

MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP

GUIDELINES

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' MEETINGS

1. All official action and deliberations by a quorum of the Board of Supervisors shall take place at meetings that are open to the public unless closed under Sections 707 (relating to exceptions to open meetings) or 708 (relating to executive sessions) of the Sunshine Act: Open Meetings Law. *See*, 65 Pa.C.S. §704 [Open meetings].
2. The Board of Supervisors shall provide a reasonable opportunity at each advertised regular meeting and advertised special meeting for residents and/or taxpayers of Montgomery Township to comment on matters of concern, official action or deliberation which are or may be before the Board of Supervisors prior to taking official action. The Board of Supervisors has the option to accept all public comment at the beginning of the meeting. If the Board of Supervisors determines that there is not sufficient time at a meeting for the residents and/or taxpayers of Montgomery Township to comment, the Board of Supervisors may defer the comment period to the next regular meeting or to a special meeting occurring in advance of the next regular meeting. *See*, 65 Pa.C.S. §710.1(a) [Public Participation. General Rule].
3. Montgomery Township residents and taxpayers are encouraged to contact the Township Manager in advance if they have an issue to raise with the Board of Supervisors so that it can be formally placed on an agenda and to better enable the Board to deal with the issue on the same evening at which it is initially raised.
4. In order to participate in a meeting, members of the audience are asked to raise their hand and wait to be acknowledged by the Chairperson of the Board of Supervisors prior to addressing the Board of Supervisors. Once acknowledged of the Chair of the Board, state your name and address. At times, the Board of Supervisors may require a signature on a sign-in sheet in order to be recognized to speak. This may be required when the Board of Supervisors is faced with a major issue, there is a large public attendance or it is facing time constraints.
5. A recognized speaker is to come to the front of the room and use a microphone for speaking so that they can be heard by other members of the audience and the Board of Supervisors. This will also ensure that a summary of their comments can be reflected in the written minutes of the open meeting.
6. The Board of Supervisor's meeting minutes must include date, time and place of the meeting, the names of the members present, the substance of all official actions and a record of all votes, and the name and address of all citizens who appear officially at the meeting and the subject of their testimony. Minutes will include the nature of each individual(s) discussion, not word for word statements. The minutes are not meant to be a transcript of a public meeting and will provide only a summary of each individual(s) comments.
7. Anyone wishing to speak at a public meeting will be asked to state their name and address.

8. The Board of Supervisors hereby sets a time limit for each individual speaker of five (5) minutes and may also set an overall time limit for all comments by the audience when there is a complex issue or a large turnout. This is done to permit the greatest number of individuals to express their views in a reasonable time frame. If appropriate, the Board of Supervisors may waive the time limit.
9. Members of the audience are requested to limit their statements to comments which have not already been made by others.
10. Please refrain from making personal attacks or statements about Board Members or other members of the public or Township staff.
11. You may be asked to sign a sign-in sheet if you wish to be recognized to speak. This may be required by the Board when it is faced with a major issue, there is a large public attendance or it is facing time constraints.
12. Please refrain from calling out or speaking out of turn. When more than one person speaks at a time, neither the Board nor other members of the audience can benefit from hearing your comments and it is difficult to record your comments for the minutes.
13. Please be advised that all regular and special meetings of the Board of Supervisors are recorded for replay on the Township cable channels.