

Public Participation at Commissioner Meetings

Purpose: The Fall River County Commission, as well as committees under the County's purview are considered public bodies that are subject to open meeting laws. SDCL 1-25-1 states that **"the public body shall reserve at every regularly scheduled official meeting a period for public comment, limited at the public body's discretion, but not so limited as to provide for no public comment."** These guidelines have been adopted to provide for clarity and consistency in the application of this statutory requirement for public comment amongst all of the county board meetings and committees that are subject to open meeting laws.

The following are some guidelines that will assist in the orderly conduction of County Commission Meetings, which are a meeting held in public, but not a public meeting.

Commissioner Meetings will be held using Robert's Rules of Order. The Chairman, Vice Chairman or their designee will conduct the meeting.

The agenda will be approved at the beginning of the meeting. During the approval process items may be removed from the agenda and no comment will be taken on removed items. All agendas are published prior to the meeting.

During discussion of business brought before the Commission, Commissioners opinions will be solicited first and then, if time allows, other comments may be acknowledged.

Comments must be presented using a civil and professional demeanor. Threatening, profane, vulgar, or abusive language will not be tolerated.

A time is set aside for public comment. This should be limited to three to five minutes and can be related to agenda items or other pertinent business. In large groups seeking to make comments, a spokesman may need to be designated for similar opinions.

The period for public comment is intended for the public body to receive comments. Members of the public body are not required to respond to a comment, answer any questions, or engage in any dialogue with the individual making the comments.

During regular Commission discussion, comments regarding what the current speaker is saying, should be withheld until after the speaker is finished, if time allows, or during public comment. Comments from the general audience during any speaker presentation will not be acknowledged.