

## **Public Participation in Commission Meeting**

All meetings of the Fannin County Board of Commissioners are open to the public. The Fannin County Board of Commissioners believe that public involvement is an essential element in building a successful and transparent Government. The Board welcomes visitors and will hear any interested citizen and/or employee of the County pursuant to the guidelines outlined below. Public comment will not exceed a total of thirty (30) minutes.

Procedures of Public Comment:

Speakers will be given up to three (3) minutes to speak. The thirty minute time limit and/or three minute maximum per speaker may be extended by the chairman.

Members of the public who wish to speak at official meetings and work sessions of Fannin County Commission are expected to adhere to the rules of decorum as outlined within.

## **Decorum**

During all meetings members are expected to behave with dignity and conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner. All remarks should be directed to the chair and not to individual commissioners, Staff, or citizens in attendance. A commissioner should not speak at a meeting until recognized by the chair and all remarks should be addressed to the motion or agenda item being discussed. Personal remarks are inappropriate and should be ruled out of order by the chair.

*(new edition of Roberts Rule's of Order pg 260) taken from ACCG Handbook*

## **Citizen Decorum**

Citizens who attend meetings or comment on agenda items at a meeting do not have the right to interrupt or heckle commissioners, staff or other citizens who have been granted an opportunity to address the commissioners. Citizens should be held to the same to the same standards of decorum that apply to the commissioners. That is, inappropriate or offensive remarks and personal attacks should not be allowed. Inappropriate behavior can be ruled out of order. If a citizen becomes or disrupts the meeting, the presiding officer may recess the meeting or have a deputy or other law enforcement officer remove the disruptive person from the meeting, if necessary, in order to restore order. A person who knowingly commits any act that prevents or disrupts a lawful meeting may be found guilty of a misdemeanor. *Taken from ACCG Handbook with Georgia Law O.C.G.A 16-11-34 cited.*

*(O.C.G.A 16-11-34)*

*(a) A person who recklessly or knowingly commits any act which may reasonably be expected to prevent or disrupt a lawful meeting, gathering, or procession is guilty of a misdemeanor.*

*(b) This code section shall not be construed to affect the powers delegated to counties or to municipal corporations to pass laws to punish disorderly conduct within their respective limits.*

## **Meeting Rules**

The following rules apply for all meetings.

1. The speaker must begin the remarks by stating his/her name, address and organization represented, if any.
2. The speaker must address all remarks to the Chairman, and not to any individuals.
3. The speaker's comments must be pertinent to the item or items for which the speaker has signed up.
4. The speaker must refrain from personal comments, political comments, and must avoid repetition and argument.
5. After the Fannin County Commission begins discussing agenda items, only the Chairman, the commissioners and person required to speak by Fannin County Commission will be allowed to speak.
6. Except for the unusual circumstances and only after a vote by a majority of the Fannin County Commissioners will a person who has not signed up in advance of the meeting will be allowed to speak.
7. All speakers must conduct themselves in a respectful manner, and refrain from vulgar language and disrespectful comments.
8. Remarks shall end when the speaker's allotted time has expired.
9. Questions from the board members may be asked for clarifications; however, no person from the floor shall be permitted to enter into any discussion either directly or through a member of the board. Please note that the Board during Public Comment will make no decisions.
10. No person shall be allowed to disrupt or interfere with procedures.
11. Any person who violates any of these may be removed from the meeting.