

**LOWER ALLEN TOWNSHIP**  
**PUBLIC MEETING GUIDELINES**

All Board of Commissioners (“Board”) meetings shall be conducted according to the following Public Meeting Guidelines (“Guidelines”). Where not addressed by these Guidelines, proceedings shall be governed by Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 10<sup>th</sup> edition.

The purpose of these Guidelines is to maintain order of public meetings by structuring the public comment process in such a way as to allow the Board to efficiently and effectively perform its primary function of making collective decisions on the issues before it. Furthermore, these Guidelines are adopted to ensure that each citizen’s equal opportunity to comment on matters of concern before the Board is not infringed upon or limited by another citizen’s undue disruptions or behavior at a public meeting.

**1. Meeting Structure.** Board meetings are conducted according to the following order of business:

**Call to Order**  
**Proof of Publication**  
**Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance**  
**Approval of Minutes**  
**Audience Recognition**  
**Special Recognitions**  
**Bid Openings**  
**Presentations**  
**Consent Agenda**  
**Board Actions**  
**Open Comments (Items not on the agenda)**  
**Department Reports**  
**Executive Session, if applicable**  
**Adjournment**

**2. Agenda.** The President may, from time to time, direct the publication and posting of a meeting agenda prior to such meeting in such a manner as he/she may determine. The agenda shall be made available at least two days prior to the meeting by posting on the Township’s website and/or in a public area of the Township Municipal Services Center. The agenda shall be made available in hard copy outside Gorgas Hall at the beginning of the meeting.

**3. Public Comment.** Public comment at all meetings shall be governed by the following:

- A. Role of President.** The President or Vice-President of the Board shall preside over public comment periods and recognize individuals wishing to offer comment.
- B. Persons wishing to comment.** To ensure accurate minutes, any person wishing to make public comment should register on the sign-in sheet available in the lobby. Registering is not a prerequisite for speaking during the public meeting.
- C. Time for public comment.**
1. Non-agenda items. One period of public comment is provided at each meeting. The purpose of the public comment period is for individuals to give comments on non-agenda items.
  2. Agenda items. Citizens may address items appearing on the agenda during the portion of the meeting at which that agenda item is discussed by the Board. Citizens wishing to comment on an agenda item may make their intentions known during the Audience Recognition portion of the agenda. Failure to be recognized during this portion of the agenda does not preclude a citizen from speaking on any agenda item. The President shall invite public comments after the Board members conclude their discussion of the matter.
  3. At regular meetings, each statement by a citizen shall be limited to no more than fifteen (15) minutes duration. At public meetings with numerous interested participants, the President may limit participants to shorter durations.
  4. The public comment period on non-agenda items shall be limited to a total of thirty (30) minutes.
- D. Subject matter of public comment.** The Board may refer questions to the appropriate official or staff for subsequent response or answer during the meeting as appropriate. The Board reserves the right to respond to questions at a subsequent meeting or other appropriate time.
- E. Manner of public comment.**
- i. Each speaker shall speak only after being recognized by the President.
  - ii. Each speaker shall identify themselves by name and address.
  - iii. Each speaker shall direct comments and questions to the President.
  - iv. Each speaker shall speak into the microphone in a clear and slow manner so that accurate minutes may be recorded.
  - v. Audience members shall not comment in a manner that is disruptive, disregards the rules of decorum, or for the purpose of preventing the conduct of the business of the meeting.

- vi. Speakers and audience members shall not use vulgar or offensive language, nor attack the character or reputation of any Township official or staff member.
- vii. No speaker shall refuse to leave the podium after his or her allotted time, including approved extensions, is up.
- viii. Audience members shall not interrupt speakers or the deliberations or discussions of the Board.
- ix. The President reserves the right to limit the extent of comments that are redundant, repetitive, or which serve only to reiterate comments already presented by other speakers.
- x. No citizen shall speak more than once on the same topic unless all others who wish to speak on the topic have been heard. A citizen may address a topic no more than twice at a meeting.
- xi. The President shall issue one (1) warning to a citizen whose comments violate these Guidelines by stating that the citizen is out of order and advise of the violation and basis thereof. Further failure to conform conduct to these Guidelines shall be grounds for the President to have the citizen removed from the meeting.
- xii. The Board may from time to time invoke such other temporary rules and procedures as may become necessary during the course of a public meeting to maintain good order or to otherwise facilitate the efficient conduct of such meeting.

**F. Submission of public comments in writing.** Citizens may provide public comment in writing according to the following procedures:

- A) Written public comments shall be addressed to the Board Members and the Township Manager at the following address:

Lower Allen Township Board of Commissioners  
c/o Township Manager  
2233 Gettysburg Road  
Camp Hill, PA 17011

Upon receipt by Township staff, all written public comments shall be circulated to the Board members prior to the next regularly scheduled public meeting.

- B) Written public comment shall have the same force and effect as oral public comment provided during the course of a public meeting.
- C) All written public comments received by the Township shall be recognized at the next regularly-scheduled public meeting or other appropriate time.

**G. Signs and placards.**

- i. Citizens may bring signs or placards into a public meeting. No restriction shall be placed on the language printed on such sign or placard, except that no language may be used that:
  - a. Is considered obscene or profane.
  - b. Is slanderous
  - c. Threatens or incites violence
- ii. Signs may not exceed 7.5 square feet in area on one side.
- iii. Signs may not be held or placed where they might obstruct the view of any other meeting participants.