

BEDH PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All regular and special meetings of the Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School Committee shall be open to the public. Executive sessions will be held only as prescribed by the Statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The School Committee desires individuals to attend its meetings so that they may become better acquainted with District operations and the school programming. In addition, the Committee would like the opportunity to hear public comment, and it will allow public comment when indicated on the agenda.

Public comment is not a discussion, debate, or dialogue between individuals and the School Committee. It is an individual's opportunity to express an opinion on issues within the School Committee's authority.

To ensure the ability of the School Committee to conduct the District's business in an orderly manner, the following rules and procedures are adopted:

1. At the start of a regularly scheduled School Committee meeting for which the agenda calls for a public comment period, individuals will sign in for an opportunity to speak during public comment. The public comment segment shall not exceed 15 minutes in the aggregate unless permitted by the Chair. All speakers are encouraged to present their remarks in a respectful manner, addressing their comments to the Chair.
2. Sign up instructions will be provided for those who wish to participate in Public Comment.
3. Speakers will be allowed up to three (3) minutes to present their material, must speak from the place indicated by the Chair, for example at a particular table, and must begin their comments by stating their name and address, including the name of the town/city. For remote meetings, public comments shall be submitted in advance to the Chair and relayed by the Chair during the meeting. The presiding Chair may permit extension of the time limit, in extenuating circumstances.
4. Topics for discussion should be limited to those items within the School Committee's scope of authority. The authority of the School Committee primarily concerns the review and approval of the budget of the district's public schools, the performance of the Superintendent, and the educational goals and policies of the district's public schools. In

ORIGINAL ADOPTION: 1/6/09

REVISION: 12/16/21

FIRST READING: 12/16/08; 5/10/11 (TABLED 9/13/11); 1/12/21

SECOND READING: 1/6/09; 2/9/21

ADOPTION: 7/21/09; 2/9/21

REVIEW:

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public session in the Committee will not hear personal complaints of school personnel nor against any members of the school community which are outside the scope of the School Committee's responsibility.

5. Improper conduct will not be allowed. Defamatory, improper, or abusive remarks are always out of order. If a speaker persists in improper conduct or defamatory, improper, or abusive remarks, the Chair may terminate that individual's privilege of address. Defamatory remarks shall mean remarks that have been adjudicated defamatory. Improper and/or abusive remarks shall mean obscenities, vulgarities, threats, and fighting words or remarks likely to provoke a violent reaction.
6. To ensure that matters not on the agenda are not debated without proper notice, the members of the School Committee will not engage in dialogue with members of the public during public comment, without permission from the Chair.
7. The School Committee will not vote on any item brought up in public comment for which no vote is scheduled on the posted agenda, unless directed to do so by the Chair due to unforeseen circumstances.
8. Written comments longer than three (3) minutes may be presented to the presiding Chair before or after the meeting. All remarks will be addressed through the Chair of the meeting. Comments made during the public comment portion of the meeting do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the School Committee.
9. No person shall address a meeting of a public body without permission of the chair, and all persons shall, at the request of the chair, be silent. No person shall disrupt the proceedings of a meeting of a public body. If, after clear warning from the chair, a person continues to disrupt the proceedings, the chair may order the person to withdraw from the meeting and if the person does not withdraw, the chair may authorize a constable or other officer, or the meeting host for any remote attendee, to remove the person from the meeting. (note: with the exception of the underlined text, this language is from M.G.L c 30A:20G.)

CROSS REFS: BE, SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS
BEDA, NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. c. 30A 18-25

ORIGINAL ADOPTION: 1/6/09

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