

Public Participation Policy
of the Washington County, Florida.
Enacted pursuant to Florida Statute 286.0114

As used herein the term "The Commission" shall refer to the County Commission of Washington County as well as any committees or agencies of the Commission which are subject to the Florida Public Records Law.

WHEREAS, the Commission encourages public participation in the affairs of local government; and

WHEREAS, the Commission wishes to allow orderly consideration of the public's concerns and comments regarding matters of local interest; and

WHEREAS, Florida Statute §286.0114 directs local governments to formulate a policy for public comments:

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED that the following shall serve as the Washington County Board of County Commissioners Public Participation Policy:

APPLICABLE MEETINGS

This policy shall apply to all meetings of the Commission. Unless exempted by Florida Statutes, all meetings of the foregoing are subject to the Florida Open Meeting Law commonly referred to as the Sunshine Law. The foregoing notwithstanding, the requirements set forth in this policy do not apply to:

- A. An official act that must be taken to deal with an emergency situation affecting the public health, welfare or safety if compliance with the requirements would cause an unreasonable delay in the ability of the Commission to act; or
- B. An official act involving no more than a ministerial act, including but not limited to approval of minutes and ceremonial proclamations; or
- C. A meeting or any portion of a meeting that is exempt from the Florida Government in the Sunshine Law; or
- D. A meeting during which the Commission is acting in a quasi-judicial capacity, as the rights of persons to be heard during quasi-judicial hearings shall be as provided for by applicable law.

PROCEDURE

Prior to the time a meeting has been called to order, should an individual or group wish to address an item which is on the agenda for consideration, the individual or group shall obtain, from the Commission Secretary or Clerk, a public comment form and shall write on the form their name and the agenda matter which they wish to address. The completed form(s) shall be returned to the Commission Secretary/Clerk who shall provide the form(s) to the Chairperson. Should a particular group wish to address an item, they shall nominate a spokesperson to voice their ideas, comments and concerns.

Prior to any vote, or the closing of discussion on any matter that is the subject of a public comment form, the Chairperson shall recognize those individuals who wish to speak. Each speaker shall be allowed three (3) minutes to address the Commission regarding the particular agenda item. *At the discretion of the Chairperson, audience members may provide input on a matter after a motion and second has been made. Those who have signed up at the beginning of the meetings shall be given precedence over anyone who failed to sign the form.* If a group representative is selected, he/she shall be allowed ten minutes to speak. Speakers may only address the Commission one time per item. Speakers are to refrain from personal attacks, interrogation and use decorum appropriate for meetings for government bodies.

The Commission or its members are not required to respond to specific questions set forth by speakers but may do so if they so choose.

If a member of the public wishes to speak on a matter which is not on the agenda of the Commission, they shall notify the Commission secretary within 48 hours of the agenda being published of their desire to address the Commission. The individual shall provide as much detail as possible regarding the proposed issues. The provision above regarding time limits shall apply to non-agenda items which have been properly requested to be placed on the agenda. The failure to timely request that an item be placed on the agenda shall require the item to be placed on the next regular Commission meeting.

Adopted this 19th day of August 2021.


CHAIRPERSON