

MEEKER COUNTY BOARD PROTOCOL AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICIES

BOARD MEETINGS

The Meeker County Board of Commissioners generally meets on the first and third Tuesdays of each month. Although rare, the Board may call a Special Meeting to deal with specific topics or Emergency Meetings to handle matters that cannot wait until the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The Board may also call Committee meetings to study a specific topic or to attend a meeting or training as a group. No action may take place during a Committee meeting. The regular Board meetings will be held in the Meeker County Board room located in the Meeker County Courthouse, 325 N. Sibley Avenue, Floor 4, Litchfield, Minnesota. The meetings are to be held at 8:30 a.m. and completed at the closure of the County business designated on the agenda.

County business, at certain periods during the year, may make it necessary to recess a meeting to a future date. There are also instances when a special meeting must be called to consider certain specified actions. In both cases the public will be informed of such meetings through the same media. All meetings of the full Board (regular, special, emergency and recessed) are open to the public. In fact, the public is encouraged to attend.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION RULES AND PROCEDURES

The Board of Commissioners desires public participation at its meetings, but also has the responsibility for conducting its business in an orderly fashion. Members of the audience are encouraged to be heard, which shall occur prior to the Board scheduled agenda items. Participants should identify themselves and the issue they are addressing or wish to raise. The individuals will be allowed **3 minutes** for their presentation. When there are a large number of speakers to be heard, the Chairperson of the Board may shorten this time.

Repetitive comments should be held to a minimum. Outbursts, or other inappropriate conduct shall not be allowed during this period. Interruption or other interference with the orderly conduct of the Board of Commissioners meeting cannot be allowed. Defamatory or abusive remarks are always out of order. The presiding officer (Chairperson) may terminate the speaker's privilege if they persist in improper conduct or remarks.

At a public meeting of the Board, no person shall orally initiate charges or complaints against individual employees of the County (due to laws governing data practices) or debate any subjects under jurisdiction of the Courts. All such charges, if presented to the Board directly, shall be referred to the County Administrator's and County Attorney's Office for investigation and report.

No action shall occur by the County Board, after the informal public comment period is over unless a County Board member seeks to ask a clarification question. The purpose of this period is for public commenting only.

RULES OF CONDUCT

The Meeker County Board Chairperson has the responsibility of providing leadership in convening and managing all official meetings of the County Board. In this capacity, the Chair facilitates discussion and action on Board agenda items, insures that the meeting protocol is adhered to, and that data practices and open meeting laws are not violated. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair assumes this role.

COUNTY BOARD MEETING PROTOCOL

Cellular Phones: All cellular phones must be silenced or turned off while in the County Board room whether prior to, during, or after such meeting. No person shall answer a phone call for any reason while in the Board room at any time. The purpose of this protocol is to avoid distraction and interference with any and all County business. Any person in violation of this protocol may be asked to leave or be removed from the Board room.

Cameras (of any kind): All cameras of any kind shall only be allowed in the designated area. All cameras, of any kind, are allowed in this designated area only and must be contained in the designated area at any time while in the Board room. Cameras used in the designated area are not allowed to make any sound of any kind. This includes prior to, during or after any Board meeting. The purpose of this entire protocol is to allow Board members or other public officials to conduct the County's business with minimal interferences, distractions, or disruptions. Any person in violation of this protocol may be asked to leave or be removed from the Board room.

Public Decorum: No person(s) shall be allowed to behave with outbursts or inappropriate or offensive conduct at any time while in the Board room. The purpose of this policy is to allow appropriate public comments through formal or informal processes and to avoid the interference and/or inappropriate conduct while the County Board is conducting business. Proper conduct will be expected at all times prior to, during and after Board meetings. Any person in violation of this protocol may be asked to leave or be removed from the Board room.

PUBLIC PROCEDURES FOR GETTING ITEMS ON THE BOARD AGENDA

Meetings of the Board of Commissioners will follow a standard agenda. To place an item on the agenda, the following procedures should be used.

The applicant contact the County Administrator's Office at least 5 business days prior to the scheduled meeting. The request should include the name, address and telephone number of the person(s) making the request, a statement describing the action the applicant(s) requests the Board to take, and the background information outlining the reasons for the request. It will be the decision of the County Board Chair whether or not to include the item on the agenda.