

Public Participation at Selectboard Meetings

The Princeton Selectboard welcomes everyone to its meetings and all other public meetings of the Town of Princeton. All regular and special meetings of the boards and committees of the Town of Princeton shall be open to the public and shall conform to the Open Meeting Law. Executive sessions are closed to the public and will be held only as prescribed by the statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We are your elected and appointed officials and we serve as representatives of the community. The Princeton Selectboard believes that community participation is important and vital to its understanding of the views, ideas, and needs of the community. Therefore, we will take steps to inform and to listen.

During meetings of the Selectboard and other town boards and committees, all attempts will be made to find a balance between hearing from members of the community and conducting required business. In order to achieve this objective, the following rules and procedures are established for the Selectboard:

1. The Chair shall preside over the meeting. In this role, s/he will acknowledge speakers from the public. S/he will determine the length of time for public participation and ensure that comments are appropriate. During any part of the meeting, members of the public may be recognized by the Chair to speak on an item before the board or committee. Asking one member of the public to speak on a specific topic does not mean that anyone else will be recognized at that time. All remarks will be addressed through the Chair of the meeting rather than directly to other participants.
2. The Selectboard reserves a portion of its meetings for Public Comment and encourages participation as follows:
 - Public Comment is a time when town residents can bring matters before the Selectboard that require a minimum of discussion.
 - Please try to keep your comments short and to the point. Plan on being allowed up to three minutes per person, not per topic, to speak at any meeting during the Public Comment section of the meeting.
 - If it appears that the topic(s) being discussed will consume longer than the three minutes allocated then, at the discretion of the Chair, the matter will be placed on an upcoming Selectboard meeting agenda.
 - If you believe that your topic will require more time or desire to make a more formal presentation than is allowed under these guidelines, please contact the Town Administrator to ask to be put on a future agenda so that we can properly allocate enough time.
 - You are free to ask questions or to make your point for all to consider. However, engaging in active debate with Selectboard or audience members will not be allowed. All comments and questions must be directed to the Chair of the Selectboard.
 - All remarks must be respectful and courteous, free of name-calling and personal attacks. Inappropriate language will not be tolerated.

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Agendas for all town committees are posted on the town's website at least 48 business hours in advance of each meeting, barring any emergency meetings as referenced by the Open Meeting Law. The purpose of the agenda is to provide "notice" to the public of the topics, which were reasonably anticipated by the chair, to be addressed at each meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

Once approved, minutes are also posted. You can sign up for email notifications of agendas and minutes for Selectboard meetings at <http://www.town.princeton.ma.us/subscriber>

Adopted by the Selectboard on March 7, 2018