



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PUBLIC BOARD MEETINGS

SCOPE OF APPLICATION:

This policy applies to all persons attending public meetings of the Ross County Board of Commissioners.

POLICY:

This Code of Conduct is intended to promote open meetings that welcome debate of issues Considered by the Board in an atmosphere of fairness, courtesy and respect for differing points of view.

1. Public Meeting Decorum

- a. Persons in the audience will refrain from behavior which disrupts a public meeting of the Board. This will include making loud noises, clapping, shouting, booing, hissing, interrupting Board members or other members of the public, or engaging in any other activity that disturbs, disrupts or impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting.
- b. Persons in the audience will refrain from creating, provoking or participating in any type of disturbance involving unwelcome physical contact or verbal abuse.
- c. Persons in the audience will silence and refrain from using mobile phones while the meeting is in session.
- d. The foregoing policies set forth in this Section 1 apply to meetings of the Board and meetings of Board committees.

2. Agenda

- a. The county clerk, as board secretary, shall maintain the agenda for the county board meetings. Advance public notice of all regular and special meeting dates and times shall be determined by the board. Notice of each meeting shall be publicized according to statute.
 - Submission of potential agenda items may be made:
 - (1) By the public to the county clerk in writing, email, or over the phone during posted business hours only until 4:00 p.m. two working days prior to the meeting. Agenda items submitted by the public will be included on the agenda but discussion of these items is at the board's discretion.
 - (2) To the Board of any County Commissioner or County Administrator who will consider the inclusion of the item on the final

agenda, until 4:00 p.m. two working days prior to the meeting. The county clerk may not accept agenda items without approval of at least one board member.

(3) At a regular or special board meeting only for an upcoming meeting.

- b. Requests for items to be placed on the agenda shall be described clearly and explicitly, i.e. discussion of, resolution for, open or award bids, approval of, and whether official action is necessary.
- c. The agenda shall not be altered later than twenty-four hours before the scheduled commencement of the meeting, except for items of an emergency nature. The county board shall have the right to modify the agenda to include items of an emergency nature
 - 1. An agenda shall be published at 9:30 am the Friday, prior to the next board meeting. Distribution of the agenda to the public at this time shall be at the discretion of the board chair and/or the county clerk. The agenda will be posted at the county clerk's office, and/or county board meeting room.
 - 2. Commissioner's packets shall be prepared and available for distribution to board members the Friday afternoon prior to the next scheduled meeting. All materials received by 9:30 a.m. the Friday prior to the meeting will be distributed in the board members' packets. Materials received after the packets have been distributed to the board members will be available prior to the meeting.
 - 3. The clerk may request at least one copy for the clerk and each board member of ALL materials relating to agenda items. One copy shall remain at the county clerk's office for record retention.

3. Addressing the Board

- a. Each group must be present in the meeting and will be given fifteen (15) minutes to speak on an agenda item, subject to extension at the discretion of the Chairperson.
- b. Groups of attendees are encouraged to designate a single member to speak on behalf of the group. The group may distribute the time among various speakers if deemed necessary.

- c. Each speaker should provide his or her name at the beginning of his or her remarks for the formal record. If a speaker represents an association or group, he or she should identify the entity he or she represents.
- d. Speakers should discuss only those topics for which they have requested to speak.
- e. Speakers' comments should be directed to the full Board.
- f. If an individual wishes to submit written comments, he or she may submit it to the clerk of the board, and the comments will be distributed to the Board at the discretion of the Board President.
- g. The policies set forth in this Section 2 do not entitle members of the public to address meetings of committees of the Board. Board committees may permit public comments at their sole discretion.

4. Meetings

- a. All meetings will be live - streamed starting January 2022 for viewing purposes only.
- b. Viewers or individuals not on the meeting agenda will not be permitted to discuss agenda items through audio-visual equipment.

Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct, use of inappropriate or abusive language toward members of the Board or Board committee or other attendees, and any conduct which will disturb, disrupt or impede the orderly conduct of Board meetings shall result in removal from the meeting.

All meetings of any public body are declared to be public meetings open to the public at all times. A member of a public body shall be present in person at a meeting open to the public to be considered present or to vote at the meeting and for purposes of determining whether a quorum is present at the meeting.