

The Richmond County Board of Elections (hereafter referred to as “the Board”) is required by various code sections to conduct different types of public meetings including but not limited to monthly meetings and certification meetings, and the Board desires both to maintain order at its meetings and to provide the general public an opportunity to address the Board; therefore the Richmond County Board of Elections establishes the following rules for the public comment at board meetings:

Public Participation in Board of Elections Meetings.

1. Persons wishing to address the Board shall do so during the Public Comment portion of the agenda.

a. Subject to the limitations provided for herein, speakers will be allowed to appear before the Board at the public comment session prior to the regular agenda with each speaker allotted a maximum of five (5) minutes for their presentation.

b. Persons seeking to complain about the performance or lack thereof of an employee of the Board shall submit such requests to the Chair for resolution. Such requests for public comment will not be heard by the Board or any committee.

c. Persons or businesses seeking to do business with the Board shall submit such requests to the Executive Director for consideration in accordance with the requirements of the Procurement Code. Requests to make presentations for products or services will not be heard by the Board or any committee except as permitted by the Procurement Code.

2. Each speaker must submit a request in writing, including his/her address, which will state the topic of discussion, to the Board of Elections’ office no later than 9:00 a.m. on the Monday preceding the next regularly scheduled Board Meeting.

a. An extension of the five (5) minute limit per person may be granted upon the affirmative vote of four (4) members of the Board.

b. If deemed advisable by the Chair, a written response to a speaker may be provided by the appropriate staff within thirty (30) days. The Board may respond verbally at the completion of any speaker's presentation.

3. After each individual speaker's remarks have concluded, the Chair may, but shall not be required to, briefly respond, either personally or through another member of the Board whom the Chair shall designate. In addition, when a request for special action or a grievance has been heard the matter will be referred to the Executive Director (or his/her designee) who will prepare a response to the matter. If necessary, action on the matter for consideration of the Board will be placed on the agenda for the second regular meeting following the date of the comment.

4. No speaker will be allowed to return on public comment on the same issue within a period of ninety (90) days; however a speaker may return on another issue following the policy and procedure.

5. All speakers, other than salaried members of the Board of Elections staff, shall address the Board in the following manner:

- a. Stating name and address (address is required only if individual has not previously provided address to staff).
- b. Stating whether he/she is speaking for himself/herself or for another;
- c. Stating if he/she represents an organization and whether he/she is being compensated by the organization for whom he/she speaks;
- d. Stating whether he/she or any member of his/her immediate family has a personal interest in the pending matter.
- e. Stating his/her comments.

6. All remarks shall be to the Board as a body and addressed through the Chair. Remarks shall not be made to a particular Board or Staff Member.

7. Questions from Board, the Executive Director, and/or the Augusta Richmond County Attorney may be made for clarification. However, no person shall be permitted to enter into any discussion, either directly or through a member of the Board, without permission of the Chair.


8. All remarks must be related to the issue on which the speaker has requested to be heard. No person shall be allowed to make impertinent, derogatory, offensive or slanderous remarks while addressing the Board.

- a. A person may be barred from further speaking before the Board in that meeting if his/her conduct is deemed "out of order";
- b. Once barred for improper conduct, a speaker shall not be permitted to continue or again address the Board in that meeting unless a majority vote of the Board allows;
- c. In the event a speaker who is barred fails for improper conduct to obey the ruling, the Chair may take such action as is deemed appropriate, including the removal of such person from the assembly;
- d. The Board may bar a person from addressing Board meetings for up to sixty (60) days for improper conduct. A person barred by the Board for this period may request a hearing by written request to the Chair, which request shall state the reason(s) for a reversal of the decision. All requests for hearings shall be placed on the agenda and heard by the Board. An affirmative vote of four (4) members of the Board shall be required to overturn the previous decision to bar the persons.

- e. If not otherwise recognized by the Chair, upon motion and the affirmative vote of four (4) members of the Board, the Board may allow public comment on an agenda item at the time the item is being considered by the Board. These comments must be limited to the subject that is being debated. Members of the public may speak for five minutes and may only speak once. These limits can be waived by the affirmative vote of four (4) members of the Board.

- f. The Board may schedule public hearings for the purpose of soliciting public comment on any subject of interest to the Board. Hearings may be held immediately prior to or following a meeting of the Board or at such other places and times as the Board may determine. No official action shall be taken at any such public hearing.

Approved by the Richmond County Board of Elections this 11th day of September 2023 and is effective immediately.



W. Travis Doss, Jr., Executive Director for
the Board of Elections, Election Superintendent