

Borough of Watontown
Meeting Procedures

A public comment period will be held during each regularly scheduled Council meeting. Except for the case of public hearings or special public information meetings, the public comment portion of the meeting is the only time when comments by the public on non-agenda items will be taken. Questions and comments on specific topics being discussed by the Borough Council will only be entertained after an individual has been recognized by the Council President. Council President may decline to permit questions or comments deemed irrelevant to the topic or presented in a manner inconsistent with these procedures.

The public comment period is designed for comments only. The Council President, in his/her discretion, may direct questions to the appropriate person to respond. No response shall be required.

Each speaker must be recognized and given the floor by the Council President prior to speaking. The speaker shall rise to the designated speaking area prior to speaking. Elected officials, appointed individuals and employees seated at the meeting table(s) shall not be required to rise to the designated speaking area.

Each speaker during the public comment period is limited to speak one time for a period not to exceed five minutes. The time limit shall be enforced by the Council President (or his/her designee). Any request for extension of this time limit must be made to the Council President who has the discretion to extend the time to speak. The Council President shall have discretion to shorten the time limit, provided that the shortened time limit is applied equally to all speakers. A speaker is permitted to speak for up to three (3) minutes on additional items raised by other speakers that are distinct from the issues raised by the speaker. This is not a time to rebut issues previously spoken on by the speaker.

Comments by speakers must be addressed to the Council President. Attendees may not address the Borough Council until recognized by the Council President.

Discussion between speakers and attendees of the public meeting or hearing is strictly prohibited.

Comments must be related to legitimate Borough business.

Speakers must present their remarks in a courteous manner and may not make personal comments about public officials, town residents or others.

A person who disregards the directives of the Council President in enforcing the rules, disturbs the peace at the meeting, fails to follow the meeting procedures, makes slanderous remarks or generally conducts himself in a boisterous or inappropriate manner while addressing the Borough Council may forfeit any balance of time remaining for his or her comments and be removed from the meeting and building.

If after a final warning, the speaker refuses to step down, the President Council will request that a Police Officer remove the individual from the meeting. Such individual may be prosecuted for disorderly conduct pursuant to the criminal laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

All cell phones and pages must be turned off or silenced. Cell phone conversations are not permitted in the meeting room while a public meeting is being conducted.

All elected officials, appointed individuals and employees are required to follow the meeting procedures, unless explicitly stated otherwise in the meeting procedures. An elected official, appointed individual or employee that has been given the floor, shall not be interrupted when speaking unless by the Council President to call the individual to order. If an individual, while speaking, is called to order, such individual shall cease speaking until the question of order is determined, and if in order, such individual shall be permitted to proceed.

If an elected official, appointed individual or employee desires to interrupt a speaker during his or her remarks, the individual shall make the request to the Council President. The interruption will only be permitted for the purposes of clarification and information.

All individuals shall observe the commonly accepted rules of courtesy, decorum, dignity and good taste.

The Meeting Procedures shall be posted in the Borough Office and at the entrance to the Borough Council Meeting.