Town Of Winslow, Maine

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TOWN COUNCIL **RESOLUTION NO. 21-2025**

A RESOLUTION
Providing for: To approve and adopt the comprehensive rules and procedures outlined in the attached document, which will govern public comment periods during all Town Council meetings.

WHEREAS, these guidelines are designed to ensure a constructive and inclusive environment for community input and engagement, now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council of the Town of Winslow to approve and adopt the comprehensive rules and procedures outlined in the attached document, which will govern public comment periods during all Town Council meetings.

SPONSORED BY: Fran Hudson

IN THE TOWN COUNCIL

August 11, 2025 First and Only Reading, _____ _____
adopted rejected

_____
Town Clerk

APPROVED: August 11, 2025

CHAIRMAN: _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Rules and procedures governing public comment periods.

Town council meetings are conducted to carry on the official business of the Town of Winslow. All meetings of the town council, except executive sessions, are open to the public. The public is invited to attend all town council meetings, and to participate in them consistent with the provisions of this policy and with the exception of council workshops, which are primarily intended for the council and staff to review and discuss items prior to their appearance on a regular town council meeting agenda. Public comment is a limited forum designed to allow residents to provide input on specific town matters and to ensure that constituent voices are heard.

~~The intent of this policy is to allow a fair and adequate opportunity for the public to be heard, to express opinions and concerns related to the business of the town, and to provide adequate time for the town council to obtain information and opinions on subjects before it while ensuring that the time allowed for public input does not interfere with addressing the scheduled agenda.~~

To carry out ~~these purposes,~~ the intent of this policy, the following rules and procedures shall govern the public comment period at all Winslow Town Council meetings:

(A) General Public Comment:

A public comment period shall be conducted at all regular town council meetings,at which time citizens will have the opportunity to be heard on matters directly relating to Town business that are ~~not included~~ on the ~~regular~~ agenda. Comments on topics not on the agenda will not be allowed during the public comment period. The public comment period shall be held ~~after~~ before all Council business has been conducted at the ~~end~~ beginning of the meeting. ~~and before any executive sessions.~~

Individuals addressing the council during the public comment period will limit their comments to up to (3) three minutes per meeting. The (3) three minutes per individual will be strictly enforced. Individuals cannot give their (3) three minutes to other individuals to allow someone to speak for additional time. The entire public comment period will be limited to 30 minutes, unless extended by a majority vote of the Council upon request by the Chair or any Councilor. ~~The council will not engage in dialogue with the public during this time.~~ The public comment period is intended for public input only. Council responses are not required, and the session should not become a back-and-forth discussion or debate. ~~Individuals requesting further information should leave their contact information on the sign in sheet which will include the person's name, ward or address and their contact information.~~ · Councilors may take issues under advisement and address them during the meeting when appropriate.

A general public comment period will not be conducted at workshops, emergencymeetings, or special meetings of the Town Council.

~~Residents who are unable to attend in person may submit written comments to be read aloud during the meeting. These comments are subject to the~~

~~same time limits and topic restrictions as in-person comments. All written comments will be read after in-person comments, if time allows.~~

~~**(B) Addressing Specific Agenda Items:**~~

~~In addition, public comments will be allowed during the meeting on those items requiring a public hearing and on other items appearing on the agenda. Individuals addressing the council during the public hearing period will limit their comments to up to (5) five minutes. The (5) five minutes per individual will be strictly enforced. Individuals cannot give their (5) five minutes to other individuals to allow someone to speak for additional time. These comments should must be directly related to the specific agenda item being addressed. Public comments will not be taken during workshops unless a request is made to the presiding officer by an individual councilor, the town manager, or a department head.~~

(C) Rules Governing Public Comment Periods:

a. Speakers must be recognized by the Chair before speaking.

b. Since meetings are broadcast and recorded, persons wishing to speak must use the public podium, ~~and must preface their comments by~~ and ~~giving~~ give their full name and their ~~ward~~ district or address, although an address is not required.

c. Comments must be limited to issues ~~or concerns directly related to Winslow municipal government~~ on the current agenda. Public comment on matters not related to the town's business will not be allowed, ~~so~~ as to ~~make sure~~ ensure ~~that~~ all meetings are carried out in a productive and efficient ~~time~~ manner ~~and~~ in keeping with the interests of ~~all~~ who attend and participate in a council meeting.

d. All comments and questions must be directed to the Chair or through the Chair.

e. The public comment period is intended for public input only. Council responses are not required, and the session should not become a back-and-forth discussion or debate, nor are Councilors required to answer questions or to respond in any manner.

f. Councilors may take issues and comments under advisement and may address them during the meeting when appropriate during discussion of the specific agenda item.

g. Per state law, found in 30-A MRS 2702, complaints or charges

~~from the public~~ made ~~against~~ an individual employee will not be permitted or discussed in public session. We encourage complainants to address such comments by directly contacting the town manager for follow-up and review.

h. Comments related to the following will be ruled out of order by the presiding officer: Specific situations that are in litigation, including those in which the town is a party (issues of a criminal or legal nature should be addressed with the Winslow Police Department); personnel matters.

i. If a resident wishes to address issues not on the agenda, they are encouraged to contact their district Councilor, the Council Chair, At-Large Councilors, or any other Council member.

j. If the Councilor deems the issue appropriate for further discussion, it may be placed on a future agenda, at which time public comments will be permitted.

(D) Decorum

a. Meetings are to be conducted with order and efficiency.

b. Civility and proper decorum are expected at all times to allow for the proper ability to conduct town business. Individuals are required and expected to conduct themselves in a respectful manner to everyone in attendance. Swearing, shouting, etc. will not be tolerated

c. Any individual who engages in disruptive or disorderly behavior that interferes with the meeting will be asked to stop. If the behavior continues, the individual may be asked to leave or removed from the meeting, if necessary.

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Individuals addressing the Council during the public comment period will limit their comments to up to (3) three minutes per meeting. The (3) three minutes per individual will be strictly enforced. Individuals cannot give their (3) three minutes to other individuals to allow someone to speak for additional time. The entire public comment period will be limited to 30 minutes, unless extended by a majority vote of the Council upon request by the Chair or any Councilor. The public comment period is intended for public input only. Council responses are not required, and the session should not become a back-and-forth discussion or debate. Councilors may take issues under advisement and address them during the meeting when appropriate.

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(B) Rules Governing Public Comment Periods:

a. Speakers must be recognized by the Chair before speaking.

b. Since meetings are broadcast and recorded, persons wishing to speak must use the public podium and give their full name and their district or address, although an address is not required.

c. Comments must be limited to issues on the current agenda. Public comment on matters not related to the town's business will not be allowed, as to ensure all meetings are carried out in a productive and efficient manner, in keeping with the interests of who attend and participate in a Council meeting.

d. All comments and questions must be directed to the Chair or through the Chair.

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