

Public Participation at Commissioner Meetings Policy

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 the county board and committee meetings that are subject to open meeting laws.

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

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 added or removed from the agenda and no comments will be taken on removed items. All agendas are published 24-hours prior to the meeting.

During discussion of business brought before the Commission, Commissioner's 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 five minutes and can be related to agenda items or other pertinent business. If there are large groups seeking to make comments, the Chair may ask for a spokesperson to be designated for those within the group with 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 the designated time for public comment. Comments from the general audience during any speaker presentation will not be acknowledged.