

## **COLUMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA MEETING RULES AND PROCEDURES**

### **POLICY**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to comply with Section 2.8 (4) of the Columbia County Charter pertaining to rules and procedures necessary for the orderly transaction of the business of the Columbia County Board of County Commissioners (the "Board"). This policy applies to meetings of the Columbia County Board of County Commissioners and meetings of its subcommittees.

#### **2. AGENDAS**

- (a) All Agendas shall be prepared by the County Staff subject to the review and edification of the Chairperson of the Board.
- (b) Citizens desiring to bring matters before the Board shall submit to County Administration, in writing, their request for placement on an agenda. Written requests should plainly state the name of the speaker, the issue about which he or she wishes to speak, and whether the speaker is acting on behalf of an entity or group of citizens. Requests shall be made no later than seven (7) days prior to the meeting agenda on which the requesting citizen desires to be placed. The Chairperson, in his or her sole discretion, may waive the seven- (7) day requirement set forth in this part. Where it appears to the Chairperson that administrative remedies may exist for a particular issue, the Chairperson may require the requesting citizen to exhaust all administrative remedies prior to addressing the Board.
- (c) Issues pending before a county-appointed board shall not be scheduled on Agendas for discussion by the Board until final action by the appointed board on that issue.
- (d) Except as specifically approved by the Chairperson, or by motion approved by the vote of three (3) or more County Commissioners, agenda items shall not be scheduled before the Board when the issue to be discussed by the speaker concerns or is substantially related to pending or threatened litigation or a legal claim in which Columbia County, including, but not limited to, its Board members, staff or employees, may be parties or have a substantial interest.
- (e) Agendas for each meeting shall adhere to the following format unless deviation from the format is made necessary by emergent or unusual circumstances:
  - 1. Invocation
  - 2. Pledge
  - 3. Approval of Consent Agenda
  - 4. Adoption of Consent Agenda
  - 5. Staff or Commissioner Additions or Deletions to Agenda
  - 6. Approval of Agenda
  - 7. Presentation of Ministerial Matters Not Requiring Public Comment
  - 8. Presentations to the Board Not Requiring Board Vote or Action
  - 9. Public Hearings

10. Public Comment on Agenda Discussion and Action Items
11. Discussion and Action Items
12. Open Public Comments to the Board
13. Staff Comments
14. Commissioner Comments
15. Adjournment

### **3. MEETINGS**

- (a) The Chairperson, or Vice-Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson, shall preside over all meetings of the Board.
- (b) The County's business should be conducted in an orderly and civil manner. The Chairperson, or Vice-Chairperson as applicable, shall therefore have the power necessary to ensure that meetings are conducted in an orderly and civil manner. Where necessary to maintain order and civility, the Chairperson has the authority to recess a meeting, adjourn a meeting, or have a person or persons removed from the podium or the building in which any meeting is being conducted.
  - i. Prior to removing an individual from any meeting, the Chairperson shall give a verbal warning in which the Chairperson shall describe to the individual the conduct which the Chairperson believes to be disorderly or uncivil. If, after having received such a warning, the same individual engages in the same or substantially the same disorderly or uncivil behavior during the same meeting, the Chairperson may, in his or her discretion, have that individual removed from that meeting.
  - ii. In cases of extreme misconduct, including but not limited to initiation of unwanted physical contact with any person in attendance at any meeting and acts or threats of violence directed to any person in attendance at any meeting, the Chairperson may, in his or her discretion, order the immediate removal of any individual engaging in such conduct.
- (c) All official actions of the Board of County Commissioners shall be by motion and second. Unless specifically provided for otherwise, a simple majority vote of Commissioners in attendance shall carry a motion. Should an even number of Commissioners be present and reach a tie vote on any proposition, that vote shall result in failure of the proposition.
- (d) Each Commissioner in attendance shall vote on each issue for which a vote is called unless abstaining or disqualified from voting in accordance with Florida Law. The Chairperson shall vote last. If any Commissioner fails to vote audibly or refuses to vote audibly either for or against any proposition, then the Commissioner's silence shall be counted as a vote in support of the proposition then before the Board.
- (e) Regular meetings of the Board shall be held on the first and third Thursdays of each calendar month at 5:30 p.m. at the Columbia County School Board Administrative Complex, 372 West Duval Street, Lake City, Florida. Meetings of the Board are subject to change.

#### **4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

- (a) The public shall have the opportunity to be heard on any agenda action item for which a vote will be called. Comment shall not be required for ministerial votes which may include among other things the approval of minutes, the adoption of the approved Consent Agenda, or votes to make proclamations. Comment shall be limited to five (5) minutes per speaker unless extended by the Chairperson. Where three or more individuals wish to speak on a single subject and appear to the Chairperson to share the same position on that subject, the Chairperson may request that a single individual from that group of three or more individuals speak for the group. If a single individual speaks for three or more individuals after being requested to do so by the Chairperson, that individual may, in the discretion of the Chairperson, be afforded additional time to speak.
- (b) Public comment on non-agenda items shall be permitted prior to adjournment of each meeting but after all Board business on action items is concluded. Comments shall be limited to two (2) minutes per individual unless extended by the Chairperson.
- (c) Public discussion on agenda items required for Public Hearings shall be limited to five (5) minutes per person unless extended by the Chairperson. The Chairperson shall have the right to set reasonable time limits within which to conduct Public Hearings.
- (d) Each person who addresses the Commission shall complete a citizen's input sheet and submit the sheet to Board staff for review by the Chairperson. The completed citizen's input sheet shall be submitted not later than five (5) minutes after approval of the Agenda. If the citizen's input sheet is not received within the allotted time period the Chairperson shall have the discretion to allow comment. Comments shall be limited to the subject(s) noted on the citizen input sheet.
- (e) Board meetings are not a proper forum for debate. As such, debates between citizens addressing the Board and Commissioners are to be avoided. Commissioners may respond to citizen inquiries as a matter of their own discretion.
- (f) Those addressing the Board shall speak from the podium and shall audibly provide the following information to be recorded for the minutes:
  - (i) Full Name;
  - (ii) County district or City of residence;
  - (iii) Whether the speaker is appearing on behalf of an organization, group of persons, or other third party. If the speaker represents another, the speaker should state whether the views expressed represent the established policy or position approved or authorized by the other;
  - (iv) Whether the speaker is being compensated for his or her appearance before the Board; and
  - (v) The issue the speaker will be commenting on.

JFF  
rev 02/12/15  
rev 02/19/15  
rev 02/26/15

**5. EFFECT OF INFORMALITIES**

The Board shall have the right to waive any informalities as they relate to these rules and procedures. An informality shall not operate to set aside any action taken by the Board that otherwise complies with the laws of the State of Florida.

Adopted by the Board of County Commissioners  
on the 5th day of March, 2015.

  
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Rusty DePratter, Chair

Approved as to form and legality

  
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Joel Foreman, County Attorney