

Sec. 2-61. Public participation.

Public participation in meetings or work sessions of the board of commissioners shall be permitted in accordance with the provisions of this section.

- (1) *Public comments.* The final agenda item of the meeting or work session shall be reserved for comments from the public. All members of the public who wish to address the board must submit their name and the topic of their comments to the chairman through the county clerk by the close of business (5:00 p.m.) on the Friday afternoon preceding the board of commissioners' next scheduled meeting. Except as otherwise provided below, these individuals will be allotted five minutes to make their comments and their comments must be limited to their chosen topic. These limits may be changed by a majority vote of the board. The following classes of individuals are ineligible to participate in the final agenda item:
 - a. Individuals, including members of their campaign committees, who have filed a declaration of intention to accept campaign contributions, from the date of filing until the date that the election results for the office sought are certified.
 - b. Individuals, including their attorneys, agents, or assigns, who are parties to litigation involving Paulding County and/or its elected officials, agents or employees, if such litigation is currently pending in either state or federal court or who have filed a pending ante litem notice with Paulding County.
 - c. Individuals who are former employees of Paulding County, including their attorneys, agents, or assigns, until the passage of ninety days following the date of termination, cessation, or resignation of their employment.
- (2) *Public participation on agenda items.* By unanimous consent, the board may allow public comment on an agenda item at the time the item is being considered by the board. These comments must be limited to the subject that is being debated. Members of the public may speak for five minutes and may only speak once. These limits may be changed by a majority vote of the board. Anyone wishing to speak at any board meeting must be recognized by the chair before addressing the board.

- (3) *Decorum of members of the public.* Members of the public shall not make inappropriate or offensive comments at a board meeting and are expected to comply with the rules of decorum that are established for commissioners. Individuals who violate any rules of the board may be ruled out of order by the chair or on a point of order by a commissioner. A majority vote of the board will rule on the point of order. An individual who violates the rules of decorum may be removed from the meeting at the direction of the chair.

- (4) *Public hearings.* The board of commissioners may schedule public hearings for the purpose of soliciting public comment on any subject of interest to the board. Hearings may be held immediately prior to, during or following a meeting of the board or at such other places and times as the board may determine. No official action shall be taken at any such public hearing except when scheduled during the course of a regular or called board meeting.

(Res. No. 99-01(A), § 1-12, 1-12-1999; Res. No. 04-42, § 1, 12-14-2004; Res. No. 10-01, § 01-12-10)