



RULES OF PROCEDURE

4.7. Public Participation. (a) Reasonable seating facilities shall be provided for the general public at all sessions and public meetings, and the general public is encouraged to attend. Where impractical to conduct an in-person hearing at County designated buildings, all or a portion of the hearing may be conducted virtually/remotely. The Council may consider public input in legislative and business matters virtually or remotely in accordance with law. Unless a majority of the Council present shall direct otherwise, time shall normally be afforded during a session or meeting for members of the public to address the Council. Persons seeking to address the Council on a specific matter may be required to state reasons for an appearance in writing. (b) Council work sessions are designed to allow Members an opportunity to formulate their position and policies, to consider staff studies and recommendations, and to review any other related record material. The Council may direct specific questions to those in attendance to clarify or explain a point being considered. (c) Public hearings on pending legislation or the budget are convened for the express purpose of obtaining public participation and comment. Such hearings may be held on a legislative or business session day. (d) At all times, order and decorum shall be maintained in keeping with the dignity of the governmental process, and no person or groups shall interfere with this process. No one shall delay or interrupt the proceedings, or refuse to obey the orders of the presiding officer. Posters or placards are not permitted in the Council Hearing Room. The number of persons in the Hearing Room shall not exceed the limit established by the County Fire Department. When practicable, and in accordance with law, attendees for public proceedings exceeding the legal capacity of the Hearing Room should be accommodated in an alternate space or area designated by the Council. (e) Smoking, including but not limited to e-cigarettes, e-hookahs, or vaporizing pens, is strictly prohibited in the Council Hearing Room. (f) The open meetings of the County Council, the County Council committees, and the District Council are recorded and shall be retained in accordance with law. The recordings are considered public records. The Clerk shall establish procedures for persons to review and obtain copies. Persons who desire to televise, videotape, photograph, broadcast or record an open meeting shall make appropriate arrangements with the Clerk in advance of the meeting. (g) Where impractical to conduct in-person hearings at County-designated buildings, the Clerk of the Council may issue electronic notices seeking public participation for legislative and business matters before the Council and may receive public input from interested parties electronically.