

CASS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
PUBLIC COMMENT POLICY

The Cass County Board of Commissioners ("Commissioners") has established a policy which addresses Public Comment, and this procedure offers citizens the best avenue to hear these issues and encourages this procedure to be followed where practical.

The Commissioners hereby establish a Public Comment Policy to allow members of the public an additional opportunity to address the Commissioners. In addition to public hearings, a special time is hereby set aside for the purpose of receiving comments and suggestions from citizens.

All comments made during the Public Comment period shall be subject to the following procedures:

1. Persons may address Public Comments on those items identified on the Commissioner's Agenda.
2. Persons who wish to make a statement during the Public Comment period will register on a "sign-up" sheet available 30 minutes before the start of the meeting. No one will be allowed to have his or her name placed on the list by telephone request to County Auditor staff.
3. Each person who signed up to speak will have up to 3 minutes to make his or her statement.
4. Speakers will be acknowledged by the County Commissioner President in the order in which their name appears on the sign-up sheet. Speakers shall address the Commissioners from the podium, and not approach the Commissioners. Speakers will begin their statement by first stating their name and address.
5. Statements are to be directed to the Commissioners as a whole, and not to individuals. Public Comment is not intended to require the Commissioners to provide any answer to the speaker. Discussions between speakers and members of the audience will not be allowed.
6. Speakers will be courteous in their language and presentation. The Commissioners encourage civility in public discourse and requests that speakers refrain from language which would incite an immediate breach of the peace; refrain from undue repetition, extended discussion of irrelevancies, obscenity, and personal attacks against private individuals unrelated to the operation of the County.
7. Only one speaker will be acknowledged at a time.
8. After the speaker has made his or her statement, he or she will be seated with no further debate, dialogue, or comment.
9. Any applause will be held until the end of the Public Comment period. Speakers shall not disrupt the meeting.

10. These rules are intended to foster a fair, respectful, and productive meeting. Any person who violates these rules will be declared out of order by the Chair. A person who persists in violating these rules may be removed from the meeting.
11. A public meeting should not be viewed by the citizens as the exclusive method for the presentation of public comment. In fact, the public comment section of a public meeting should not be the first avenue that a citizen utilizes to present his or her concerns to the Commissioners. The Commissioners encourage the citizens to contact them directly by phone, email, United States Mail, or in person at Commissioner's Office. Often "person to person" communication is more productive than a public meeting setting because the Commissioners can have direct dialogue with the citizen at their convenience and on their time.
12. While the Commissioners may not answer questions presented to them by a speaker at a public meeting, they encourage citizens to submit questions in writing, at least 48 hours in advance of a meeting. The Commissioners may respond to such questions as a part of the meeting's agenda. This process will enable the Commissioners to have ample time to review, research and respond to enquiries after careful and thoughtful review.