

Readfield Select Board Policy for "Public Communications" Sessions

The Select Board encourages citizens of the Town of Readfield to attend Board meetings, conducted at the Town Office at 6:30 Monday evenings, which are open to both the press and the public except during executive sessions. Executive sessions, which usually occur at the end of a meeting, deal with topics that the open discussion of which may potentially harm the Town, affected individuals or both, or are authorized/mandated by state law. The Select Board follows state law with regard to executive sessions. The Board encourages residents to bring issues of concern or interest of an individual or of the community to the attention of the Select Board. Citizen involvement in Town governance enhances the sense of community that makes Readfield a great place to live, work, and visit. Select Board meetings follow an agenda, which lists the issues the Board will address. The Board wants to hear from citizens and recognizes one way for residents to participate is to speak out in the "Public Communications" sections of each Select Board Meeting. The Select Board also recognizes that efficient, productive and orderly meetings are essential to ensure full and fair consideration of agenda subjects at each meeting. To balance these two interests, the Select Board adopts this Policy to govern the "Public Communications" agenda item of the meetings.

1. Citizens will be allowed to comment on each agenda, with comments pertaining only to the item being discussed before final action is taken. Comments will be limited to three minutes.
2. There will be one "Public Communications" segment at each regularly scheduled Select Board Meeting at the end of the meeting. Each Public Communications segment is limited to fifteen minutes, allowing three (3) minutes per person. Repeat speakers shall be allowed to speak again after anyone wishing to speak has done so and we are still in the fifteen minute allotted time frame. The full fifteen minute time interval will not be reserved for potential discussion. A citizen who is present at the meeting may request the Select Board to extend the Public Communication time, with the Select Board voting on the amount of time and either accepting or rejecting the additional time allocation requested.
3. All public comments or questions shall be directed to the Chairperson, who will recognize each speaker in turn. Remarks may not exceed three minutes per speaker. Each speaker must identify him/herself and the group he/she represents, if applicable. Speakers may not "read into the record" remarks prepared for or directed to another person or entity. This segment of the agenda is intended for brief, usually informal, discussions.
4. A speaker requesting to present a more formal or comprehensive discussion may request in advance to be on the agenda for that evening. To request to be on the agenda, one should contact the Town Manager by Monday noon prior to the following scheduled Select Board Meeting. The "Public Communications" segment is not an appropriate time to request an interpretation and/or decision of the Select Board. All reasonable requests will be considered, but it will be at the Select Board Chairperson's discretion whether to allow an agenda item, depending on the nature of the request and the time available at a specific meeting. Any request to be on the agenda denied by the Chairperson of the Board, may be brought forth before the entire Select Board during Public Communications time for the entire Select Board to review. If a motion is made and passes to add the item to a future agenda, the Chairperson will add it to the agenda within the next two scheduled Select Board meetings.
5. The Select Board will not accept written materials distributed at a Select Board meeting, other than petitions submitted in accordance with state law. Individuals or groups must submit written materials for the Board's attention to the Chairperson of the Select Board, no later than noon on the Monday before the next scheduled Select Board meeting. The Chairperson shall provide to the Town Manager any written materials received from the public for distribution to all Board members. Please reference Number 8 below.
6. Individuals or groups who desire a response from the Select Board are advised to contact the Town Manager and all Select Board Members to request placing an item on the Board's agenda for discussion

or submit a letter rather than relying on a "Public Communications" session. The Select Board shall note any concerns, questions, comments and communications from the public and possibly address at a following meeting. The Chairperson also could direct the individual or group to an appropriate resource for further information. The Select Board will not enter into debate with the public on a topic but may provide factual information regarding the substance of a comment or ask clarifying questions. Following the meeting, the Chairperson, on behalf of the Select Board will submit contact information (if provided) for the member of the public who asked a question or provided a comment to the appropriate resource for further information, if needed.

7. Questions about Town affairs and criticisms or concerns about Town policies, actions, or programs are welcome, provided they do not become personal.

8. No personal attacks on any individual or firm, including Town employees, Town officials, or members of the public, will be tolerated during any meetings. Please direct concerns about Town officials to the Chairperson of the Select Board outside the public meeting. Complaints concerning any employee of the Town, other than the Town Manager, shall be directed only to the Town Manager and are not permitted to be publicly discussed, pursuant to Maine Labor Laws. Complaints involving the Town Manager shall be directed to the Select Board for consideration, but are not permitted to be publicly discussed pursuant to Maine Labor Laws.

9. The Select Board vests in its Chairperson the discretion to terminate any remarks if the speaker does not adhere to this policy. At any time, remaining Select Board members may call a point of order and ask the Chairperson to address any individual(s) that are not abiding by this policy. This pertains to the public, Select Board Members, and all Town employees.

Adopted as policy by the Select Board on 11/05/2012

Amended and adopted on 02/25/2013