

Public Comment Period Policy for the Town Council of the Town of Winfall

To provide the public with an opportunity to address the Town Council during its regular meetings, and in compliance with State law, a public comment period will be included during each regularly scheduled Council meeting.

Speakers are asked to review these rules and guidelines before speaking. Any questions should be addressed to the Town Clerk or the Mayor.

1. **Public Comment Period.** The public comment period shall not exceed thirty (30) minutes in duration. Speakers will be called up in the order in which the names appear on the sign-up sheet. If the allotted time of thirty (30) minutes expires before all persons who have signed up are able to speak, the names of those not reached will be carried over to the next public comment period and placed first on the list.
2. **Sign Up.** Anyone desiring to speak before Council must sign in, on the sheet provided, to the Town Clerk by 5:55 p.m. No one will be allowed to speak during the public comment period unless that person has signed up to speak. Sign up shall include the name and the street address of the residence of the speaker, and the topic or issue he or she wishes to address.
3. **Presentation.** Speakers will be called by the mayor in the order in which they have signed up to speak. Speakers shall address the Council from the lectern near the front of the room (unless physically unable) and begin their remarks by stating their name and the address of their residence.
4. **Time Allowance.** Speakers shall be limited to three (3) minutes each. No one may speak more than once during any public comment period. The mayor may designate a timekeeper for enforcement of this policy.
5. **Common Topics.** If more than three (3) persons have signed up to speak on any topic or issue, the mayor may request that a single spokesperson be selected to speak on that topic on behalf of those either supporting or opposing the same position. In such cases, additional time may (at the discretion of the City Council) be allotted to such a representative speaker, but not more than ten (10) minutes in total. Where there are opposing or competing points of view on a particular topic, the mayor will allot like time to a spokesperson for the opposing view.
6. **Visual Aids or Exhibits.** If a speaker desires to present exhibits, or use any video, computer or other visual aid of any kind, arrangements for such must be made in advance of the meeting with the Town Clerk. No additional time will be allotted for setting up such videos or exhibits.
7. **Speaker Etiquette.** All comments shall be addressed to the Mayor and Council as a whole, and not to individuals. Discussions of any kind between a speaker and a member of the audience

audience will not be allowed. Use of obscene or vulgar words or gestures will not be allowed.

8. **Council Response.** The Council will not respond to any questions or comments made by any speaker, except if necessary to direct the speaker to a particular staff person for follow up or response. It is in the discretion of the Mayor and Council whether and when to take any action on items brought up in the public comment period.
9. **Topic Exclusions.** During the public comment period, speakers shall not address or discuss:
 - (a) Matters which are the subject of public hearings on the Council's agenda or which are items listed on the printed agenda for the meeting; or
 - (b) The candidacy of any person, including the speaker, seeking elective office; or
 - (c) "Closed Session" matters, including but not limited to threatened or pending litigation, matters within the attorney/client privilege, personnel issues or property acquisition issues.

The mayor may stop any speaker who addresses or attempts to discuss any such matter.
10. **Audience Behavior.** Rowdy, disruptive, or threatening behavior by members of the audience during or in response to a speaker's comments during the public comment period will not be permitted.
11. **Publications.** Copies of this Policy shall be available at the front desk of Town Hall, and on the Town's website, and shall be posted at the entrance to the Town Hall entrance before each scheduled meeting.

This policy shall become effective on January 9, 2024.

Adopted this the 8th day of January 2024.

Preston T. White, Mayor

Attest:

