

# **COLEMAN COUNTY SPECIAL UTILITY DISTRICT**

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT AT BOARD MEETINGS**

1. **Right of Public to Address the Board of Directors (“Board”).** Pursuant to Section 551.007, Texas Government Code, each member of the public who desires to address the Board regarding an item on the agenda for an open meeting of COLEMAN COUNTY SPECIAL UTILITY DISTRICT may do so in accordance with this policy. The right to address the board applies to any member of the public.
  
2. **Comment Procedure.**
  - a. After the presiding officer calls the meeting to order, the public comment period will be the first item on the agenda before the Board discusses or acts on any other agenda item.
  - b. The board will place the official sign-up sheet for the meeting at the system’s main office at the time notice for the meeting is posted, and in a conspicuous location at the meeting not later than **15 minutes** before the presiding officer calls the meeting to order. Speakers may sign up to address the Board at any time before the presiding officer calls the public comment period agenda item, at which time the Board will collect the official sign-up sheet. Individuals may not address the Board or add their name or additional topics to the official sign-up sheet after the Board has collected it.
  - c. Each speaker shall list their name on the official sign-up sheet, as well as the specific agenda item(s) they will be addressing. In addition to public comment on agenda items, the Board may also hear public comment on issues of general concern that are not on the agenda.<sup>1</sup> If a speaker wishes to address an issue that is not on the agenda, they shall indicate on the official sign-up sheet that they wish to speak on a matter of general concern.
  - d. The Board will solicit speakers on each agenda item in numerical order. If the Board hears public comment on issues of general concern, those matters will be heard after the Board has received public comment on each item on the agenda. Speakers will be called upon in the order in which they appear on the official sign-up sheet.
  - c. The public comment period will end after all individuals on the official sign-up sheet have addressed the Board.

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<sup>1</sup> Some systems may be required to hold a general public comment period by their bylaws, ordinances, or other governing documents.

### **3. Time Limit for Public Comment.**

- a.** Each speaker may address the Board for **not more than 5 minutes per agenda item**, unless the Board extends the time limit at the meeting. For matters of general concern, each speaker may address the Board for **not more than 10 minutes per meeting**.
- b.** The official time for each speaker will be maintained and enforced by the Secretary-Treasurer or the Secretary-Treasurer's designee.
- c.** Except as provided by Section 3.d., speakers may not pool their time or give unused time to another speaker.
- d.** If there are many individuals who are aligned on an issue who plan to provide the same or similar comments, the presiding officer may request that the group designate a spokesperson to speak on the group's behalf. However, individuals may still provide additional comment if they choose to do so.
- e.** If a speaker addresses the Board through a translator, the speaker will be granted twice the amount of time granted to other speakers in accordance with this policy.
- f.** Time spent on Board member questions or comments shall not be counted against a speaker's time.

**4. Location for Public Comment.** The presiding officer shall identify the podium, table, microphone, or other location from which speakers may address the Board. Speakers may not address the Board from any other location.

### **5. Decorum.**

- a.** All members of the public shall always be respectful of the Board and other attendees.
- b.** Speakers shall address the Board one at a time.
- c.** Attendees may not interrupt a speaker or Board member when the speaker or Board member has the floor.
- d.** For purposes of this section, statements made during an individual's speaking time, including criticism of any act, omission, policy, procedure, program, or service of the system, do not constitute an abuse of decorum rules.

**6. Response by Board.** The Board welcomes public input and will take note of all public comment it receives at a meeting. The Board may ask questions and engage in dialogue about public comments regarding items on the agenda. For public comments regarding items not on the agenda, the requirements of the Texas Open Meetings Act (Tex. Gov. Code Ch. 551) prevent the Board from engaging in a dialogue but allow the Board to provide statements of factual information or recite existing policy in response to an inquiry.

