

**ORDINANCE 2023-02**

**ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WASHINGTON, COUNTY OF WARREN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY ESTABLISHING MEETING PROCEDURES AND RULES OF CONDUCT FOR PUBLIC MEETINGS**

**WHEREAS**, the Township Committee of the Township of Washington, County of Warren firmly believes that public participation in government is one of the foundations for our democracy; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township believes that both the public and elected officials should be treated with civility and respect; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township believes that establishing meeting procedures as well as rules of conduct is essential to civil and productive meetings.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED** that the Mayor and Township Committee of the Township of Washington, County of Warren, State of New Jersey adopt the following rules and procedures:

**MEETING PROCEDURES AND RULES OF CONDUCT FOR PUBLIC MEETINGS**

The Township Committee of the Township of Washington abides by N.J.S.A 10-4:6- 10-4:21, known as New Jersey's Open Public Meetings Laws. The state statute can be found at: <https://www.njsba.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/open-public-meetings-act.pdf>.

**MAYOR AND COMMITTEE MEETING PROCEDURES**

1. The Mayor is the Chair and presides over all Township Committee meetings. The Deputy Mayor assumes the Chair in the absence of the Mayor.
2. The Township Committee conducts an agenda meeting which is in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Law.
3. The public may only participate in the meeting during the public portion.
4. Members of the public desiring to speak must give their name and address in an audible tone and should limit their statement to five (5) minutes, which cannot be shared with other speakers.
5. Copies of the agenda for each of the meetings are available at all sessions. Copies of ordinances which will have their public hearings are also available to the public. Agendas are prepared by the Township Clerk and are posted at the Municipal Building and published on the website.
6. The Township Committee will act on items listed on the agenda which is available to the public on the back table in the meeting room.

7. Items listed on the agenda in which the public may participate are Public Hearings and the Public Comment Period.

### **MANNER OF ADDRESSING THE COMMITTEE AND RULES OF CONDUCT**

Upon recognition by the Mayor, the person shall proceed to the floor and give their name and address in an audible tone of voice for the records. Unless further time is granted by the Committee, they shall limit their statement to five (5) minutes. Statements shall be addressed to the Committee as a body and not to any member thereof. No person, other than the Chair and the person having the floor, shall be permitted to enter into any discussion without recognition by the Chair. All attendees are required to conduct themselves in a courteous and respectful manner and as follows:

1. The public is to refrain from private conversations that interrupt the proceedings of the Committee.
2. Persons not on the agenda who wish to speak will be limited to the “Public Comments” portion unless addressed by a Committee member and all such speech shall be directed to the Committee as a body and not to individual members, Township professionals, Township staff, or other attendees.
3. The Committee is not required to respond to any subject matter addressed during the “Public Comments” portion.
4. Profane, vulgar, inflammatory, threatening, abusive, or disparaging language, or racial or ethnic slurs directed at the presiding Chair, members of the Committee, Township officials or employees, and members of the general public, or statements by a person attending the meeting which are not made during the public participation segment of the agenda or during a public hearing, are not allowed and shall not be tolerated.
5. Utilizing a public meeting for the purpose of making political speeches, including threats of political action and the same, will not be tolerated and ruled out of order.
6. Discussion between speakers and attendees of the public meeting or hearing are prohibited.
7. Banners, flyers, or other signs are not permitted in the meeting room. Distribution of flyers in the meeting room is also not permitted.
8. Attendees when leaving the board meeting before it is adjourned must leave in a quiet and orderly manner, including outside the meeting room and hallway, so as not to disrupt the meeting.
9. If any violation of the Rules of Conduct occurs, the offender will be barred from further participation and lose any balance of time remaining for his or her comment period. If a speaker who violates these rules refuses to step down, the Chair shall have the individual removed from the meeting room in violation of Chapter 90, Nuisances and/or charged with disorderly conduct in accordance with the Penal Law.

## **SECTION 2: REPEAL**

All ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent with this ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

## **SECTION 3: SEVERABILITY**

If any section, subsection, clause or phrase of this ordinance is held to be unconstitutional or invalid for any reason, such decision shall not affect the remaining portions of this ordinance.

This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon final publication as provided by law.

**NOTICE** is hereby given that the foregoing Ordinance was introduced and passed on first reading at a meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Washington held January 3, 2023 and ordered published in accordance with the law. Said Ordinance will be considered for final reading and adoption at a meeting of the Township Committee to be held on February 15, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard at the Municipal Building, 211 Route 31 North, Washington, NJ 07882 at which time all persons interested will be given an opportunity to be heard concerning such Ordinance.

Ann Kilduff, RMC  
Township Clerk