



Talbot County Council Meeting Protocols

Generally:

- Audience members may not engage in any conduct that disrupts the meeting or that interferes with the right of members of the public to attend and observe the meeting with minimal distraction.
- Audience members, including staff, may not engage in side conversations during the meeting. Any necessary discussions must be taken outside of the hearing room.
- Audience members, including representatives of the news media, may record discussion of the County Council at any open session, provided that the recording does not create excessive noise or distraction that disturbs the County Council or other persons attending the meeting.
- Audience members should make every attempt to sign in prior to the Council meeting to speak should such form be made available.

Participation in Presentations and Discussions:

- Audience participation in presentations and discussions, including questions, is not permitted unless expressly invited by the President of the County Council
- If recognized by the President, the audience members must approach the microphone and clearly state their name and address before speaking.
- Speakers must remain civil and respectful during comments. Abusive language and the use of profanity are strictly prohibited.
- All public questions or remarks must be directed to the County Council, and not to the audience as a whole or to persons in the audience, or staff.
- After making comment or asking a question, the audience member must immediately return to their seat. Follow-up comments or questions are not permitted unless the individual is again recognized by the President and invited forward.

Open Public Comments:

- The agenda contains a time for public comments at the end of the meeting agenda. The length of time permitted for public comment during a regular meeting is limited and at the discretion of the President of the County Council.
- Emailing of questions and comments ahead of the meeting is always encouraged and can be addressed to Jessica Morris, Assistant County Manager (jmorris@talbotcountymd.gov).
- Comments permitted during the open discussion section of the agenda must be limited to no more than three (3) minutes.
- Unscheduled speakers who wish to speak must fill out the sign-in sheet in the lobby stating their name, address and topic.
- Once recognized by the President of the County Council, audience members participating in the public comments section of the agenda will be called forward. Speakers must approach the presentation table and clearly state their name and address into the microphone.
- After making a comment or asking a question, the audience member must immediately return to their seat. Follow-up comments or questions are not permitted unless the individual is again recognized by the President and invited forward.
- It is at the prerogative of the Council to answer a question at the meeting, defer the answer until additional information is obtained, refer the matter to staff for future follow up and response, or not answer the question based upon relevance or inappropriateness.