

Public Meeting Expectations and Rules Saratoga Springs City Council

Whereas, the people of Saratoga Springs are entitled to attend public meetings of their City Council and to overserve the conducting of public business in a civil and safe environment, the following rules and procedures will be followed at meetings of the Saratoga Springs City Council.

Whereas, public meetings are considered limited public forums under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, meaning that the government may regulate the time, place, and manner of speech at public meetings through the adoption of rules of procedure and conduct.

1. The Mayor, as presiding officer shall have, to the fullest extent allowed by New York State Law, the sole authority to regulate public comment and participation at any meeting, as they in their sole discretion see fit, including but not limited to, the authority to declare any person to be out of order for failure to follow their directives in this regard and/or the rules detailed herein.
2. Rules of Decorum and Order:
 - a. Members of the public shall not engage in behaviors which disrupt the conduct of the meeting. Prohibited conduct includes disorderly, disruptive, disturbing, delaying, or boisterous conduct which may include, but is not limited to, handclapping, stomping of feet, whistling, making noise, use of profane language or obscene gestures, yelling or similar demonstrations, which conduct interrupts, delays, or disturbs the peace and good order of the proceedings of the council.
 - b. Signs, placards, and distribution of literature are prohibited within the meeting room during a meeting.
3. Sergeant-at-Arms: The Saratoga Springs Police Department (SSPD), or any member of the SSPD, is designated as the Sergeant of Arms for the purpose of maintaining order at the Saratoga Springs City Council meetings.
4. Enforcement of Rules of Decorum:
 - a. Upon a violation of the rules of decorum, the presiding officer shall verbally request the person or persons violating a rule or rules to cease the conduct giving rise to the violation.
 - b. If the violation continues, the presiding officer shall verbally warn the person(s) that they may be required to leave the meeting room if the violation continues.
 - c. If the person(s) does not cease the violation the presiding officer shall declare the person to be out of order at which time the Sergeant-at-Arms may take steps to

remove the person(s) from the meeting room. If applicable, such person may be subject to civil and/or criminal penalties that may apply to their conduct.

5. Public Input

- a. Each Regular Meeting of the City Council will have thirty (30) minutes set aside for public input, to allow members of the public to address the City Council on matters relating to City of Saratoga Springs business.
- b. The Mayor shall have the sole discretion to extend the 30-minute time limit to accommodate a larger number of people who may wish to address the Council at a given meeting.
- c. Any person wishing to speak during Public Comment must sign their own name and address on a sign-up sheet for speakers prior to the commencement of the Meeting. At the commencement of the meeting the Clerk of the Board shall gather the sign-up sheet and deliver it to the presiding officer.
- d. The Mayor shall recognize speakers to speak based on the order on which they appear on the sign in sheet.
- e. Members of the public may submit written public comments to the Clerk of the Board at any time by mail or electronic mail. The Clerk of the Board shall circulate any submitted written public comments to the members of the City Council and such comments shall be entered as part of the official record of such meeting.
- f. Speakers will be limited to three (3) minutes unless their time is extended by the Mayor. All remarks shall be directed to the City Council as a body and not at specific individual, staff, or member of the public.
- g. Speakers who violate the rules may be held to have forfeited the remainder of their time. Speakers may not transfer their time to other speakers, or reserve unused time.
- h. The Mayor shall have the right to establish other rules and reasonable time limits governing the appearance of persons before the City Council and to make such orders as may be necessary in order to ensure that the business of the City Council can proceed.