

Resolution 23-12

A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE ESTABLISHED GUIDELINES FOR CITIZEN COMMENTS DURING ALL PUBLIC MEETINGS FOR THE CITY OF RIDGETOP, TENNESSEE

Whereas, the need to formulate guidelines for citizens comments in all Public Hearings and meetings conducted by Board of Mayor and Alderman, has been deemed necessary, and

Whereas, such guidelines have been developed and is incorporated herein and attached as Exhibit 1 to this Resolution; and

Whereas, it is in the best interest of the City of Ridgetop and the Board of Mayor and Alderman that such Guidelines be adopted;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMAN OF THE CITY OF RIDGETOP, TENNESSEE THAT THE "GUIDELINES FOR CITIZEN COMMENTS" BE ADOPTED AS SHOWN IN EXHIBIT 1 OF THIS RESOLUTION.

THIS RESOLUTION IS EFFECTIVE UPON ADOPTION, THE WELFARE OF THE CITIZENS REQUIRING IT.

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Tim Shaw, Mayor

Adopted: 15th day of August 2023

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Kelly Rider, City Recorder

CITY OF RIDGETOP, TENNESSEE  
GUIDELINES FOR CITIZEN COMMENTS

The Board of Mayor and Alderman welcomes citizen participation at its regular meetings and provides an opportunity for citizens to address the Board during a meeting. The Board also conducts study sessions /workshops which are generally scheduled during a regular or special called meeting of the Board. All meetings of any Board of the City are open to the public and are noticed in accordance with the Tennessee Code Annotated.

1. BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMAN STUDY SESSIONS/WORKSHOP

During a study session/workshop, no binding action may be taken, and the purpose of the study session/workshop is for the Board members and staff to present material and for the Board to have time to discuss and consider issues and matters of the City in detail before it takes action on such issues.

Because the Study Session/Workshop is designed for discussion among the members of the Board and staff, citizen comments shall not be allowed unless the Mayor or presiding Alderman recognizes a citizen or interested party or if an Alderman requests that a citizen be recognized. If so recognized, the same "Procedures and Rules of Decorum" listed below for all Board meetings shall apply.

2. BOARD MEETINGS OF MAYOR AND ALDERMAN AND OTHER BOARD MEETINGS

An opportunity for citizen comments may be listed on the agenda as "Citizen Comments". This is the only time set aside for citizens to address the Board on any issues. Citizen comments are not to be confused with a public hearing, which is a formal proceeding, conducted for the purpose of discussing a specific topic pursuant to the Tennessee Code Annotated, such as the City budget, rezoning, etc. Anyone desiring to address the Board must adhere to the following "Procedures and Rules of Decorum" as specified below.

"Procedures and Rules of Decorum":

- a. Citizen comments are limited to three (3) minutes in length. If the citizen speaker has any documents or papers he/she desires to share with the Board, he/she must provide a copy to the City Recorder three business days prior to the meeting.
- b. All comments should be directed to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen as a body rather than to any particular member or staff member or audience.
- c. The speaker shall refrain from using:
  - i. Profanity;

- ii. Language likely to incite violence or outbursts from the audience;
  - iii. Language that is disrupted to the orderly process of the meeting;
  - iv. Engaging in conversations with individual Board members or staff members, making comments of a personal nature regarding others;
  - iv. Shouting, yelling, or screaming.
- d. The mayor or presiding Board member is responsible for maintaining order and decorum and shall not allow any speaker to make personal attacks or inflammatory comments and has the authority to ask the speaker to refrain from further comments and to step down. Should the individual speaker fail to comply, he/she may be asked to leave, or if necessary, escorted from the public meeting.
  - e. Speakers shall not continue to address the Board once they have left the podium and shall not engage in conversation with Board members from their seat.
  - f. Speaker shall not anticipate Board members entering into any dialogue with them as the citizen comments are not intended for a discussion between the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and will not be used for that purpose.

### **3. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

When an agenda item requires a public hearing pursuant to the Tennessee Code Annotated, the Mayor and/or presiding Alderman will open and facilitate the public hearing. Public comments during a public hearing are to be made in the same manner as the citizen comment portion of any agenda. Reasonable limitations on the number of speakers and time allowed to speak may be imposed by the Mayor and/or presiding Alderman in order to keep the meeting moving. Public hearings are held to gather data and opinions from the citizenry that facilitate the decision-making of the Board. All Rules of Decorum specified herein shall apply to any comments during and for a public hearing.

### **4. RULES OF DECORUM FOR AUDIENCE/ATTENDEES**

Any member of the audience and a meeting attendee shall:

- a. Refrain from commenting, clapping, shouting, booing, or other inappropriate and/or disrupting behavior.
- b. Refrain from private conversations during any meeting.

- c. Refrain from addressing the Board members in individual conversation or making comments to individual Board members during the meeting.

The Mayor and/or presiding Alderman has the authority to address any meeting attendee(s) to comply with the rules of decorum, ask any attendee(s) to leave if necessary and/or be escorted from the public meeting.