

**WOODBURY COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AGENDA ITEM(S) REQUEST FORM**

Date: 1/4/2023

Weekly Agenda Date: 1/10/2023

**ELECTED OFFICIAL / DEPARTMENT HEAD / CITIZEN:** Chairman Matthew Ung

**WORDING FOR AGENDA ITEM:**

Approval of the rules for public participation in Board of Supervisors meetings

**ACTION REQUIRED:**

Approve Ordinance

Approve Resolution

Approve Motion

Public Hearing

Other: Informational

Attachments

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

This item updates the participation rules for board meetings, and consolidates the two "Citizen Concern" items at the beginning and end of the agenda into one item at the end, in order to facilitate more orderly, respectful, and productive meetings for everyone involved.

For the last eight years, the Board has gone far above and beyond by providing two separate items on each agenda for "citizen concerns." For contrast, the Sioux City Council provides only one at the end, and the Sergeant Bluff City Council provides only one at the beginning. The Sioux City School Board provides only one at the beginning, with the added restriction of a policy that requires speakers submit a form before the meeting in which they wish to speak.

Orderly, respectful, and productive public comment will not be restricted by this change, as every effort will be made to encourage participation through more organized and more transparent agenda items. If a citizen is unwilling to either take the time to submit an agenda item for consideration or sit through items of official business to speak at the end of the meeting, then that is their choice.

**BACKGROUND:**

It surprises many people to learn that Iowa Code does not guarantee a "right" for the public to speak during a board meeting. The Iowa Public Information Board states on their "Open Meetings" webpage the following: "Government bodies are not required to allow public comment at open meetings, though many do, and they are allowed to enforce reasonable rules to ensure meetings are orderly." The intent of our rules is to facilitate as much public participation as possible in an orderly fashion.

Below is an updated list of rules for approval and inclusion on board meeting agendas.

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This is a formal meeting during which the Board may take official action on various items of business. Members of the public wishing to speak on an item must follow the participation rules adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

1. Please silence cell phones and other devices while in the Boardroom.
2. The Chair may recognize speakers on agenda items after initial discussion by the Board.
3. Speakers will approach the microphone one at a time and give their name and address before their statement.
4. Speakers will limit their remarks to three minutes on any one item, and address their remarks to the Board.
5. At the beginning of discussion on any item, the Chair may request statements in favor of an action be heard first followed by statements in opposition to the action. The Chair may also request delegates provide statements on behalf of multiple speakers.
6. Any concerns or questions which do not relate to a scheduled item on the agenda will be heard under the item "Citizen Concerns." Please note the Board is legally prohibited from taking action on or engaging in deliberation on concerns not listed on the agenda, and in such cases the Chair will request further discussion take place after properly noticed.
7. Public comment by electronic or telephonic means is prohibited except when directed by a majority of the board for a particular agenda item of a subsequent meeting.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

n/a

**IF THERE IS A CONTRACT INVOLVED IN THE AGENDA ITEM, HAS THE CONTRACT BEEN SUBMITTED AT LEAST ONE WEEK PRIOR AND ANSWERED WITH A REVIEW BY THE COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE?**

Yes  No

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Board should approve these amended rules and consolidate citizen concerns into one item. Over the years, "citizen concerns" at the beginning of the agenda has all too often devolved into a "gotcha" opportunity to attack others and draw Board members into irrelevant arguments. Unfortunately, Board members are also incentivized to engage in these arguments during citizen concerns because "board concerns" is listed only once, at the end of the agenda. The perfect example of abuse is Maria Rundquist wrongfully accusing Supervisor-elect Bittinger of failure to pay property taxes at the Dec. 6 meeting, while referring to documents not shared with the Board.

**ACTION REQUIRED / PROPOSED MOTION:**

Approve the rules for public participation in Board of Supervisors meetings