

Guidelines for Public Comment

Towns are authorized to enact rules and regulations regarding the conduct of public meetings and public hearings. Town Law, §130.

The public shall be allowed to speak only during a public hearing or during the public comment period of the meeting or at such other times as a majority of the Board shall allow. Comments must relate to the business of the Parma Board or the specific Public Hearing being held to provide information to the Board or express their concerns. The Public Comment period is not intended to be a question and answer period. When practical the Board will try to answer short direct questions.

Citizens that have a question or concern that will require some research are encouraged to provide that information to a Board member prior to the meeting. This should allow the Board to have a response or possibly resolve the matter before hand.

The Chair shall recognize the person wishing to speak. Comments shall be limited to three minutes per person. Each participant shall be permitted to speak only once during each Town Board meeting. Comments shall be directed only to the Chairperson and Board members. Comments shall be respectful and in good order. The Chairperson or Board member may reply only after the speaker has finished talking.

Speakers must give their name, address and organization, if any and state the topic they wish to address.

Board members may, with the permission of the Chairperson, interrupt a speaker during their remarks, but only for the purpose of clarification or information.

Speakers shall observe the commonly accepted rules of courtesy, decorum, dignity and good taste. Members of the public shall refrain from debate and argument among themselves during the Board meeting and shall address all remarks to the Board.

Prepared statements and accompanying documents and attachments shall not be read aloud but shall be submitted to the Chairperson for review by the Board in the future and may be included in the Board minutes.

When a group of persons wishes to address the Board on the same subject matter, it shall be proper for the presiding officer to request that a spokesperson be chosen by the group to address the Board and to limit the number of persons addressing the Board on the same matter so as to avoid unnecessary repetition.

Interested parties or their representatives may address the Board by written communications. Written communications shall be delivered to the Town Clerk or designee. Sufficient time should be allowed to distribute these communications to the Board members so they are aware of them prior to the next meeting.

Any person making offensive, insulting, threatening, insolent, slanderous or obscene remarks or who becomes boisterous or who makes threats against any person or against public order and security while in the Board Room shall be removed at the direction of the presiding officer from further audience at the meeting, unless permission to continue is granted by the majority vote of the Board members present.

A disruptive speaker after a final warning by the Chair will be removed from the meeting by a peace officer. The authority is section 240.20 of the Penal law related to disorderly conduct.

Banners, flyers, or other signs are not permitted in the meeting room. The distribution of flyers is not permitted in the meeting room.

The Open Meetings Law gives the public the right to attend meetings and to listen to deliberations. However, the public may not participate in the meeting except upon the invitation of the Chairperson and, in the case of public hearings, as required by law.

At any time, the Chairperson may entertain or enter a motion to adjourn, which shall be carried upon majority vote. At any time, the Board may vote to exhaust the agenda before possibly inviting further public comment.

There will be a sign up sheet for those wishing to address the Board during a public hearing or a meeting where the attendance is high. The Chairperson will call upon the people that signed up in the order that they appear.