

Policy Number: BRE - 804

Gwinnett County Board of Registrations and Elections Board Policy File

Policy Title: **Procedure for Public Comments**

Version: 2023-02

Effective Date: July 19, 2023

I. Authority:

The Gwinnett County Board of Registrations and Elections (Board) is empowered with all the powers and duties relating to the conduct of elections as election superintendents. 1988 Ga. Laws p. 4296 (Section 9).

II. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish standards for public to provide feedback and information to the Board.

III. Applicability and Scope:

This policy applies to any person who wishes to speak at the scheduled meetings of the board.

IV. Related Documents and References:

- A. 1988 Ga. Laws p. 4296 (Section 14).
- B. Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, 15 U.S.C. § 10503
- C. Code of Federal Regulations, 28 CFR Part 55.

V. Policy:

All official regularly scheduled meetings of the Gwinnett County Board of Voter Registrations and Elections 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 by law, to discuss such matters as may be properly considered in executive session.

The Board desires citizens of the county to attend its meetings so that they may become better acquainted with the operation of county elections and that the Board may have the opportunity to hear the comments and ideas of the public.

Sixty minutes shall be allotted for public comment when the Board meets for its regularly scheduled meetings.

To ensure that persons who wish to appear before the Board may be heard and, at the same time, allow the Board to conduct its meetings properly and efficiently, the Board adopts as policy the following procedures and rules pertaining to public participation in meetings:

A citizen wishing to speak at a regularly scheduled meeting shall:

1. Sign up at a table near the entrance to the meeting. Staff shall make the sign-up sheet available thirty (30) minutes before the scheduled start of the meeting. Each person signing up to speak may only designate themselves as a speaker. The sign-up period shall end at 6:00PM and the sign-up sheet shall be given to the Chair. The Chair will call on each speaker in the order of sign up and will prioritize those individuals who have indicated that they reside in Gwinnett County.
2. The speaker's comments in the regularly scheduled meeting shall be as brief as possible, limited to two-to-three (2-3) minutes maximum, unless an extension of time is granted. Speakers will be expected to conclude their remarks promptly when the allotted time has expired. Speakers shall begin their comments by stating their name and any group they may be representing. Speakers may not yield their time to another individual.
3. The speaker's comments shall be directed to the Board as a body and not to an individual Board member. The Board members or Elections Supervisor may ask questions for clarification but will not necessarily engage in discussion with the speaker.
4. Supporting documents or information to be shared with the Board must be provided in hard copy. Ten (10) copies should be provided and should be presented to the Chair for distribution to the Board members. Audiovisual presentations are not allowed.

5. Speakers may offer objective criticism of the Board, but in public session, the Board will not hear personal complaints regarding elections personnel or against any person connected with the Elections Office. Personnel complaints should be in writing and directed to the Chair. The Chair will share the written complaint with the entire board and any other appropriate personnel.

6. Speakers will remain courteous and respectful throughout their presentations, avoiding inappropriate language or behavior at all times.

7. Written responses will not be provided.

8. The Board vests in its Chair, or other presiding officer, the authority to terminate the remarks of any individual who does not adhere to the rules established here.

The purpose of the meeting minutes is to serve as the official record of the actions of the board. Public comments will not be reflected unless the Board takes action on any comments.

The policy shall be posted online, but also printed for distribution as needed during meetings.

Approved, this 19th day of July 2023.

BOARD OF REGISTRATIONS AND ELECTIONS
OF GWINNETT COUNTY, GEORGIA

By:


Dr. Wendy Taylor, Chair


Anthony Rodriguez, Vice Chair


Stephen W. Day, Member


David Hancock, Member


Alice O'Lenick, Member