

SAMPLE RULES OF DECORUM

SHANGRI-La TOWNSHIP RESOLUTION # ____ – 2023

WHEREAS, the _____ Township Board of Supervisors hereby establishes the following protocol designed to promote the lawful and orderly administration of its public meetings;

WHEREAS, the Board acknowledges that residents and taxpayers are entitled to comment on matters of public concern in accordance with the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act, 65 Pa.C.S.A. §701, *et seq.*, and the First Amendment to the United States Constitution;

WHEREAS, the Board desires to assure that its public meetings are administered in an orderly and civil manner that is respectful of and consistent with the rights of all persons in attendance;

WHEREAS, the Board invites residents and taxpayers to comment on matters of public concern; and

WHEREAS, in furtherance of these goals, the Board establishes these guidelines to govern public participation at public meetings and to assure that all members of the public have an equal opportunity to address matters of public concern.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Supervisors of ----- Township that the following public participation guidelines shall apply to all public meetings of the -----Township Board of Supervisors:

A. Public Meetings:

1) Public meetings of the Board of Supervisors are designed to facilitate the discussion of specific topics as noted within a particular meeting's agenda.

2) All public Township meetings shall follow the order of business presented in the meeting's agenda. The agenda for all public meetings of the Board of Supervisors shall be made available to the public in advance of the public meeting on the website at www._____. The agenda is subject to change in the discretion of the Board of Supervisors.

3) During a public meeting, a maximum of three (3) minutes shall be provided for audience comments directly related to the specific issue before the Board of Supervisors prior to its vote or action on the specific issue.

4) All speakers are expected to refrain from personal attacks on Board Members, township staff and other members of the public.

5) The minutes of the public meeting will note the names of all citizens who appeared officially and the substance of their testimony. Persons deemed to be appearing officially at meetings shall be limited to those persons appearing relative to an agenda item under consideration by the Board. Those individuals who appear officially may have their names and addresses noted in the minutes. The minutes are not intended to be a verbatim recitation of all issues discussed, but instead need only denote the subject matter discussed and the official action taken by the Board. The Township shall be under no obligation to include within the minutes matters of public comment, or to read aloud at a meeting written statements submitted to the Township.

Public Comment:

6) Township residents and taxpayers may speak publicly during the “Public Comments” and “New Business from the Floor” portions of the meetings, as designated in the meeting agenda, unless otherwise waived by the Board of Supervisors.

7) All public comments should be framed to provide a point of view, to gain valuable information, and/or to express a concern.

8) The Chairman of the Board of Supervisors shall preside over public comment and, within his discretion, may enforce the following rules and guidelines:

1. Each speaker may speak for a maximum of three (3) minutes;
2. A maximum of sixty (60) minutes shall be permitted for public comment at any one meeting.
3. Speakers shall not share, loan or borrow time;
4. Comments from all speakers must be civil and respectful. Infractions will result in the loss of remaining time, by order of the Chairman, after one warning;
5. Members of the audience and the Board of Supervisors are expected to respect the views of others and not interrupt or harass speakers.
6. All comments and questions shall be directed to the Board of Supervisors.

9) It shall be noted that the allowance of public comment does not necessarily mean that the Board, staff or consultants shall respond to inquiries or questions raised by the commenting resident or taxpayer. While the Board may elect to respond to such inquiries or comments, the Board and Township reserve the right to address appropriate inquiries at a subsequent meeting after due consideration and review. The Board reserves the right, in its discretion, to refrain from commenting on matters due to personnel, public safety, legal, confidentiality or other concerns.

