School Administrative Unit # 77
Monroe School District
School Board Policy

BEDH

FIRST READING: 08/20/2011	ADOPTED: 06/18/2012	REVISED: 11/07/2022

BEDH – Public Comment and Participation at Board Meetings

The primary purpose of 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 ensure that persons who wish to appear before the Board may be heard and, at the same time, ensure that the Board may conduct its business and meetings properly and efficiently, the Board adopts as policy the following procedures and rules pertaining to public participation at Board meetings.

Rules of Order

1. The Board will provide a maximum of thirty minutes to hear public comments at the beginning of each regular Board meeting. If there are not enough speakers at the beginning of the meeting to exhaust the full 30 minutes, the Board will provide opportunity at the end of the meeting for additional public comment of no less than the balance of the 30 minutes. This period may be extended by a majority vote of the Board. Additionally, the Board may include additional public comment periods for specific agenda items with a time limit for public comment specified on the pertinent agenda.
2. Individual speakers will be allotted five 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.
3. The Chair will recognize speakers on a first come basis.
4. In order to comply with the minute requirements of RSA 91-A:2, II, speakers shall identify themselves clearly for the record.
5. Except as otherwise provided in this policy, members of the public may offer comments on agenda items or upon any other matter of public concern directly relating to the District's school policies, programs and operations. In the interest of preserving individual privacy and due process rights, the Board requests that comments (including complaints) regarding individual employees (other than the Superintendent) or individual students be directed to the Superintendent in accord with the complaint/grievance resolution processes set forth in School Board Policies KE and/or KEB. Complaints regarding the Superintendent may be made either during public comment or directed to the School Board Chair as described in Board Policy KEB.

6. Any comments which 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 threatening bodily harm, 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 or disruptions may result in the intervention of law enforcement, with the 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 consideration by the full Board.

With the aim of maintaining focus on the issues in discussion, it is desired that all speakers strive to adhere to ordinary norms of decorum and civility.

Legal References:

RSA 91-A:2, Meetings Open to the Public
RSA 91-A:3, Non-Public Sessions
U.S. Const., 1st Amendment