

BEDH – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS

See also BEDB, KE, KEB

The primary purpose of Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School Board meetings is to conduct the business of the Board as it relates to school policies, programs and operations. The Board encourages residents to attend Board meetings so that they may become acquainted with the operation and programs of the schools. All official meetings of the Board shall be open to the press and public. However, the Board reserves the right to meet and to adjourn or recess a meeting at any time. The Board also reserves the right to enter non-public session at any time, in accordance with the provisions RSA 91-A:3.

In order to assure that persons who wish to appear before the Board may be heard and, at the same time, it may conduct its meetings properly and efficiently, the Board adopts as policy the following procedures and rules pertaining to public participation at Board meetings:

1. Members of the public shall not speak unless recognized by the Board Chair or other person presiding over the meeting.

2. The Board will provide a minimum of 30 minutes to hear public comments. This may be extended by a majority vote of the board. If insufficient speakers remain to fill the 30 minutes, the Board will close public comment.

3. Individual speakers will be allotted three (3) minutes per person. Speakers may not relinquish allotted time to another speaker. For specific meetings and/or specific agenda items, the Board may at the outset of the public comment period increase the individual time limit for all speakers (but may not decrease the aggregate time below 30 minutes).

3. The Chair will recognize speakers on a first come basis.

4. In order to comply with RSA 91-A:2 II, speakers shall identify themselves clearly for the record.

5. Members of the public shall limit comments only to those items appearing on the agenda. The Board will not entertain comments that do not appear on the agenda. The only exception shall be comments which address matters discussed by the Board at its last public meeting which were not on that meeting's agenda but were discussed by the Board under "New Business". Requests to address the board on specific matters (i.e. a request to have a matter placed on the agenda) should be presented to the Superintendent no less than seven (7) days prior to the next Board meeting and must set forth specifics on the subject to be addressed. The determination whether to place the matter on the agenda will be made consistent with policy BEDB. In the interest of preserving individual privacy and due process rights, the Board requests that comments (including complaints) regarding individual employees or students be directed to Superintendent in accord with the processes set forth in School Board Policies KE and KEB.

6. Any comments that do not adhere to the above, or which disrupt the official business of the Board may be ruled out of order by the Chair. Repeated disruption may

result in the individual being asked to leave the meeting. Obscene speech, comments of threatening, or other unprotected speech will not be tolerated.

7. The Board Chair may terminate the speaker's privilege of address if the speaker does not follow the above rules of order. Repeated violations may result in the intervention of law enforcement, with potential for criminal charges.

Persons appearing before the Board are reminded that members of the Board are without authority to act independently as individuals in official matters. Thus, in most instances, any board response will be deferred pending future consideration by the full Board. With the aim of maintain focus on the issues in discussion, it is desired that all speakers strive to adhere to ordinary norms of decorum and civility.

Legal Reference:

RSA 91-A:2, Meetings Open to Public

RSA 91-A:3, Non-Public Sessions

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