

CITY OF PORTAGE POLICY FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public Comment shall be allowed under this section of the agenda for the purpose of allowing the non-elected general public the opportunity to address the Common Council or Board, Committee or Commission on any topic regarding City government or Board, Committee or Commission; or matters over which the Common Council or Board, Committee or Commission has authority to act; and that is not a topic of a current or previous public hearing. Campaigning for elected office shall not be allowed during the Public Comment Period.

Individuals who wish to address the Common Council or Board, Committee or Commission under the Public Comment Period shall first complete the Public Comment Appearance Form that indicates their name, address, and the topic to be discussed. The individual is allowed to speak on that topic for a maximum of 5 minutes. Alderpersons, Board, Committee or Commission members shall not respond to or debate matters raised during Public Comment.

Individuals may address the Common Council or Board, Committee or Commission during the meeting only if recognized by the Mayor/Chairperson or if an alderperson relinquishes his speaking time to that individual.

The rules are as follows:

1. Public Comments shall be allowed at meetings of the Common Council, Board, Committee or Commission.
2. Agendas will provide a Public Comment Period at the beginning of the meeting. Comments will also be allowed during the meeting if recognized by the Mayor/Chairperson or if an alderperson relinquishes his speaking time to a member of the public.
3. Public Comment shall be limited to individuals completing the Public Comment Appearance Form.

The Public Comment Appearance Form must be submitted to the City Clerk for a Common Council meeting; or Chairperson for a Board, Committee or Commission meeting no later than ten (10) minutes prior to the beginning of the meeting.

Failure to submit a completed form in a timely manner will result in an individual not being recognized during the public comment period of the meeting.

4. The following individual(s) can provide comment.
 - Members of the City of Portage non-elected general public
 - Citizens residing in the City of Portage
 - City of Portage property owners
 - City of Portage business owners

5. An individual may make comment on any topic regarding city government or matters over which the Common Council, Board, Committee or Commission has authority to act on; and that are not a topic of a current or previous public hearing before the Common Council, Board, Committee, or Commission

Comments shall not deal in personalities or personal attacks.

Comments and/or complaints on employees shall be directed to the Mayor only and are not permitted in a public forum.

Campaigning for elected office shall not be allowed.

6. Speakers shall be respectful and not disruptive of the meeting. Behavior that involves personal attacks, profanity, obscenity, or otherwise impedes or disrupts the safe, orderly and effective conduct of a Public Meeting is equally unacceptable during the Public Comment Period as it is during other portions of the meeting. Clapping, shouting, gestures, whistling, booing, profanity, obscenity, personal attacks and other disorderly behavior are prohibited.
7. The Mayor or Chairperson shall silence any outburst of emotion and keep order. Any person attempting to upset the decorum shall be asked to leave the premises, and in the event they do not do so, shall be ejected upon order of the Mayor or Chairperson.
8. The rules of the Council, Board, Committee or Commission is that members shall not respond to comments.
9. Any speaker being recognized by the Mayor or Chairperson shall advance to the podium in the center of the Council Chambers; or in the case of a Board of Commission to the front of the table. The speaker shall have a period of five (5) minutes to address the members of the Common Council or appropriate Board or Commission.
10. This Policy shall be reviewed by the Legislative and Advisory Committee each year after the Annual Organizational Meeting.

Approved by Common Council on June 22, 2023.