

HOWE TOWNSHIP
Perry County, Pennsylvania

RESOLUTION NO. 2020 - 07

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A POLICY TO GOVERN
PUBLIC COMMENT AT MEETINGS OF THE BOARD
OF SUPERVISORS OF HOWE TOWNSHIP

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of Howe Township (the "Board") welcomes and encourages public comment by its residents as a valuable mechanism to evaluate and address issues of concern within Howe Township (the "Township") as well as offer members of the public an opportunity to actively participate in their local government by commenting/influencing issues directly related to the governance of the municipality in which they reside;

WHEREAS, the Board also strives to balance the aforementioned objectives with the need to ensure that all public meetings are conducted in an orderly, efficient and productive manner; and

WHEREAS, in order to facilitate these cumulative goals, the Board desires to formalize a policy of decorum to be adhered to by all those in attendance at public meetings held by Howe Township.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF HOWE TOWNSHIP, as follows:

The following rules and regulations governing public comment and the decorum associated therewith are hereby adopted by the Board, as amended from time to time:

- 1) Any person shall be provided a reasonable opportunity to address the Board on any agenda item or any public matter in which Howe Township (the "Township") has jurisdiction or authority. This privilege shall occur during the part of the agenda entitled "Good and Welfare". Public Comment shall be reasonably limited to three (3) minutes and Public Presentations limited to ten (10) minutes unless otherwise authorized by the Board Chairman. These limitations are intended to ensure sufficient time for other members of the public to comment as well as enable adequate opportunity for the Board to address all business before it in a timely manner.

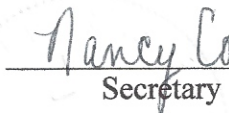
- 2) In order to provide both the Board and the public time to review agenda items and to prepare for duly advertised public meetings, the Board Secretary will prepare a final agenda for such meeting 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting, provided that if additional requests to add items to the agenda after such time are received, they may be added at the discretion of the Board. Any person wishing to be placed on the agenda to appear before the Board is encouraged to contact the Township Secretary at least 48 hours prior to any scheduled Board meeting to be placed on the agenda. The Board and/or the Board Chairman reserve the right to close the agenda to additional items prior to the beginning of any duly advertised meeting.
- 3) Speakers on any item are encouraged to make every attempt to keep their comments concise and focused upon the issue at hand and avoid repetition of the comments of previous speakers on an issue. Simply stating agreement with the points raised by the prior speaker(s) will help move the meeting along so that all who wish to speak have the opportunity to do so within a reasonable time.
- 4) Any questions and/or comments raised by a speaker will not normally be answered by the Board or administrative staff during a meeting; however, such questions may be referred for follow-up investigation and/or comment in the discretion of the Board.
- 5) Groups of persons wishing to address the Board during Good and Welfare/Presentation are encouraged to nominate a spokesperson to address the Board on issues of unified concern to avoid unnecessary repetition.
- 6) In the case of a non-agenda item, citizens are requested, but not required, to present the matter to a member of the Board or the Township Manager in an attempt to resolve the matter beforehand.
- 7) Any person wishing to speak during any other portion of a public meeting shall raise his or her hand, be acknowledged by the Board Chairman; and await permission to offer his or her comment(s). It remains in the sole discretion of the Chairman, or in case of disagreement by majority vote of the Board, to permit public comment outside of the duly recognized Good and Welfare/Presentation portions of a meeting.
- 8) Proper decorum is to be maintained at all times by all persons at a meeting including Board members, Township staff, speakers and/or members of the audience.
 - a. The Chairman shall be responsible for maintaining order and decorum of meetings by requiring speaker(s) and the audience to refrain from abusive or profane remarks, disruptive outbursts, protests, or other conduct that disrupts or interferes with the orderly conduct of the business of the meeting.

- b. No one shall interrupt another who is speaking.
 - c. Personal attacks on Supervisors, Township staff, other speakers, or members of the public will not be tolerated.
 - d. Failure to adhere to these standards of order and decorum can result in any/all of the following:
 - i. A formal warning issued by the Chairman of the Board;
 - ii. The speaker forfeiting his or her right to be heard;
 - iii. Removal from the meeting by the Pennsylvania State Police.
 - iv. Referral to the Pennsylvania State Police and/or Office of the District Attorney of Perry County for prosecution pursuant to 18 Pa.C.S.A. §5508, as amended, relating to the unlawful disruption of a lawfully held meeting.
- 9) Each member of the Board shall cooperate with the Chairman in preserving order and decorum, and no member shall, by conversation or otherwise, delay or interrupt the proceedings of the Board, nor disturb any member while speaking, or fail to abide by the order to the Board or its Chairman.

ADOPTED, this 20th day of August, 2020, by the Township Supervisors of Howe Township in a lawful session duly assembled.

ATTEST:

HOWE TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS


Nancy Cangjoli
Secretary

By: Dale W. Beaver
Chairman

(SEAL)