

Washington County Commissioner Public Comment Policy

Meetings of the Washington County Commissioners are held in public for the purpose of conducting the Commissioner's business. The Indiana Open Door Law (Indiana Code §5-14-1.5) allows the public to observe public meetings, including those of the Board of Commissioners. While there is no specific statutory authority that guarantees the right to speak at these public meetings, a governing body has discretion whether to allow public comment and may set reasonable rules that govern the conduct of a meeting (Indiana Code §5-14-1.5-3.3).

The Washington County Board of Commissioners does allow public comments during its board meeting as it value the importance of public comment. The following rules govern the Commissioner Meetings to ensure decorum and order:

- Speakers who wish to speak at a Commissioner Meeting must sign up with the Auditor no later than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the Meeting.
- Public comments shall be limited to three minutes for each speaker and each speaker is limited to speak once per subject matter.
- The speaker must provide their name and address.
- The public comments portion of the meeting is limited to thirty (30) minutes.
- Public speakers must be residents or property owners of Washington County.
- Public comments are allowed so that residents and property owners of Washington County can express their opinion or concerns about matters over which the Board has authority or responsibility. Comments are to be statements from the public and directed to the Commissioners. This is not a time for questions and answers or discussion with the Commissioners. Those can be done with each Commissioner outside of their public meetings. The Commissioners' telephone numbers and email addresses are on the county website for that purpose.
- Public comments shall not attack any individual, shall not be political or election based, and shall not be in regards to personnel matters or any other matter held in an executive meeting.
- The presiding officer will take reasonable steps to maintain order in a meeting, including interrupting, warning, and terminating speakers who disrupt a meeting, including when a speaker's statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene or irrelevant. Once the presiding officer has issued three (3) warnings to the speaker, the presiding officer may direct the speaker to leave the meeting and a law enforcement officer to remove the attendee from the meeting, if the attendee refuses to leave when directed by the presiding member for a violation of this Policy (Indiana Code 5-14-1.5-3.3(e)(3)).

*Please complete and return this form to Kyra Stephenson, Auditor, at
kstephenson@washingtoncounty.in.gov, no later than 24 hours prior to the meeting.*

I agree to follow the Washington County Commissioner Public Comment Policy and relevant Indiana Code.

Speaker Name: _____

Address: _____

Speaker phone number/email: _____

Date of Meeting to speak: _____

Public comment Topic or Agenda Item: _____

Signature of Speaker: _____

Date: _____