

Town of River Bend

Public Hearing Policy

Overview- To comply with North Carolina law, the council is required to conduct a public hearing prior to taking action on some matters. The Council, at its discretion, may also conduct a public hearing to gather input on a matter. The purpose of a public hearing is to give the public an opportunity to express their views, comments or opinions to the council. It is a time for the council to listen to the public. The following rules have been established to maintain order and decorum during a public hearing. Furthermore, these rules are designed to ensure fairness to each speaker by establishing rules in advance that will be applied equally to each speaker in all public hearings.

I. Public Hearing

Public hearings shall be reserved as an item of business on the agenda for the council's regular session, which is currently held on the 3rd Thursday of each month. All public hearings shall be subject to the following guidelines:

1. Prior to the start of the hearing, persons wishing to address the council will register on a sign-up sheet stationed by the meeting room door. Prior to beginning the hearing, the Mayor will collect the sign-up sheet and recognize speakers in the order that they registered. Speakers will address the council from the lectern and will be asked to provide their name and address for the record.
2. Each speaker shall be limited to a maximum time of three (3) minutes. Each speaker will only be allowed to speak once during the hearing. A staff member shall serve as timekeeper and will promptly announce when the speaker's time has expired.
3. No time may be yielded or transferred from one speaker to another. In order to avoid repetition and delay, groups of people supporting the same position are encouraged to designate a spokesperson for the group.
4. The hearing is not intended to require the council and/or any staff to answer any impromptu questions. The council will not take action on an item presented during the hearing. Upon completion of the hearing and when appropriate, the council may refer inquiries made during the hearing to the Town Manager or an appropriate staff member. If necessary, the item may be added to the agenda of a future meeting, thereby providing the staff an opportunity to research the item and provide data to the council for consideration and review.
5. Speakers will address comments to the entire council as a whole and not one individual member. Discussions between speakers and members of the audience will not be permitted during the hearing.
6. Speakers who have prepared written remarks are encouraged to leave a copy of such remarks with the Town Clerk. Speakers who have materials that they want distributed to the council related to the

item they plan to discuss during the hearing, shall provide eight (8) copies of those documents to the Town Clerk prior to the start of the hearing. The Clerk shall distribute the copies to the Council, Attorney, and Town Manager and retain one copy for the record.

7. Speakers shall be courteous in their language and presentation. Profanity or other inappropriate language or gestures will not be tolerated.

8. In order to provide for the maintenance of order and decorum in the conduct of the hearing, the Mayor may declare "out-of-order" any person who fails to comply with this policy. The Mayor shall caution any such person to abide by the provisions of this policy. Refusal to do so shall be grounds for removal of the speaker from the meeting.

- Adopted 12-14-17