

## **Board Policy**

### **Public Participation in Board Meetings**

Meetings of the Dodge County Board of Commissioners are structured to allow the Board to conduct its public business. Meetings of the Board are open to the public, but are not to be confused with public forums. When time permits, the Dodge County Board of Commissioners as a matter of general operating procedure offers an opportunity for citizens of the county to address the Board in open session. The following rules shall be adhered to:

1. The Board requires individuals to contact the County Manager and/or elected officials in an effort to secure a satisfactory solution to any concerns prior to referral to the Board of Commissioners.
2. To be placed on the agenda, individuals must request to appear before the Board in writing by noon at least five (5) days prior to the regular meeting of the Board (ie, the Board normally meets on Monday. To be on the agenda, the individual must complete the form and return to the Board of Commissioners' office the completed request form by noon on Thursday). The request must state clearly the topic or issue to be addressed.
3. Each person whose name is placed on the agenda will be given five (5) minutes to make his/her comments, but the total time allotted for citizen participation will be limited to thirty (30) minutes.
4. Where several citizens wish to address the same topic or issue, the Board reserves the right to further limit discussions should they become repetitive. In the event a group or a delegation wishes to address an issue before the Board, the group must designate a representative to speak for the group or delegation.
5. While citizens may use their allotted time to take serious issue with Board decisions, the Chairperson will not permit anyone to become personally abusive of individual board members, county officials or employees.
6. When issues arise that stimulate high community interest, the Board of Chairman may schedule special meetings specifically to invite public comment. In those circumstances, the Board will establish special guidelines for participation.
7. The Board or Chairperson will not respond to comments or questions posed by citizens in their presentations, but will take those comments and questions under advisement.
8. Open records requests must be made in writing and during normal business hours, not during a board meeting.
9. At the Chairman's direction, public comments will be allowed for persons from the audience to speak once per meeting for a maximum of 5 minutes.

The Dodge County Board of Commissioners, by majority vote, may extend or further limit the time allotted for citizen participation.

## Virtual Observation Guidelines

The following rules are in conjunction with the above Board Policy

1. Virtual observers will be muted upon entry into the meeting. While off site parties will have full access to observe the meeting, they will not be a part of the discussion unless they are in person on site.
2. Virtual observers will not have the opportunity to address the board during the public comment section on the agenda. If you wish to address the board in person, please see the above policy section two (2). If the virtual observer has a medical or logistical problem, which does not allow them to attend, exceptions may be made on a case by case basis on written petition to the County Manager and/or elected official.
3. Comments typed by virtual observers will not be read into the minutes of the meeting.
4. Any profane comments or actions will not be tolerated and may lead to expulsion from the meeting.
5. Virtual observers will be excluded, in the same manner as physical attendees, from executive sessions of the Board.
6. The access code and phone number will be published on the Dodge County website: [www.dodgecountyga.com](http://www.dodgecountyga.com) the day of the meeting. This is a work in progress and may be modified from time to time.

These guidelines conform to O.C.G.A. 50-14-1 & 50-14-3.

Dodge County will use Google Meet as the platform and conform to all rules and regulations set by Google. If you need help using this technology, please contact the Commissioners' office by the Friday prior to the meeting. We will not be able to assist the day of the meeting.