

HANCOCK COUNTY MEETING & AGENDA POLICY

Public Proceedings Definition. The legislature finds and declares that public proceedings exist to aid in the conduct of the people's business. It is the intent of the Legislature that clandestine meetings, or conferences or meetings held on private property without proper notice and ample opportunity for attendance by the public, not be used to defeat the purpose of M.R.S.A. Title 1, section 401.

Purpose. The purpose of the Hancock County Meeting & Agenda policy is to comply with M.R.S.A. Title 1, section 401 and to provide the Commissioners and Department Heads with a clear and decisive meeting and agenda management tool.

Responsibilities. It is the responsibility of the Hancock County Commissioners to ensure that the public is notified of all meetings in ample time for attendance. To enhance the public's interest and encourage participation, the public notice shall include a list of specific agenda items. It shall be the responsibility of the County Administrator in consultation with the County Commissioners to set the regular order by which departments will be heard during meetings, with consideration to minimizing the intrusion into the Department Head's work schedule and consideration given to those having special requests.

It is the responsibility of the County Administrator to compile input from the Department Heads and/or the Public into one agenda and to ensure that the County is in compliance with the requirements of M.R.S.A. Title 1, Section 406, which states "notice shall be given in ample time to allow public attendance and shall be disseminated in a manner reasonably calculated to notify the general public in the jurisdiction served by the body or agency concerned. In the event of an emergency meeting, local representatives of the media shall be notified of the meeting, whenever practical, the notification to include time and location, by the same or faster means used to notify the members of the agency conducting the public proceeding."

It is the responsibility of the Department Heads and/or the Public to submit agenda items for timely inclusion on the agenda and adhere to the guidelines stated in this policy.

AGENDA PROCEDURES

(A) **Regular Meetings:**

1. The County Administrator will send a memorandum to each Department Head, municipal clerks, and constituents requesting agenda items at least 7 days prior to a regular Commissioners' meeting.
2. Department heads and/or the Public having business to conduct with the Commissioners shall notify the County Administrator of the nature of that business in the form of an agenda item by the date requested by the Administrator.
3. Department heads and/or the Public shall provide the County Administrator, either by mail, fax or email with a brief narrative outlining the issues of each agenda item.
4. A Department Head suspecting that a portion of his or her business may be conducted in executive session, shall notify the County Administrator who will schedule that Department Head's agenda items and executive session at a time that least intrudes on others who are attending the meeting.
5. The County Administrator will compile a final agenda for all scheduled Commissioners' meetings. Whenever possible, agenda items related to a Department Head shall be included along with that department's agenda items.
6. Upon approval of the agenda by the chairperson, the County Administrator will post the meeting agenda outside the clerk's office, outside the Commissioners' meeting room, on

the county website, e-mail the agenda to municipal clerks and constituents who have requested to receive agendas, place a hard copy in departmental mail boxes and supply the County Commissioners with the final agenda and supporting documents.

7. If a Department Head discovers additional items requiring discussion, the County Administrator should be notified immediately. It shall be at the County Administrator's discretion what late items will be added to the agenda or must be presented to the Commissioners for inclusion.
8. The County Administrator, upon notification of an added item, will advise the chairperson of the addition and will make appropriate annotations to the published agenda. Department Heads who discover, at the last minute, that there are additional items to be discussed will request approval of the Commissioners to add these items to the agenda, either in person or by proxy, at the start of the meeting. The Public is welcome to request approval of the Commissioners to add items that are related to county business under the Adjustments to the Agenda section at the beginning of the meeting.
9. If a Department Head is not in attendance when his/her agenda items are to be heard, an attempt will be made to contact the Department Head to advise them that their attendance is required. While waiting for the Department Head to arrive, the chairperson may suggest moving forward to the next section of the agenda.
10. If, during the Commissioners' meetings, agenda items are discussed that involve another Department Head who is not present, an attempt to notify that Department Head will be made. The Commissioners should consider delaying discussion until the Department Head is able to appear.
11. The agenda of each meeting will include an opportunity for public comments. Public comment will occur soon after the meeting commences. Any member of the public may speak for no more than 3 minutes unless the Commissioners grant more time.

(B) Special Meetings: Regular meetings rules apply to all special meetings.

1. Notification will be made to each Department Head and local newspapers of all special meetings as soon as feasible.
2. Whenever possible, special meetings will be confined to the specific business for which they are called.

MEETING DECORUM

(A) Meeting decorum:

1. The meeting decorum shall conform to the Roberts Rules of Order in as much as practical while always giving the board the ability to modify the rules to accommodate small meeting venues. The agenda dictates the flow of the meeting, unless modified by the County Commissioners. Unscheduled agendas items may not be permitted once the agenda has been set unless an emergent need is present.
2. The chairperson is responsible for controlling discussions by designating speakers. Commissioners with a personal conflict of interest should abstain from voting on a motion and all abstentions should be explained by the Commissioner. A member may "abstain" from voting on a motion provided that member states on the record a personal conflict of interest. Absent that conflict, the record shall reflect a Did Not Vote for any members not voting on a motion. In any election, members may only vote in favor of a candidate and NO or Against votes shall not be entertained. If a member wished to vote against a candidate, they must vote for another person.
3. Attendees will conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner.

4. The Public is welcome to comment on any agenda item with the exception of executive sessions, which are held in closed session.
5. All meetings will begin at 8:30 AM, unless otherwise posted in the Agenda.

MEETING RECORDS

- (A) 1. The official meeting record, hereafter referred to as the “written minutes”, shall reflect more of what was done at a meeting and less of what was said and shall be clear, curt, and concise. Each agenda item will be notated with a brief explanation, when necessary, regarding the intent and meaning of the item. All official actions shall be recorded with special emphasis on what action was taken by each Commissioner with regards to making, seconding, approving or disapproving each motion
- (B) 2. An audio recording of all meetings shall occur and be made part of the official, public record.
- (C) 3. Under the general guidance of the chair, the County Administrator shall see to the production of the final draft meeting minutes. Commissioners will submit their DRAFT corrections and suggestions to the Administrator for consideration to be incorporated into the document. When the chair cannot agree to suggested corrections to the draft minutes, the Chair, at his discretion, may post two versions of the draft and the full board will decide which draft shall be incorporated into the approved minutes. Approved minutes will be emailed to municipal clerks and constituents, and posted on the county website.
- (D) 4. Whenever possible, directives will be reported out to the public immediately following the executive session when appropriate.

HANCOCK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

APPROVED: March 11, 2003
AMENDED: November 5, 2013
AMENDED: February 7, 2017
AMENDED: January 21, 2020

William F. Clark, Commissioner Chairman

Antonio Blasi, Commissioner

John Wombacher, Commissioner