



City of West Monroe

PUBLIC COMMENTS AT PUBLIC MEETINGS

Section 1: Purpose - The City of West Monroe, Louisiana, is committed to ensuring transparency, public participation, and orderly conduct during open meetings of the Board of Aldermen and other public bodies. This policy establishes guidelines for public comments in accordance with applicable Louisiana laws.

Section 2: Public Comment Rights - In accordance with Louisiana Revised Statutes (La. R.S. 42:14), the public shall have the right to comment on any agenda item before a vote is taken.

Section 3: Procedure For Public Comments

- A. **Recognition of Commenter:** Individuals wishing to speak must raise their hands and be recognized by the presiding officer, move to the podium, and provide their name, address, and the agenda item on which they wish to comment prior to the commencement of their comment period.
- B. **Time Allocation:** Each speaker shall be limited to 3 minutes per agenda item. The presiding officer may extend or reduce the time limit as necessary to accommodate all speakers. In no event shall any member of the public be allowed to allocate or gift time to another member of the public to extend the allocated time of an individual speaker, except as provided in Subsection D.
- C. **Decorum:** Speakers must address the governing body in a respectful manner. Personal attacks, threats, or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.
- D. **Group Representation:** If multiple individuals wish to speak on the same topic, they may be asked to designate a representative to present their views to ensure an efficient meeting process. If designated, the time limit for the group representative may be extended, by approval of the presiding officer, to five minutes.

Section 4: Public Hearings - For matters requiring a public hearing, the presiding officer will open the floor for comments after a presentation of the issue. The same decorum and time limits shall apply in Section 3.

Section 5: Presiding Officer Authority

The Mayor or presiding officer shall have the authority to:

1. Enforce time limits and decorum rules.
2. Remove individuals who engage in disorderly conduct. Law enforcement assistance may be requested if necessary to maintain order.
3. Postpone or reschedule public comments when necessary due to time constraints.

Section 6: Policy Statement Prior to Meeting - A statement regarding this policy may be read at the beginning of each public meeting to inform all attendees of the procedure for making a public comment.