

MEADVILLE AREA WATER AUTHORITY  
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS

The Board recognizes the value of public comment and the importance of involving members of the public in Board meetings. The Board also recognizes its responsibility for proper governance of the Authority and the need to conduct its business in an orderly and efficient manner.

The Board shall establish guidelines to govern public participation in Board meetings necessary to conduct its meeting and to maintain order. In order to permit fair and orderly expression of public comment, the Board shall provide an opportunity at each open meeting of the Board for ratepayers to comment on matters of concern, official action or deliberation before the Board prior to official action by the Board.

The Board shall require that all public comments be made at the beginning of each meeting.

If the Board determines there is not sufficient time at a meeting for public comments, the comment period may be deferred to the next regular meeting or to a special meeting occurring before the next regular meeting.

The presiding officer at each public Board meeting shall follow Board policy for the conduct of public meetings. Where his/her ruling is disputed, it may be overruled by a majority of those Board members present and voting.

Whenever issues identified by the participant are subject to remediation under policies and procedures of the Board, they shall be referred to the administration and dealt with in accordance with those policies and procedures and the organizational structure of the Authority.

1. The Board requires that public participants be ratepayers of this Authority or anyone representing a group in the community, any representative of a firm eligible to bid on materials or services solicited by the Board or any Authority employee.
2. All individuals wishing to participate in a public Board meeting shall contact the Authority manager three (3) days in advance of the meeting. Name and address of the participant, group affiliation, if appropriate, and topic to be discussed must be provided. No non-ratepayer will be allowed to speak at a public meeting unless allowed by special approval by the Board. Multiple requests by different persons representing the same group will not be honored. Accordingly, groups wishing to address the Board should select a spokesperson who can express the views of the collective body.
3. Participants must be recognized by the presiding officer and must preface their comments by an announcement of their name, address, and group affiliation if appropriate.
4. The Board retains the right to refuse permission to any individual to speak at an open meeting to address the same subject discussed at a previous meeting.
5. Each statement made by a participant shall be limited to three (3) minutes duration. The Board will not permit any speaker to yield time to another speaker.

6. No participant may speak during the meeting more than once on the same topic, unless all others who wish to speak on that topic have been heard.
7. All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board members individually.
8. The portion of the meeting during which participation of the public is invited to speak shall be limited to thirty (30) minutes.
9. Electronic recording devices and cameras, in addition to those used as official recording devices, shall be permitted at public meetings under guidelines established by the Board.
10. No placards or banners will be permitted within the meeting room.
11. The meeting agenda and all pertinent documents shall be available to the press and public at the meetings.
12. The presiding officer may:
  - a. Interrupt or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, threatening, derogatory, obscene, or irrelevant
  - b. Request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum.
  - c. Request the assistance of law enforcement officers to remove a disorderly person when his/her conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting.
  - d. Call a recess or adjourn to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting.
  - e. Waive these rules with the approval of the Board.

Authority: PA Statute 65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 701 et seq