

**Dickinson Township**  
**Agenda and Public Comment Policy**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this Agenda and Public Comment Policy is to ensure the orderly and effective management of Board meetings while complying with statutory requirements. This policy is designed to structure the public comment process so that the Board of Supervisors can make informed and collective decisions efficiently, while also providing every resident and taxpayer (referred to collectively as "Citizens") with a fair opportunity to voice their concerns and participate in the deliberative process.

**Scope**

This policy applies to all meetings of the Board of Supervisors of Dickinson Township. For matters not specifically addressed by this policy, Robert's Rules of Order Newest Revised edition will be generally followed.

**1. Meeting Structure**

- **Order of Business:** The order of business for Board meetings will be established by Resolution and may be amended, as necessary. The current order of business will be made available to all Board members and the public.

**2. Agenda**

- **Preparation:** The Township Manager is responsible for preparing the agenda for each meeting after receiving input from individual Supervisors and staff as necessary, including all items scheduled for action or discussion.
- **Posting:** In accordance with Act 65, Section 709 of the Sunshine Act:
  - The meeting agenda must be posted on the Township's website at least 24 hours before the meeting. The agenda must list each matter that may be considered.
  - The agenda must also be physically posted at the meeting location and the Township building or temporary principal office.
  - Copies of the agenda must be made available to all members of the public in attendance.
- **Amendments:**
  - Act 65 provides specific circumstances under which a political subdivision may depart from the posted agenda:
    - **Emergency Situations:** Official action may be taken on any matter related to a real or potential emergency involving "a real and present danger to life or property," regardless of whether it was included in the agenda.

- **De Minimus business:** Official action may be taken on a matter if it arises or is brought to the attention of the political subdivision within 24 hours before the meeting if the matter does not involve fund expenditure or entering into a contract. This must be announced at the beginning of the meeting under Agenda Item #4 (Opening Announcements). The reasons for amending the agenda must be announced at the meeting, and the amended agenda must be posted on the Township's website and at the principal's office no later than the first business day after the meeting.
- **De Minimus business raised at meeting:** Official action may be taken on de minimus matters raised by a resident/taxpayer at the public meeting that do not involve the expenditure of funds or the formation of a contract.
- Citizens may raise issues during the public comment period, and the Board may choose to add these issues to the agenda for a future meeting if further discussion is warranted.

### 3. Public Comment

Public Comment will be permitted at designated times during the meeting: once for Agenda Items Only and once for Non-Agenda Items Only. The procedures for Public Comment are as follows:

- **A. Roles**

1. **Chairperson:** The Chairperson will oversee the Public Comment period, recognize speakers, enforce time limits, and regulate redundant public comment.
2. **Speakers:** Only Township residents or taxpayers are permitted to offer Public Comment unless the Board approves otherwise.

- **B. Procedures for Public Comment**

1. **Identification and Participation:**

- Citizens wishing to speak must sign the Sign-in Sheet provided at meetings. The Board may allow those who have not signed in before the meeting to speak.
- Proof of residency or taxpayer status may be required. If an individual prefers not to provide this information publicly, they may submit it to the Township Manager before the next meeting to be eligible to comment at that meeting.

2. **Manner of Public Comment:**

- Speakers must be recognized by the Board before speaking and use the microphone to ensure accurate recording.
- Comments should be directed to the Board. Speakers are limited to one address per topic until all interested speakers have had their turn. Re-addressing a topic requires Board approval.

- Comments must be respectful and orderly. Obscene, threatening, or disruptive remarks will not be tolerated and may result in removal from the meeting.

### 3. Time Allowed:

- The Board will determine the time allocated for Public Comment based on factors such as the number of speakers, agenda length, and meeting duration. A timer may be used to ensure fairness.
- If there is insufficient time for Public Comment, it may be rescheduled to the next meeting.

### • C. Public Comment Referral

- Questions or issues raised during Public Comment will be referred to relevant staff or officials for response. If further research is needed, responses may be deferred to a subsequent meeting.

### • D. Submission of Public Comment in Writing

1. Written comments may be submitted via email at [township@dickinsontownship.org](mailto:township@dickinsontownship.org), or may be mailed and addressed to:
  - Dickinson Township
  - C/O Board of Supervisors
  - 219 Mountain View Road
  - Mount Holly Springs, PA 17065
2. Written comments will be circulated to the Board and Township Manager upon receipt.
3. Written comments will be considered with the same weight as oral comments.
4. All written comments will be acknowledged at the next regular meeting following receipt.

## 4. Rules of Order

The Board, in consultation with the solicitor and Township staff, will address any questions related to the Rules of Order and the application of this policy. The Board reserves the right to adapt procedures as necessary to ensure effective meeting management.

## 5. Record Keeping

- **Recording:** Meetings are recorded to aid the Secretary in the preparation of accurate minutes.

- **Minutes:** Accurate minutes will be recorded for each meeting, capturing proceedings, decisions, and Public Comments. These minutes will be made available to the public following Board approval.
- **Documentation:** All documents related to Public Comment, including sign-in sheets and written submissions, will be retained in accordance with Township record-keeping policies.

## 6. Emergency Procedures

- **Emergency Meetings:** In emergencies requiring immediate action, the Chairperson may call a meeting with appropriate notice and adjusted procedures.
- **Health and Safety:** Meetings will adhere to current health and safety regulations. Virtual or hybrid meeting options may be implemented as needed.

## Approval

This policy has been approved by the Board of Supervisors and is effective as of [Insert Date].

Signature



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Rob Kole  
Board Chairman  
October 21, 2024

