



TOWN OF TRURO

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POLICY MEMORANDUM #59

Date: 24 January 2017; rev 9/13/2022

** This policy was revised at the September 13, 2022 Select Board meeting solely to reflect the titles used in the Town Charter for the Town Manager and Select Board and to modify language to be gender neutral. No changes were made to the content of the Policy at that meeting.*

Subject: **PUBLIC COMMENT, SELECTMEN REPORTS
AND SELECTMEN COMMENTS**

The purpose of this policy memorandum is to define and provide structure to the Public Comment, Select Board Reports and Select Board Comments elements of regular Board of Selectmen Meetings.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

The Select Board believes that the public should have an opportunity to comment on issues that affect the Town and are within the scope of the Board's responsibilities. Therefore the Select Board will begin each regular meeting with Public Comment as a way to engage and hear from the Truro community. Work session meetings will not include Public Comment as articulated in Policy Memorandum #56. The Public Comment period will abide by the rules of the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. Public Comment should not exceed 15 minutes. However, time for Public Comment can be extended at the discretion of the Chair or by a vote of the Board. Speakers will be encouraged to keep their remarks to no more than three minutes. If there are a large number of citizens attending for Public Comment, the Chair may require each person to register on a sign-up sheet available at the entrance to the Select Board Meeting Room. In this instance, speakers will be acknowledged by the Chair in the order in which their names appear on the sign-up sheet.

Public Comment is not intended to be a discussion, debate, or dialogue between or among citizens and the Select Board. Rather, it is intended to offer citizens an opportunity to express their opinion on issues of the Select Board business. While the Board and/or Town Manager will not typically respond to citizen comments or questions posed at Public Comment, the Chair, as presiding officer of the meeting, may answer or request an answer to a question if they deem it appropriate. Further, should the Chair believe that an issue or question falls outside the purview of the Select Board they may direct it to the appropriate person or body so that the matter is

given proper consideration. Any member of the Select Board can request that an issue raised during public comment be placed on a future agenda for further consideration.

The Chair will begin each Public Comment period outlining the guidelines contained in this Policy Memorandum. The Chair will call on citizens who wish to provide Public Comment. Speakers will first identify themselves by their full name and address at the commencement of their remarks. Speakers will address all comments to the Board as a whole and not one individual member. Discussions between speakers and members of the audience will not be allowed. Speakers will be courteous in their language and presentation. Speakers must be respectful and constructive in their remarks and will refrain from personal attacks and the use of profanity. Speakers who have prepared written remarks or supporting documents are encouraged to leave a copy of such remarks and documents with the Chairperson so that they can be entered into the record of that meeting.

SELECTMEN REPORTS:

Select Board Reports are an opportunity for each member of the Board to report on official activities in their role as Select Board that have occurred between meetings. This includes reporting on meetings attended as a Select Board Liaison, other meetings representing the Town of Truro and Select Board Office Hours. Select Board Reports will be placed at the end of each agenda of a regular Select Board Meeting. Members are encouraged to keep their remarks to no more than three minutes and focus on matters raised that are in the purview of the Select Board. If an issue or question raised during Select Board Reports can be addressed quickly by another member of the Board or by the Town Manager that will be allowed. However, the Board may not begin a substantive discussion or deliberate on an issue raised during Select Board Reports unless that issue has been included on that meeting's posted agenda. If not, the member can request that issue be placed on a future agenda.

SELECTMEN COMMENTS:

Select Board comments differ from Select Board Reports in that they are an opportunity for individual members to comment on issues or activities affecting or concerning them individually that are relevant to Town affairs. This includes responding to community feedback directed solely at them or reporting on activities in the community where they participate as a citizen and not as an elected official. If a member is responding to written communication or a specific document, they will include that in their remarks so that it can be entered into the record of that meeting. Members will refrain from using Select Board comments as an opportunity to respond to or address an individual. Select Board comments will be included at the end of each agenda of a regular Select Board Meeting. Members are encouraged to keep their remarks to no more than three minutes.

In both Select Board Reports and Select Board Comments, members will abide by the Standards of Professional Conduct outlined in Policy Memorandum #54 attached to this document.



Kristen Reed, Chair



Robert Weinstein, Vice-Chair



John Dundas, Clerk



Susan Areson



Stephanie Rein
Truro Select Board