

Mark W. Smith, Chairman
John Sullivan, Vice Chairman
Doug McLinko, Commissioner



Gayle Kershner, Chief Clerk
Jonathan Foster, Solicitor

Bradford County Commissioners Office

Press Release for Immediate Release

At the Bradford County Commissioners' meeting held on April 14, 2011, Chairman Mark W. Smith implemented guidelines for conduct at Commissioners' meetings. These new guidelines are meant to ensure that members of the public have equal opportunity to address the Board of Commissioners in a timely manner and that each person is heard respectfully.

In past meetings there have been cases of disrespectful behavior, people interrupting each other, talking out of turn and speaking for long periods of time about many different subjects. Furthermore, Bradford County Commissioners' meetings are open meetings to conduct the business of Bradford County government; they are not forums for political campaigning. Commissioner Smith would like to remind all candidates, incumbents and challengers, that the Bradford County Commissioners' meetings are not the place for campaigning.

Citizens who wish to speak at a commissioners' meeting are asked to sign in before the start of the meeting, giving their name, address, and topic of discussion. Residents may also call the Commissioners office to request to be put on the list for visitors' remarks. These guidelines are important to make sure that each citizen is heard, respected and recognized.

1. **Opportunities for Public Comment on Agenda**

The Agenda of each meeting of the board provides two opportunities for public comment. First, "Visitors Remarks Concerning the Agenda" and the second "Visitors Remarks" are scheduled immediately before Adjournment. Members of the public may only address the board during these two portions of the Agenda. Each public comment portion of the agenda is limited to not more than one half (1/2) hour, unless an extension is approved by the Chairman.

2. **Scope of Public Comments**

Members of the public are encouraged to confine their remarks to matters which are on the board Agenda and/or are of current concern and interest to the operations of the county government.

- 3. Conduct during the Public Comment Portions of the Agenda**

Signing in prior to the start of the Commissioners' meeting is required by any person wishing to address the board during either "Visitors' Remarks Concerning Agenda" or "Visitors Remarks" portion of agenda. Each speaker shall be permitted to address the board once for not more than three (3) minutes during each Public Comment portion of the Agenda, and shall be limited to a total of six (6) minutes of comment for the entire meeting, unless an extension of time is approved by the Chairman. The Chairperson shall have the responsibility of judging the appropriateness of comments made during any public comment portion of the Agenda and shall maintain order and dignity at all times during the meeting. The Chairperson may, in his or her discretion, call on members of county staff or of the public for information which may assist the board at any time during the discussion of any agenda item.
- 4. Questions by Board Members during Public Comment Portion of Agenda**

Members of the board upon recognition by the Chairperson shall have the privilege of questioning speakers during either public comment portion of the Agenda. Time spent during questioning by members of the board shall not be deducted from the three-minute time limit for comment permitted to each speaker.
- 5. Comments by County Officials**

County officials should limit their comments to not more than five (5) minutes unless other arrangements have been made with the Chairperson.
- 6. Formal Presentations to the Board Time Limit**

Persons invited and approved prior to the meeting to make formal presentations to the board should limit their presentations to not more than fifteen (15) minutes, unless other arrangements have been made with the chairperson.
- 7. Media**

All questions from the media will be handled at the end of "Visitors Remarks."
- 8. Change of Rules during meeting**

Any of these rules are subject to change during the meeting on the majority vote of the board.