

PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING PUBLIC HEARINGS AND MEETINGS

Resolution 24-***

Oct. XX, 2024

Quorum meetings

The presence of two (2) Lewis County Commissioners constitutes a quorum for the convening of a meeting.

Quorum meetings of the Lewis County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) are conducted in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, RCW 42.30.

Commissioners may attend meetings via remote communication and may participate and vote during the meeting as if they were physically present at the meeting.

The BOCC Chair – or the Vice Chair in the Chair’s absence – controls the conduct of BOCC meetings.

Security

In order to promote the efficiency of BOCC meetings, the Chair – or Vice Chair in the Chair’s absence – may request the presence of additional security for meetings expected to address sensitive and/or controversial subjects.

Public comment

The BOCC allows public comment at all of its regular meetings. Any topics can be addressed during the BOCC’s weekly legislative meeting (the “BOCC Business Meeting” held on Tuesdays), but for all other meetings, public comment is limited to final-action items listed on the agenda.

Written public comment may be submitted via email at bocc@lewiscountywa.gov or by mail at BOCC Public Comment, 351 NW North Street, Chehalis, WA 98532. Written comment must be received at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting for which it’s being submitted.

Unless otherwise stated, the BOCC limits verbal public comment to three (3) minutes per person and requires those wishing to speak to sign in and to state their first and last name as well as their city of residence.

The BOCC offers the following guidance regarding public comment:

- All speakers shall be courteous in language and demeanor.
- Comments should be directed to the BOCC as a whole.
- Comments shall not exceed the allotted time.
- Comments shall not include disruptive behavior.

Disruptive behavior includes:

- Speaking beyond the allocated time limit.
- Preventing members of the public from hearing or viewing the discussion of the BOCC, whether by standing or holding a banner or sign in a manner that obstructs view of or passage through the meeting room.
- Using obscene language and / or gestures.
- Speaking in a volume louder than low, conversational tone when not recognized by the Chair – or Vice Chair in the Chair’s absence – for public comment.

Public hearings / public testimony

Public hearings are held in accordance with the provisions of RCWs 42.30, 36.32 and any other applicable statute(s). Notice regarding public hearings shall be published in the official newspaper as selected by the BOCC to provide public notice pursuant to RCW 36.72.

The BOCC Chair – or the Vice Chair in the Chair’s absence – presides over public hearings.

The BOCC allows for public testimony during public hearings.

Unless otherwise stated, the BOCC limits verbal public testimony to three (3) minutes per person and requires those wishing to speak to sign in and to state their first and last name as well as their city of residence.

The BOCC offers the following guidance regarding public testimony:

- All speakers shall be courteous in language and demeanor.
- Testimony should be directed to the BOCC as a whole.
- Testimony shall not exceed the allotted time.
- Testimony shall not include disruptive behavior.

Disruptive behavior includes:

- Speaking beyond the allocated time limit.
- Preventing members of the public from hearing or viewing the discussion of the BOCC, whether by standing or holding a banner or sign in a manner that obstructs view of or passage through the meeting room.
- Using obscene language and / or gestures.
- Speaking in a volume louder than low, conversational tone when not recognized by the Chair – or Vice Chair in the Chair’s absence – for public testimony.

Curtailing public comment or public testimony

The Chair – or Vice Chair in the Chair’s absence – has discretion to curtail public comment or testimony that violates the guidelines above. Chair – or Vice Chair in the Chair’s absence – will first request that the commenter follow these guidelines. If an individual fails to comply with the request, the Chair – or Vice Chair in the Chair’s absence – may deem the individual out of order and direct that the individual be removed from the meeting. If the individual presents a threat to those present at the meeting, law enforcement may be summoned to help remove the individual.