

## SUMMARY OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Please either turn off your cell phones and other electronic devices or set them to mute while in this meeting room or the hallways. If you need to take or make a phone call or have a conversation with another person, please step outdoors.

Meetings of the Board are public in the sense that they are held in public. This does not mean they are public meetings in the same sense as a "Town Meeting." There is no statutory requirement in Maine that the public be permitted to speak; however, the Town Charter requires that "the public shall have the opportunity to be heard" and the Board wishes to include the public whenever possible. Please be aware of the following "ground rules."

### **Public Comment – Items not on the Agenda**

Persons wishing to address the Select Board on any item not appearing on the agenda may do so during the Citizen's Forum. The Chair, with the consent of the Board, may allow for additional public comment and participation or to impose time limits and special rules for recognition when, in the opinion of the Chair, such action will advance the efforts of the Board in the conduct of its affairs and promote citizen participation in the conduct of the Board affairs. In general, the Board will not discuss or act on matters not already on the agenda as they had no time to prepare, but will receive comments for consideration at a later date. Emergency items may be added to an agenda. Emergency items are only those matters affecting public health, life, property or the public peace.

### **Public Comment – Items on the Agenda**

Persons wishing to address the Board on an item which appears on the agenda shall wait until the Chair announces the consideration of such item, at which time they may address the Board on that particular item. Any person desiring to address the Board shall signify his desire by raising his hand and when, recognized by the Chair, shall speak from the podium provided for such purpose, shall state his name and address in an audible tone for the record, and shall limit his remarks to the question under discussion. All remarks and questions shall be addressed to the Board as a whole and not to any individual member thereof. All remarks and questions addressed to the administration of the town shall be addressed to the Town Administrator and not to any individual town employee. No persons other than the members of the Board and the person having the floor shall enter into any discussion either directly or through a member of the Board without the permission of the Chair.

### **Public Comment – Public Hearings**

The Chair shall convene all public hearings by describing the purpose of the hearing and the general procedures to be followed. The Board may receive any oral or documentary evidence but shall exclude irrelevant, immaterial or unduly repetitious evidence, provided however formal rules of evidence shall not apply. Every party shall have the right to present its case in the order determined by the Chair and without interruption, provided, however, that the Chair may impose such reasonable time limits as may be necessary to ensure that all parties have adequate opportunity to be heard.

The Select Board has adopted the following policy for the conduct of all public meetings of the Board:

- (1) During public discussion at meetings of the Board, only one person will be allowed to speak at any time and those comments shall be confined to the agenda topic for which that person is speaking.
- (2) No person speaking before the Select Board, including Selectpersons, shall be interrupted by other members of the public.
- (3) The Chair of the Select Board reserves the right, at all times, to terminate the public comments of any speaker if those comments are considered irrelevant to the topic being discussed; if the length of those comments is considered excessive or prevents the Board from addressing other agenda topics; or if the speaker makes comments that are obscene, profane, or otherwise outside the boundaries of appropriate public behavior.
- (4) Under no circumstances shall members of the public at a meeting make audible comments which involve obscenity, profanity, or which constitute unruly conduct, in the opinion of the Chair of the Board or in the opinion of a majority of the Select Board.

### **Public Comments concerning Personnel**

Due to confidentiality laws, the Board does not allow complaints or accusations to be stated in public against any personnel. Should such matters arise, the Chair will stop the speaker and describe the appropriate procedure to share a personnel complaint.