

HENNEPIN COUNTY

MINNESOTA

Hennepin County Rules of Public Participation

The Hennepin County Rules of Public Participation govern public participation at meetings of the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners, Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority (HCRRA), and Hennepin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA). These rules govern all aspects of public participation at meetings, as well as decorum for members of the public that attend meetings in person and virtually.

The purposes of the Rules of Public Participation are:

- To ensure the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners, HCRRA, and HRA can conduct its business in a transparent and effective manner;
- To ensure that members of the public who attend meetings, whether in person or virtually, can be heard in a fair, impartial manner;
- To ensure that meetings are conducted in a way that is open to all viewpoints, yet free from abusive, distracting or intimidating behavior; and
- To ensure that the rules governing public participation at meetings are understood by persons attending the meetings, .

I. General Rules of Decorum for Meetings.

A. Members of the public attending meetings of the County Board, HCRRA, and HRA, including any meeting of a Committee of the Board, Board Briefings, and public hearings shall not engage in any of the following activities during a meeting:

- Shouting, chanting, disruptive behavior, clapping, stamping of feet, whistles, use of a bull horn or similar demonstrations;
- Speaking out of turn or making remarks when not recognized by the Chair of the Board or Presiding Officer at the meeting;
- Use of profanity, personal attacks, or threats of violence; or
- Any other behavior that disrupts the orderly conduct of the meeting.

B. Placards, banners or signs are not permitted in the County Board Room. Such placards, banners, or signs are allowed outside the glass partition of the County Board Room as long as they are held in a manner such that they do not obstruct the view of any person or impede the free flow of movement by any other person at the meeting. When meetings are not held in the County Board Room, such signs are only allowed in the back of the room in which the Board is meeting as long as they are held in a manner such that they do not obstruct the view of any person or impede the free flow of movement by any other person at the meeting.

II. Rules of decorum for public comments at meetings.

Public comments at County Board, HCRRA, and HRA meetings are only allowed when authorized by a category on a published agenda. The following rules apply to public comments:

A. Open Forum.

Pursuant to County Board resolution, members of the public are invited to address the County Board on any topic relevant to Hennepin County during the "Open Forum" section of the Administration, Libraries and Budget Committee meeting. During "Open Forum" the following rules apply:

- All individuals wishing to speak may call the Clerk of the Board prior to the Administration, Libraries and Budget Committee and indicate they wish to speak at "Open Forum", or follow instructions for participating as outlined on the public website: [County board meetings | Hennepin County](#), which states:
 - Comments are pre-recording and played during meetings. Comments will be recorded in a first-come, first-served order. To record a comment for the meeting, call 612-348-3100 and leave a voicemail message. For comments to be included in open forum, recorded messages will need to meet the following standards just as they would in person:
 - Remarks should be limited to topics that are relevant to agenda items.
 - Participants will need state their first and last name for the record.
 - Participants will need to adhere to the rules of decorum as outlined in our posted guidance for addressing the board.
 - Comments must be kept to 3-minutes or less.
- Individuals choosing to speak during "Open Forum" must direct their remarks solely to County Board members.
- Speakers must be respectful to the Board, staff, and others participants. Any recorded comments using foul, abusive or inappropriate language will not be played back during the committee meeting.

B. Public Hearings.

- All individuals wishing to speak at a Public Hearing can call the Clerk of the Board prior to a meeting with a Public Hearing and indicate a desire to speak at the Public Hearing, or sign up as a speaker prior to the Public Hearing.

- The Presiding Officer of the Public Hearing will call individuals who have indicated a desire to testify. The Presiding Officer has discretion to call individuals in any particular order.
- Individuals must address the topic of the Public Hearing and must keep their testimony to 3 minutes, unless the Presiding Officer provides them additional time. In addition, individuals must direct their remarks solely to County Board members.
- Speakers must be respectful to the Board, staff, and others in the audience. Any speaker who uses foul, abusive or inappropriate language or uses foul, abusive or inappropriate displays or other support materials will be stopped and will not be allowed to continue with his/her comments, will be ordered to leave the microphone area and will be directed to be seated. Speakers failing to comply with direction from the Presiding Officer may be removed from the meeting.

C. On occasion there may be other opportunities for the public to address the County Board, HCRRA, or HRA. On these occasions the rules of decorum governing public hearings apply.

III. Enforcement of the Rules

- If an individual (or individuals) violates the rules of decorum, the Chair of the County Board or Presiding Officer at the meeting will request that the individual(s) who is violating a rule cease the violation;
- If the violation continues, the Chair of the County Board or Presiding Officer will warn the individual(s) that if the behavior violating the rules does not stop, they will be required to leave the meeting room;
- If the individual(s) does not stop the behavior violating the rules and/or leave the meeting room as directed by the Chair or the Presiding Officer, the Chair of the County Board or Presiding Officer in his or her discretion may request security to remove the individual(s) from the meeting room;
- The Chair of the County Board or Presiding Officer may recess the meeting to allow security to remove individual(s) and restore order; and
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