



ORDINANCE



Ordinance No. 002-2020-110

ASHLAND COUNTY ORDINANCE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

- (1) Public participation and comment at County Board/Committee meetings.
County meetings are the forum for the Board to conduct the County's business. Citizen engagement is the bedrock of any public body and the County encourages the public to come in and share their views of policies being considered by the board. That being said, public comments should not be a venue to shut down the business of County Board meetings, nor be a platform for disrespectful language. While Board meetings are open to the public pursuant to the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law, they are not a forum for public expression. As such, members of the public are not allowed to participate in County Board discussion and debate without a specific invitation and/or formal recognition by the presiding officer. Members of the public shall not applaud, engage in conversation, or engage in other behavior through words or actions, or displays that may disrupt the proceedings of the Board.
- (2) Members of the public shall follow the direction of the County Board Chair. Members of the public who do not follow the direction of the Chair will be warned that further disruptive conduct will result in removal from the meeting. After such warning, if the conduct continues, the Chair may ask the member of the public to leave the meeting room. If the member of the public refuses to follow the direction of the Chair, the Chair may direct the Sheriff to remove the person through any lawful means. In emergency situations, or where the conduct is an egregious threat to the safety of the public or the Board, a warning is not necessary before the Sheriff is directed to remove the person. No person is allowed to disrupt a meeting in such a fashion that would limit or delay the agenda of the meeting.
- (3) Public comment period. A limited forum for members of the public to speak with the Board is provided on each agenda. Public comments during the public comment period are subject to the following limitations:
 - A. Speakers must be recognized by the Chair before speaking and are limited to three minutes for comments;
 - B. When multiple speakers appear to speak on the same topic, comments should not be repetitive. The Chair may request speakers to appoint a spokesperson;
 - C. The Chair may place a time limit on the public comment period if necessary to allow for the conduct of County business. If there is not sufficient time at the meeting to hear all public comments, the comment period may be deferred to the next regular Board meeting or at a continued meeting;
 - D. Speakers must sign up prior to speaking and provide their name, address, and a brief summary of the subject matter which they wish to address. Sign-up sheets will be available at the start of the board meeting;
 - E. Speakers must direct their remarks toward the Chair;
 - F. Speakers shall not use obscene, profane, insulting, or threatening language, nor conduct themselves in a threatening, loud, or boisterous manner that disrupts the conduct of the meeting or the security of the public;
 - G. Speakers are required to follow the direction of the Chair;

This Ordinance is effective on publication:

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Ordinance No. O02-2020-110

- H. The Board will generally not respond at the same meeting where an issue is initially raised by a member of the public. Generally, the matter will be referred to staff for further research and possible report or action at a future Board/Committee meeting. No discussion/debate from County Board Supervisors is allowed during public comments.
- I. An individual speaking under public comments is permitted to speak only once per meeting unless approval is granted by the chair;
- J. Electronic or written public comments will be retained by the County Clerk and if received at least 3 business days before the meeting, will be summarized for the meeting;
- K. Written material from public comment speakers can be left in the county board room for pickup by county board members after the meeting. A copy will be retained by the County Clerk. No distribution will be allowed during a meeting;
- L. No signs larger than 2ft x 2 ft may be brought into the board room. No blocking others view of the proceedings. Signs have to be handheld, no attaching to walls, no supports other than being handheld;
- M. No food or drink may be brought in by members of the public. County Supervisors and Staff can bring in drinks however.

Adopted at Ashland County, Wisconsin this 27th day of February, 2020.


Richard Pufall, County Board Chair


ATTEST: Heather Schutte, Ashland County Clerk

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