022

Revised: December 13, 2021

Revised: August 19, 2019

Revised: December 2018

Revised: October 5, 2017

Adopted: February 27, 1990 (Souhegan)