

POLICY: PUBLIC COMMENT AT MEETINGS OF A PUBLIC BODY

Policy: Public comment will be offered at each scheduled meeting of a public body.

Purpose: The Open Meetings Act provides that a person be permitted to address a meeting of a public body under rules established and recorded by the public body. Alamo Township encourages participation through both formal and informal means.

Procedure:

- A. Public comment will be offered at each scheduled meeting of a public body.
- B. The public comment section of the agenda is limited to comments unrelated to the published agenda. Public comment on agenda items must occur when the public body is discussing that particular agenda item. If an agenda item is removed from the published agenda, the public will be notified prior to the public comment section of the agenda. The public body always has the opportunity to address an agenda item prior to members of the audience unless the public body requests comment or addresses a question to one or more audience members.
- C. Members of the audience will not speak unless recognized by the Chairperson of the public body. Members of the audience will begin any comments by stating their name and address. A three-minute time limit will be imposed for all remarks unless the public body, by majority vote, extends that time. The public body, at its discretion, may limit public comments to new information or matters not fully addressed at any previous meeting regarding the agenda item issue at hand. Citizens may speak once during any one agenda item unless otherwise requested by the Chairperson to address the public body. The Chairperson will designate a Township official to be a timekeeper. The timekeeper will notify the Chairperson when time is up.
- D. Audience Conduct
 1. Audience members addressing the public body will make responsible comments and will refrain from making personal attacks, slanderous or profane remarks. Comments must be directed to the public body as a whole. Comments may not be addressed to audience members or individual members of the public body.
 2. Audience members will remain quiet and refrain from speaking, cheering, booing or displaying other disruptive behaviors.
 3. Audience members will turn off or set to "silent", cell phones, pagers and other electronic devices.
 4. Audience members unable to comply with these rules may be ruled out of order (breach of the peace), may be asked to end their comments, be requested to leave the meeting and/or be removed from the premises.
 5. Audience members having breached the peace may be excluded from subsequent meetings.
- E. Public Body Member Conduct
 1. Members of the public body will not engage in debate with audience members.
 2. Members of the public body will acknowledge all comments made; however, the public body is not obligated to make a response to any comment made.