

RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE WEAVERVILLE TOWN COUNCIL

Adopted by Town Council on October 24, 2022

Appendix B – Rules for Public Comment and Public Hearings

A general public comment period is provided at the regular meeting of the Weaverville Town Council which is held on the 4th Monday at 6:00 pm in the Council Chambers and Community Room at Town Hall, 30 South Main Street, Weaverville (subject to adjustments reflected in council's adopted regular meeting schedule). Public hearings are scheduled by action of Town Council.

It should be noted that all meetings of the Town Council are recorded and available for public viewing and listening and most are streamed live via Zoom.

The following rules of decorum and procedures are expected of all speakers during public comment and public hearings that occur before the Weaverville Town Council in order to ensure meetings are conducted in a civil and orderly manner:

1. Persons who wish to speak must sign up on the appropriate sign-up sheet located at the podium inside the meeting room.
2. The mayor, or other presiding officer, or a majority of the council, may allow comments from citizens joining a meeting remotely.
3. The Council will allocate up to 20 minutes during each of its regular monthly meetings to hear general public comments.
4. Each public hearing that is scheduled is generally limited to 20 minutes, but may be extended.
5. The mayor, or other presiding officer, reserves the right to adjust the time limitation for individual speakers or the overall time period as necessary for the efficient and effective conduct of business, and to allow the presentation of multiple viewpoints.
6. Each speaker is allocated up to three (3) minutes to speak.
7. Speaker substitutions at the meeting are not allowed and citizens may not yield their comments to another speaker present.
8. It is recommended that groups or delegations of three (3) or more select a spokesperson in advance of the meeting. If three (3) or more members of a group are present and identified, the group's spokesperson shall be allocated up to 10 minutes.
9. A speaker may not share or relinquish any remaining time they have not used to another speaker.
10. Speakers are only allowed to speak once during the public comment period.
11. Speakers must be recognized by the mayor, or other presiding officer, before speaking. The mayor will recognize speakers in the order of which they signed up.
12. Speakers must make their comments from the podium and not from the audience.

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13. Once at the podium and before making their comments, a speaker must state their name and address. If serving as a spokesperson, the speaker must identify the group they are speaking on behalf of and the members present that they represent.
14. Speakers who have prepared remarks or supporting documents are encouraged to leave a copy of such remarks or documents with the town clerk. Written materials will be provided to town council but will not be made part of the minutes of the meeting.
15. Speakers shall refrain from personal attacks and/or threats directed towards town staff, elected officials, or members of the public.
16. Speakers shall be civil and courteous in their language and presentation. Insults, profanity, vulgar language or gestures, or other inappropriate behavior are not allowed.
17. Speakers should limit their comments to matters that are germane to, or within the Town's jurisdiction or apparent jurisdiction. Comments during public hearings are limited to the subject matter of the hearing.
18. Campaigning for political office shall be disallowed by the presiding officer.
19. Comments are to be directed to the entire council and not to individuals or to members of the audience.
20. The audience must maintain order and decorum in their conduct. Comments, applause, questions, jeering, or other interruptions from the audience are not allowed. Speakers shall, likewise, not address or respond to members of the audience.
21. Speakers should not expect the council to comment on or respond to their comments directly during the meeting. The mayor, or other presiding officer, may, however, request that the town manager or other town staff follow up with the speaker after the meeting or provide additional information to the council or speaker at a later time.
22. Speakers may not use the audio-visual equipment located in the meeting room or otherwise make audio-visual presentations. Other visual aids, including but not limited to signs, banners, flags, and other props are not allowed.
23. The mayor, or other presiding officer, has the authority to enforce these rules.
24. The mayor, or other presiding officer, or a majority of the council may suspend the rules at their discretion.
25. Failure to obey these rules may result in forfeiture of the remaining speaking time, removal from the meeting, and possible criminal charges.
26. Speakers and members of the audience should note the following legal provision:
N.C.G.S. § 143-318.17 – Disruptions of official meetings. *A person who willfully interrupts, disturbs, or disrupts an official meeting and who, upon being directed to leave the meeting by the presiding officer, willfully refuses to leave the meeting is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor.*