

Town of Manlius  
Rules for Decorum at Public Meetings  
LAST ADOPTED \_\_\_\_\_

Town Board meetings are required to be held in public for the purpose of allowing the public to *observe* the meetings. The law does not require that Town Boards set aside time at regular meetings for public comment, except for the case of public hearings. Public participation is the purpose of a public hearing, which is required prior to the adoption of a local law or ordinance and in other cases, as specified by law.

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The Town Board believes that a public comment period should be scheduled for each meeting. However, it believes that it is important that all periods of public input -- whether they be public hearings or a public comment period -- should abide by a set of rules that are designed to ensure that good order and civility is maintained at meetings. The purpose of the public comment period is to discuss Town business only.

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Deleted: "Points of Order", questions, and comments before or after that period will not be recognized.

Individual problems, concerns or questions of the public should initially be addressed to the Town Supervisor's office, rather than be brought up at Town Board meetings. This will allow the Supervisor to gather the necessary information and/or personnel to address those concerns. If those concerns are not addressed to the satisfaction of the individual, then redress by the entire Board may be the next option.

In an effort to help the Town conduct efficient and productive meetings, the Town of Manlius, on \_\_\_\_\_, adopted the following policy on Rules of Decorum at Public Meetings, which were last amended on \_\_\_\_\_.

Deleted: April 11, 2007  
Deleted: January 2, 2008

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD/PUBLIC HEARING/PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING**

1. The Supervisor, or in his absence, the Deputy Supervisor, is the Chairman of every Town Board meeting. As such, it is the Supervisor right and responsibility to direct meetings and make decisions that will, in his/her judgment, inure to the benefit of all those attending.
2. Except for the case of Public Hearings or special Public Information Meetings, the public comment portion of the meeting is the only time when comments will be permitted by the public, unless a person is recognized by the Supervisor.
3. The public comment period is an opportunity for the public to address Town business.  
Examples of Town business, includes, but is not limited to: action items before the Town Board; information that has general applicability to the Town; issues or concerns related to Town operations; issues or concerns related to Town property or infrastructure.  
Examples of things that are NOT Town business, includes, but is not limited to: private property matters; neighbor disputes; Village, County, State or Federal issues that do not affect the Town of Manlius; litigated or disputed matters that have been settled to the Town's satisfaction.

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## AGENDA

While an agenda is not required, the Town Board believes to the extent possible, an agenda should be prepared before a regularly scheduled meeting. The agenda is prepared by the Town Manager. Items for the agenda shall be given to the Town Manager by the Friday before the next regularly scheduled Town Board meeting.

## TOWN BOARD

1. Town Board members must be recognized by the Town Supervisor before making motions and speaking.
2. A member, once recognized, shall not be interrupted when speaking unless to call the member to order. If a member, while speaking, is called to order, such member shall cease speaking until the question of order is determined, and, if in order, such member shall be permitted to proceed.
3. There is no limit on the number of times a member may speak on a question.
4. A member may, with permission of the Town Supervisor, interrupt a speaker during their remarks, but only for the purpose of clarification and information.
5. All members shall observe the commonly accepted rules of courtesy, decorum, dignity and good taste.

Nothing contained herein shall be construed to limit the rights and responsibilities of a Town Board to conduct meetings under the Laws of the State of New York and the United State of America. It is the intent of the Town Board to offer general guidelines that it believes will make attending Board meetings more effective, efficient and enjoyable to the Members of the Board and the public in general.