

Swanton Township Code of Conduct for Public Meetings

The Swanton Township Board of Trustees recognize the value of public comment on township issues and the importance of allowing members of the public to express themselves on matters of community interest.

Any person or group wishing to place an item on the agenda shall register their intent with the Board Chairman no later than seven (7) days prior to the meeting and include name and address of the participant, group affiliation, if and when appropriate, and the topic to be addressed.

Such requests shall be subject to the approval of the Board Chairperson.

In order to permit the fair and orderly expression of such comment, the Board shall provide a period for public participation at every regular meeting of the Board and publish rules to govern such participation in Board meetings.

A period for public participation at the end of every regular meeting of the Board shall be for comments with regard to items on the agenda from that regular meeting. This will be an opportunity for residents to address the Board, however this period is not a public hearing or forum for debate or discussion.

This policy shall be adopted for public participation at special meetings as the Board Chairperson deems necessary.

The presiding officer of each Board meeting at which public participation is permitted shall administer the rules of the Board for its conduct.

The presiding officer shall be guided by the following rules:

- A. Public participation shall be permitted as indicated on the order of business and at the discretion of the presiding officer.
- B. Anyone having a legitimate interest in the actions of the Board may participate during the public portion of a meeting.
- C. Those wishing to address the Board must sign in prior to the start of the meeting.
- D. Participants must be recognized by the presiding officer and will be requested to preface their comments by an announcement of their name, address, and group affiliation, if and when appropriate.
- E. Each statement made by a participant shall be limited to three (3) minutes duration, unless extended by the presiding officer.
- F. No participant may speak more than once on the same topic.
- G. To ensure that all interested parties have an opportunity to speak, please be brief and limit your comments to one topic.
- H. All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no person may address or question Board members individually.

- I. Common courtesy and respect is expected towards the Board while making public address. The use of profanity, loud, threatening or condescending comment towards the Board or other township employees will be cause for removal from the meeting.
- J. Outbursts such as clapping, cheering, booing or interjecting comments from those in attendance is not acceptable and if repeated will be cause for removal from the meeting.
- K. The Board will not respond to comments made during the public participation periods. This should not be interpreted to mean that members of the Board agree or disagree with anything said.
- L. The presiding officer may:
 - 1. interrupt, warn, or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant;
 - 2. request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum;
 - 3. request the assistance of law enforcement officers in the removal of a disorderly person when that person's conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting;
 - 4. call for a recess or an adjournment to another time when the lack of public decorum so interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting as to warrant such action;
 - 5. waive these rules.

Adopted: 5/10/2011
Resolution 52-2011