

Burgettstown Borough Public Meeting Policy

The Burgettstown Borough hereby approves as and for part of its open meetings policy, the following restrictions and guidelines intended to promote fair and equitable participation by the citizens of Burgettstown Borough and insure that the Council's time is adequately devoted to the public interests and the business at hand.

At each regular and special meeting of the Burgettstown Borough, the citizens of the Borough may comment or ask questions of the Council, subject to reasonable constraints. Individuals or group representatives who have submitted a request in writing at least two weeks prior to the stated meeting will have 5 minutes of time to address the Council during the public participation portion of the meeting. If there is a group of individuals speaking on the same subject, a representative be chosen to speak. Audience comments will not be permitted following the public participation portion of the meeting; therefore, we ask that you please review the agenda for any item(s) you may wish to discuss. We have, in the past, had individuals direct comments to the Council that were not correct or could not be documented. For that reason, we ask that your information be to the point and factual. Although we may not be able to answer your question at this meeting, we will refer your request or recommendation to the proper department for any necessary action or response.

Individuals appearing before the Council are expected to follow the following guidelines:

1. Address the Council only at the appropriate times as indicated on the agenda (i.e. at the time for "Public Comment" on the agenda, or for specific listed agenda item) and when recognized by the President of the Borough Council.
2. Any person wishing to address the Council at a public meeting must request to do so in writing at least 2 weeks prior to the stated meeting by writing a letter to the Council listing a record of their name and address, as well as the topic which the speaker wishes to address.
3. When addressing Council at the meeting, please identify oneself by full name and address, and be brief. Ordinarily, such comments shall be limited to 3 minutes. In unusual circumstances, and when the person is given advance notice of the need to speak for a longer period of time, such person may be allowed to speak for more than 3 minutes.
4. The President of the Burgettstown Borough Council shall control public comments to enforce time limits and to reduce respective comments.
5. No more than 20 minutes shall be devoted to public comment, except by majority approval of the Council.
6. The President of the Burgettstown Borough Council shall have the authority to determine procedural matters regarding public participation not otherwise defined in this policy.
7. Priority for presentation shall be given to individuals who have not previously addressed the Council.

8. If addressing the Council on a specific agenda item, all comments shall be limited germane to set agenda items.

9. Speaker shall not make charges and complaints against individual employees or officers of the Borough. Such charges or complaints will only be accepted in writing and will not be considered unless signed by the person making the charges.

10. The President of the Burgettstown Borough Council reserves the right to terminate any public comment if it becomes hostile, defamatory, argumentative, threatens the public safety or is disruptive to the meeting.

11. The Council will not necessarily respond to public comments at the time they are made. Consideration will be given to public comments and further research may be required before the Council takes any action concerning any comments.

12. There shall not be any cell phone use by either the public or members of the Council during the meetings, except as otherwise authorized by the Council and/or its designee.

The Burgettstown Borough Secretary shall record public comments in summary form only in the minutes of the meeting. Petitions, or written correspondence presented to the Council shall be presented to the Council at the next regular scheduled Council meeting.

The Council will permit recording of the proceedings of a public meeting of the Council in a manner that does not interrupt the proceedings, inhibit the conduct of the meeting, or distract Council members or other observers present at the meeting. Meetings or portions of meetings which are permitted by the law to be closed to the public may not be recorded by the public or any other individual or Council Members. The President may designate a reasonable location for recording equipment or camera location, may restrict the movements of individuals who are using recording equipment if said movements become disruptive to the meeting, or may take such other steps as are deemed necessary to preserve decorum and facilitate the meeting. The President shall have the authority to determine when any recording device or camera interferes with the conduct of the meeting and may order that an interfering device or camera be removed.