

*City of Whiteville*  
*North Carolina*



*Public Comments Policy*


The City of Whiteville encourages all citizens to participate in the public process and values their input, ideas, and suggestions. The City holds Public Comment periods at each of its regular scheduled meetings held every month; regular scheduled meetings are held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. The City Council of Whiteville is resolved to be fair and equitable to all citizens and to maintain order and decorum during the conduct of public meetings. For these reasons, the City Council of Whiteville establishes the following policy for Rules of Procedure for the Public Comments Period.

1. This policy shall not place limitations as to who may or may not address the Council.
2. Speakers are encouraged to be courteous and respectful of one another and of Council and Staff. Vulgar language, profanity, inappropriate gestures, insults, personal attacks and/or accusations are not considered behavior that qualifies under the definition of decorum.
3. Each speaker will have a maximum of three minutes to speak. As the presiding officer, the Mayor has the discretion to grant additional time in special circumstances.
4. Speakers shall address Council only on issues that are related to the jurisdiction of the Whiteville City Council.
5. In order to avoid repetitiveness and exceeding room capacity, groups shall elect a spokesperson to speak on their behalf.
6. Any related documents, printed comments, or materials the speaker wishes to distribute to Council shall be provided to the City Clerk. Written comments or letters, to include persons not present, will not be read aloud without prior approval from the presiding officer. As the presiding officer, the Mayor has the discretion to deviate from this general rule should he deem it necessary.
7. Speakers will address the Council from a designated podium or table and begin their remarks by stating his or her name and address to Council. However, should the speaker refuse to provide his or her name and/or address, this refusal will not disqualify the speaker from addressing Council.
8. Signs no larger than two square feet are permitted provided that they do not block the view of spectators, staff, and City Council members. Signs shall not be mounted on a pole, stick, or handle. Signs shall be made of paper, card stock, poster board, or cardboard. All sign surfaces shall be flat, non-reflective materials. Signs shall not be shaken, waved or moved vigorously so as to disrupt the meeting.

9. No person shall enter the area where Council is seated except upon the specific invitation of the Mayor or other presiding Council Member.
10. The Public Comment period is not intended to require Council to answer impromptu questions or to participate in a debate with Speakers. The Council will not take action on an item presented during the Public Comment period. When the Council deems appropriate, the Council may refer inquiries and items discussed during Public Comments to the City Manager for further follow-up.
11. Speakers will not discuss matters regarding the candidacy of any person seeking public office, including the candidacy of the person addressing the Council.
12. The Mayor retains the right to stop any speaker who raises an issue or comments that are not within the jurisdiction of the Whiteville City Council.
13. Speakers in need of interpreters or other special accommodations must contact the City Clerk's office at least one week in advance of the meeting. Reasonable accommodations will be provided free of charge.
14. The Mayor may remove disruptive speakers/attendees from a meeting and the Mayor and Council retain the right to override this policy as they deem necessary in the case of an emergency or other unforeseen circumstances.

This policy is adopted this day of June 28, 2016, and is effective immediately.

  
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Terry Mann, Mayor

ATTEST:   
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Bonnie Williams, City Clerk