



**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND**

MEETING CONDUCT AND MEETING SEQUENCE

Citizens and other visitors attending Board of County Commissioner meetings shall preserve order and decorum and shall neither, by conversation or otherwise, delay or interrupt the proceedings nor refuse to obey the orders of the presiding officer or rules outlined below. Any person who does not comport with the rules outlined below shall be removed from the Board's meeting room if security is directed to by the presiding officer. If the presiding officer fails to act, any member of the Board may move to require enforcement of the rules, and the affirmative vote of a majority of the Board shall require the presiding officer to act.

Conduct During the Meeting

- Speakers should be mindful that these meetings, which are a **limited public forum**, are broadcast over cable television and published on certain social media platforms to provide access to a broader group of persons who cannot attend in person. Any behavior that may violate applicable communications laws, statutes or regulations or social media platform community guidelines, preventing dissemination of the meeting to the Citizens of Washington County shall not be permitted.
- Signs or displays (No larger than 12"x24") are permitted so long as they do not disrupt the orderly conduct of the meeting or violate any rule outlined herein. This does not prohibit displays and visual aids used in connection with a presentation of regular business to the Board. The County cannot be held responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen items. Personal items must be kept on your person at all times.
- Video recording of the citizens' participation portion of the meeting is permitted so long as it does not disrupt the orderly conduct of the meeting or obstruct the view of other attendees. The County cannot be held responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen items. Personal items must be kept on your person at all times.
- Personal attacks, abusive language, or comments unrelated to County business that disrupts, disturbs or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting or interferes with the ability of people to access the meeting at home shall not be allowed.
- Obscenity or profanity that is disruptive to the conduct of an orderly meeting or interferes with the ability of people to access the meeting at home shall not be allowed.
- Unauthorized remarks from the audience, loud noises, whistles, yells and similar demonstrations shall not be permitted.

Meeting Sequence

- Regular meetings of the Board of County Commissioners ("Board") will typically start **at 8:00am**, unless otherwise noted, with an invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.
- Following the Pledge will be a broadcasted citizens' participation portion of the meeting for thirty (30) minutes. The presiding officer, at his discretion, may extend this timeframe.
- Individuals wishing to speak during citizen's participation must sign up, with their name and address, by the start of the meeting. The sign-up sheet is located near the door to the Board Meeting Room.
- The presiding officer will call the names of the persons wishing to speak in the order in which they are signed up.
- Each speaker will be given three (3) minutes to speak, with the time kept by the presiding officer and county clerk.
- In the event a speaker begins his or her comments prior to the end of the thirty (30) minute citizens' participation period, he or she will be permitted their fully allotted three (3) minutes.
- If the time allows, the presiding officer may allow anyone who has not signed up an opportunity to come forward and speak for three (3) minutes.
- No speaker shall be given more than three (3) minutes to speak.
- There shall be no donating or pooling of time to allow any one person to speak longer than three (3) minutes.
- At the end of the thirty (30) minute citizens' participation period, the presiding officer will announce a recess until the announced start time of the Board's regular business meeting.

These rules shall apply to ensure the orderly conduct of all regular meetings, special sessions, work sessions, public hearings, etc. held by the Board.