

# **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS**

## **GENERAL EXPECTATIONS**

Persons attending meetings are requested to either refrain from bringing cell phones into the meeting room or to place them in quiet mode so as not to disrupt the meeting.

Citizens will address and be recognized by the Chairman. Citizens may be required to state their name and address for the record. Citizens will refer all direct questions to and through the Chairman at a meeting.

Non-residents in attendance at meeting shall identify themselves as non-residents, state the purpose of their participation, request permission to address the meeting and be recognized by the chairperson in advance of participating in any discussion.

Exceptions to the rules for the participation of non-residents at Board of Selectmen's meetings are granted to those persons invited to participate by the Board of Selectmen and those persons advising persons with scheduled business before the board.

## **PUBLIC FORUM**

A regular part of each regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen shall be the Public Forum. During this time citizens may address the Board of Selectmen on any items of interest pertaining to municipal affairs, including those that are not on the agenda. The intent is to allow citizens to be heard early in the meeting.

Speakers may offer such objective criticisms of town operations and programs as concern them, but in public session the Board will not hear personal complaints of town employees. Other channels provide for Board's consideration of legitimate complaints involving individuals. Persons having such issues are directed to the Town Administrator for information on the proper procedures to be followed.

The Chair will recognize each attendee who wishes to speak.

Due to the large number of items usually on each Board agenda, individual presentations should last no longer than 2-3 minutes. Written remarks are encouraged.

Persons appearing before the Board are reminded as a point of information that the members of the Board are without authority to act independently as individuals in official matters, thus questions may be directed to individual Board members but answers must be deferred pending consideration by the full Board.

The Board or the Town Administrator will respond to questions if the information is available. Otherwise, the matter will be referred to the Town

Administrator who will contact the citizen with the information as soon as it is available.

In some cases, the request will require action as an agenda item at a later meeting. Generally the Board of Selectmen shall not be expected to take action at the same meeting on any issue raised during the Public Forum.

## **PERSONS SCHEDULED TO APPEAR BEFORE THE BOARD**

This section of each agenda is reserved for people who have been pre-scheduled to appear before the Board. This section of the Board's agenda is normally where committee reports are heard, public hearings on ordinances are held, requests for abatements, specific proposals or requests for Board action and other significant issues are handled.

Except in actual emergencies, arrangements shall be made by noon on the Thursday prior to the date of the Board meeting. This is so that individual speaker and specific topic may be listed on the agenda and supporting materials may be provided to Selectmen prior to the meeting.

Appearances will be scheduled within the next two regularly scheduled Board meetings whenever possible.

The person wishing to be scheduled before the Board is encouraged to be as brief as possible since most meetings have several persons scheduled before the Board. It is most helpful when the Board is aware of what specific action the petitioner is requesting. Furnishing basic information backing up a request to the members of the Board in advance is helpful. A form for the presenter to provide the Board with basic information shall be completed; or it's equivalent provided, at the time the request to be heard is to be submitted to the Town Administrator.

The Board may take action after the presentation or may choose to defer until a subsequent meeting.

### **Presentation**

When you are scheduled to appear before the Board you will be given up to ten minutes-uninterrupted –to make your presentation.

Town officials that are involved in the area being discussed and other interested parties may be able to present their opinions.

Board members will then have time to address questions to you and others that are involved.

## **PARTICIPATION DURING BOARD DELIBERATIONS**

Citizen participation shall generally not be permitted once the members of the Board begin discussion of a motion and/or amendments without a majority of the members approving such participation.

The significant workload at each meeting does not permit the Board to actively engage in discussions with visitors at these times during the meeting.

### **AUTHORITY OF THE CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman has authority to keep order and impose reasonable restrictions necessary for the efficient and orderly conduct of a meeting. Any person who fails to comply with reasonable rules of conduct or who creates a disturbance may be asked or required to leave and upon failure to do so becomes a trespasser and subject to removal.

The Board vests in its Chairperson the authority to terminate the remarks of any individual when they do not adhere to the rules established above as to the content or time limitation.

**Adopted and effective on May 2, 2006**

**REQUEST TO APPEAR BEFORE THE HENNIKER BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

Unless the issue is an emergency, all requests need to be furnished to the Town Administrator no later than noon on the Thursday prior to the Board Meeting.

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number: Work** \_\_\_\_\_ **Home** \_\_\_\_\_

**General Topic to be Presented** \_\_\_\_\_

**ACTION DESIRED:** Please specify what action you desire the Board of Selectmen(or Sewer Commissioners)to take as a result of your presentation to the Board. Please be specific as possible.

**PREVIOUS STEPS TAKEN:** Please indicate any attempts that you have made to resolve this issue prior to asking to appear before the Board of Selectmen. If current procedures require that you place your request elsewhere prior to possible action by the Board of Selectmen, the Town Administrator shall inform you at the time you complete this form.

**INFORMATION:** Please attach any information that you believe will assist the Board of Selectmen to make a decision on the matter you are placing before the Board.

**THE END**