

Town of Fenton Meeting Rules

All Town Board, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), meetings are required to be held in public for the purpose of allowing the public to observe these meetings. The law does not require these boards to set aside time at regular board meetings for public comment, except for the case of public hearings. Public participation is the purpose of a public hearing, which is required prior to the adoption of a local law or ordinance and in other cases, as specified by law.

Our boards believe that a public comment period should be scheduled for each meeting. However, they also believe that it is important that all periods of public input - whether they be public hearings or a public comment period - should abide by a set of rules that are designed to ensure that good order and civility is maintained at these meetings. The purpose of the public comment period is to discuss Town business only. "Points of Order", questions, and comments before or after that period will not be recognized.

In an effort to help the Town conduct efficient and productive meetings, the Town of Fenton, on XXXXXXXX , XXXXXX, XX 2017 adopted the following policy on Rules of Decorum at Public Meetings:

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD/PUBLIC HEARING/PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

- Each board will set an item on each agenda for public comment period. Except for the case of Public Hearings or special Public Information Meetings.
 - The public comment portion of the meeting is the only time when comments will be permitted by the public. Comments will not be allowed during other portions of these meetings except at the discretion of the Supervisor or Chairperson.
- The public comment period and public hearings and information meetings are designed for comments only. At the appropriate time, questions, comments and/or opinions will be taken by the Town Supervisor or Board Chairperson. Where appropriate, the Town Supervisor or Chairperson may direct the question, comment or opinion to the appropriate person to respond.
- Each speaker must state his or her name, their current address, and the subject he or she will be addressing.
- Each speaker during the public comment period is limited to speak one time, maximum three minutes in length. This rule will be enforced by the Town Supervisor or Chairperson. Any request of extension of this time limitation must be made to the Town Supervisor or Chairperson who has the discretion to extend the time to speak. In the case of public hearings, and at the discretion of the Town Supervisor or Chairperson, speakers may be allowed to speak a second time, once everyone has been allowed to speak once.
 - The maximum length of the Public Comment portion of the meetings will be 45 minutes unless comments are exhausted earlier or at the discretion of the Town Supervisor or Chairperson to extend the time further.
- Comments by speakers must be addressed to the Town Supervisor or Chairperson.
- Attendees may not address the Town Board until recognized by the Town Supervisor or board Chairperson.
- Any audio/visual or similar equipment to be used to support the comments or issues of a speaker must be approved by the Town Supervisor at least 24 hours before the regularly scheduled meeting.

- Discussion or comments between speakers and other attendees of the public meeting or hearing is prohibited. A speaker may disagree with or support prior speakers in comments directed to the Town Board.
- In the case of Town Board meetings comments can be related to legitimate Town business.
- In the case of Planning Board or ZBA meetings comments must be related to only those topics that appear on the agenda for that specific meeting.
- Speakers should present their remarks in a courteous manner and may not make personal comments about public officials, town residents or others.
- Placards, banners, or other signs are not permitted in meeting rooms, nor the distribution of flyers.
- Board members must be recognized by the Town Supervisor or Chairperson before making motions and speaking.
- There is no limit on the number of times a member may speak on a question or issue.
- A member may, with permission of the Town Supervisor or Chairperson , interrupt a speaker during their remarks, but only for the purpose of clarification and information.
- All members shall observe the commonly accepted rules of courtesy, decorum, dignity and good taste.
- A person who disregards the directives of the Town Supervisor or board Chairperson in enforcing the rules, disturbs the peace at the meeting, makes impertinent or slanderous remarks or generally conducts himself/herself in a boisterous or inappropriate manner while addressing the Town Board, could be barred from further participation and forfeit any balance of time remaining for their comments.
- If after a final warning, the speaker refuses to step down, the Town Supervisor or Chairperson will request that a Police Officer remove the individual from the meeting room. (§240.20 of the Penal Law.)
- All cell phones and pagers should be turned off.
- Minutes will be revised at the discretion of the Town Clerk. If at all possible comments regarding the minutes should be submitted to the Town Clerk before the Board meeting.