

Town of Ipswich, Massachusetts
Board of Selectmen
Policies for Open Meetings
Adopted: July 11, 2011

This policy is consistent with the M.G.L.'s, Open Meeting Law, and Town Bylaw

Conducting a Meeting:

1. No person shall address a meeting of the Board of Selectmen without permission of the Chair, and all persons shall, at the request of the Chair, be silent
2. No person shall disrupt the proceedings of a meeting of the Board of Selectmen.
3. If, after clear warning from the Chair, a person continues to disrupt the proceedings, the Chair may order the person to withdraw from the meeting and if the person does not withdraw, the Chair may authorize a constable or officer to remove the person from the meeting.

Citizen Queries:

1. Members of the public can use this time to ask a question or comment on a matter affecting the Town that is not listed on the agenda.
2. The citizen query portion of the meeting cannot be used to endorse candidates running for office, to endorse ballot questions, or as a forum to discuss election issues.
3. The citizen query portion of the meeting cannot be used by members of the public to attack, either professionally or personally, town officials or employees.
4. Matters raised during the citizen query portion of the agenda, which require further debate, action or discussion, may be placed on a future agenda, unless, at the discretion of the Chair, further debate, action or discussion is allowed immediately.
5. The citizen query agenda item is at the start of the meeting
6. Citizens may speak for a period not to exceed approximately five (5) minutes. If the Chair chooses, he/she may limit the time to a shorter period.

Approval of Minutes:

1. Minutes from a Board of Selectmen meeting will be approved at the next posted Board of Selectmen meeting. Until approved minutes are only considered a draft.
2. Edits will be accepted from the public to approved minutes. Requests for edits from the public must be made in writing. These requests will be reviewed and acted upon at the next Board of Selectmen meeting.
3. The Board of Selectmen approves the following information found in the minutes:
 - a. The date and time of the meeting
 - b. Location of the meeting
 - c. Those in attendance
 - d. Decisions made and actions taken, including a record of all votes

4. Additional information found in the minutes, such as, but not limited to, dialog between the Board and/or presenters and citizens is considered beneficial additional information. This may not be verbatim, but adds depth to issues discussed. The Board does not approve this information explicitly.

New Business:

1. This agenda item covers any items the Chair does not reasonably anticipate 48-hours in advance of the meeting.
2. Items arising within 48 hours of the meeting may be posted to the online calendar agenda to inform the public.

Use of Cell Phones and Personal Computers:

1. Cell phones should be shut off or the ringing turned off.
2. Citizens must take all phone calls in the hallway.
3. Board of Selectmen members may not use cell phones during a posted meeting.
4. Board of Selectmen members shall not communicate with each other via email, social media, text message, etc. during a posted meeting.

Use of Video or Audio Recorders:

1. Citizens are permitted to record Board of Selectmen meetings after properly informing the Chair.
2. Prior to the start of a meeting, the citizen should inform the Chair that he/she wishes to record the meeting.
3. At the beginning of the meeting the Chair shall inform other attendees of any such recordings.

Additional Documentation:

1. All documents and exhibits cited by citizens or presenters become part of the public record of the meeting.
2. Copies of all documents must be provided to the Board, if possible, in advance of the meeting.