

## **POLICY OF THE MECKLENBURG COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

### **Procedure for Public Appearance**

The agenda format of the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners for regular meetings sets a time in the meeting for public appearances. The purpose of this policy is to set forth the rules concerning the use of this time by members of the public.

1. Members of the public who wish to speak during the public appearance portion of a regular meeting must sign up with the Clerk to the Board in accord with the Clerk's sign up policy. The Clerk will keep a record of the order in which members of the public sign up. Although members of the public will generally be called in the order in which they sign up, the Chairman has the discretion to revise the order if the Chairman determines that a revised order will result in a more orderly meeting.
2. Members of the public who appear during the public appearance portion of a regular meeting may discuss any matter within the jurisdiction of the Board of Commissioners except for the following types of matters: **(a)** a matter which appears on the agenda of that meeting of the Board; **(b)** a matter which concerns the candidacy of any person seeking public office, including the candidacy of the person appearing before the Board; **(c)** a request that the Board consider funding a certain program or activity, either from the current budget, or by inclusion in a future budget (such funding requests would be made at the Board's annual budget public hearing).
3. Members of the public appearing before the Board will each be given three (3) minutes to speak unless there are four (4) or more speakers who wish to speak concerning the same matter, in which case, all persons wishing to speak on the same matter will be considered a group and given a total of ten (10) minutes in which to speak. The group (four (4) or more speakers) would divide the ten (10) minutes among themselves. The Board reserves the right to alter these rules on a case by case basis as necessary for the efficient and effective conduct of business.
4. Members of the Board will not engage in dialogue with public appearance speakers. Comments will be received and followed up on as applicable by County staff and/or members of the Board.
5. Handouts and/or tokens shall be given to the Clerk for distribution to Board members at the conclusion of the meeting.
6. For the efficient and orderly conduct of County business, the Board of Commissioners reserves the right to set a maximum number of speakers whom they will hear from during the public appearance portion of any meeting or to set a maximum time for the public appearance portion of a meeting. Members of the public wishing to address the Board during this portion of the meeting must appear in person if the Board is meeting in person. In the event that the Board exercises its right to set such limits on the number of speakers or the maximum time allowed for the public appearance portion of a meeting, the names of any persons who signed up to speak but did not get the opportunity to speak will go to the top of the list of persons requesting to be heard during the public appearance portion of the next regular meeting of the Board should such persons indicate to the Clerk that they wish to appear at the next regular meeting.
7. Persons addressing the Commission are expected to observe the decorum of the Chamber, to be respectful of the Commission and the public, to refrain from the use of profanity, coarse or foul language. The Chairman may rule out of order any comments tending to disrupt the meeting that are rude, inappropriate, or intended to harass any person or group of people, and is authorized to take reasonable and appropriate measures to ensure compliance with these rules.

Adopted March 14, 1994  
Revised June 12, 2001  
**Revised October 5, 2010/Amended October 19, 2010**  
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