

**VILLAGE OF UPPER BROOKVILLE**  
**RULES OF DECORUM AT PUBLIC MEETINGS**

The Village of Upper Brookville Board of Trustees (the “Board”) meetings are required to be held in public for the purpose of allowing the public to observe the meetings. New York Village Law does not require that the Board 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.

The Board believes that a public comment period should be scheduled for each meeting. However, it is important all periods of public input - whether they be public hearings or a public comment period - should abide by rules designed to ensure good order, efficiency and civility.

The public comment period is for the purpose of discussing Village business only. Individual problems, concerns or questions of the public should initially be addressed to the Village Clerk or the Mayor, rather than be brought up at Board meetings. This will allow time to consult the right people gather the necessary information to address those concerns. If those concerns are not addressed to the satisfaction of the individual, then redress by the entire Board of Trustees may be the next option.

The Board adopted this policy by resolution on March 27, 2017:

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

1. By statute, the Mayor, or in his/her absence, the Deputy Mayor, is the presiding officer over every Board meeting. It is the presiding officer’s right and responsibility to direct meetings and make decisions that will, in his/her judgment, inure to the benefit of all those attending;
2. The Village will endeavor to provide, to the extent practical, a Public Comment Period that will be governed by rules set forth in this policy;
3. Except for the case of Public Hearings or special Public Comment Information Meetings, the Public Comment portion of the regular meeting is the only time when comments will be permitted by the public, unless a person is otherwise recognized by the presiding officer;
4. The Public Comment Period is an opportunity for the public to address Village business;
  - Examples of Village business include, but are not limited to; action items before the Village Board; information related to Village Business and issues or concerns related to Village operations; and issues and concerns related to Village Property or infrastructure.
  - Examples of things that are NOT Village business include, but not limited to; private property matters; neighbor disputes; Village, County; State or Federal issues that do not affect the Village or litigated or disputed matters that have been settled to the Village’s satisfaction. In addition, comments related to individual employee personnel issues, claims against the Village or disputes concerning the award or administration of specific contracts will not be allowed in this forum, as there are other avenues to pursue these matters. The presiding officer of the meeting shall determine if the matter being discussed is Village business.
  - If, in the opinion of the presiding officer, comments by a member of the public during the Public Comment Period, Public Hearing, or Special Public Information Meeting are not related to Village Business or in any other way violates these Rules, the presiding officer will notify the speaker to either re-direct his or her comments to Village business or otherwise follow the Rules. If the individual persists to violate these Rules, he or she will be asked to stop speaking.
5. If a resident and/ or a person owning property within the Village desires to speak during the Public Comment Period he or she shall so notate on the sign-in sheet available upon entrance of the Board meeting room along with a description of the topic they wish to discuss along with contact information. The presiding officer will determine if the subject reflects Village business as set forth in Number 5 above.

6. The Public Comment Period, Public Hearing or Special Public Information meetings are designed for comments only, not for question and answers. At the appropriate time any questions, comments and/or opinions will be taken by the Board. Where appropriate, Board members may respond directly or the presiding officer may direct the question, comment or opinion to the appropriate person to respond.
7. Each speaker during the Public Comment Period, Public Hearing or Special Information Meeting must state his or her name, address, and the subject he or she will be addressing.
8. Each speaker during the Public Comment Period, Public Hearing or Special Information Meeting may speak once subject to a time limit determined and enforced by the presiding officer. When the time limit is up, the speaker will be asked by the presiding officer to wrap up their comments. Any request of extension of this time limitation must be made to the presiding officer who has the discretion to extend the time to speak. In the case of Public Hearings, and at the discretion of the presiding officer, speakers may be allowed to speak a second time, once everyone has been allowed to speak once. The Village Clerk is responsible for ensuring the time limit for each speaker is not exceeded.
9. The presiding officer shall determine the allotted time for speakers, and shall do so before the start of public comment.
10. If there are a large number of speakers for one particular item, it would be helpful if a representative could be selected to speak for the entire group. If not, comments on a single topic should not be repetitive in nature; if comments were already made by another speaker, please state agreement with the prior speaker(s) and do not repeat what has already been stated.
11. Public comments will be made in the order in which individuals signed up, and are to be directed to the Board as a whole. Attendees should not address the audience. Discussion between speakers and attendees of the Public Comment Period is prohibited, unless directed by the presiding officer. The public comment period is intended to provide an opportunity to hear members of the community.
12. Speakers should present their remarks in a courteous manner.
13. The presiding officer will moderate the comment period. The Board reserves the right to ban from public comment persons who engage in a consistent pattern of disruptive behavior at Board meetings. This may include use of slurs, derogatory comments, or any other conduct, whether physical, verbal or written directed at another person or based upon another person's race, color, origin, sex, religion, sexual orientation, disability or age.
14. The presiding officer may interrupt or terminate an individual's statement when it is too lengthy, personally directed, defamatory, abusive, obscene, repetitive, irrelevant or the speaker persists in improper conduct or remarks. The Board as a whole shall have the final decision in determining the appropriateness of all such rulings.
15. If after a final warning, the speaker refuses to step down, the presiding officer may have the person removed from the Board meeting room.
16. Nothing in this policy shall prohibit the removal of any person who willfully disrupts a meeting to the extent that orderly conduct is seriously compromised.
17. Because of the diversity of issues, members of the Board will not respond to public comment. Instead, issues may be recorded and referred to the proper staff person for follow-up.
18. The presiding officer must approve any audio/visual or similar equipment to be used to support the comments or issues of a speaker at least 24 hours before the regularly scheduled Board meeting.
19. Placards, banners, or other signs are not permitted in meeting rooms, nor are the distribution of flyers, or other media.