

Adams County Fire District Board Meeting Rules

Public Comment and Meeting Decorum

1. Purpose

These rules are meant to keep Board meetings fair, orderly, and efficient. They set clear expectations for public comment, respectful conduct, and how the Chair will run the meeting.

2. Authority and scope

These rules apply to all regular and special meetings of the Adams County Fire District Board, including any public comment periods. Public comment is allowed at the Board's discretion and must follow the limits below.

3. Standard agenda and meeting flow

The Board will generally use this meeting order:

- Call to order
- Roll call
- Approval of minutes
- Public comment (if included on the notice)
- Reports
- Business items
- Next meeting information
- Adjourn

If there is a high-interest agenda item, the Chair may place public comment for that item immediately before the Board's discussion of that item.

4. Public comment rules

When public comment is offered, the following rules apply:

4.1 Agenda-item limit. Comments must relate to items listed on the meeting agenda, unless the agenda notice states otherwise.

4.2 Sign-up to speak. Speakers must sign up before the public comment period begins (or before the agenda item's comment period, if comment is taken by item). Signing up is only required to speak, not to attend.

4.3 Time limit. Each speaker has three minutes per requested agenda item. The Chair will enforce time limits. When time is up, the speaker must stop.

4.4 One turn per person, per agenda item. Each person may speak once per comment period per agenda item. The Chair may allow a second round only if time remains and it is done fairly.

4.5 No yielding time. Speakers may not give their time to another person, unless the Board adopts a different rule in advance and applies it evenly.

4.6 Total time cap. The Chair may set a total time limit for the full public comment period (example: 20 or 30 minutes) to allow the Board to complete its business. If a total time cap is used, the Chair will announce the cap before public comment begins.

4.7 Address the Chair. All remarks must be addressed to the Chair. Speakers should not argue with other speakers, staff, or Board members.

4.8 No debate during comment. Public comment is for receiving input. Board members may choose not to respond. The Chair may allow brief clarifying questions through the Chair, but the Board will not debate during public comment.

4.9 Off-topic or repetitive remarks. The Chair may redirect a speaker who is off-topic or unreasonably repetitive. If the speaker continues, the Chair may end the comment and move to the next speaker.

4.10 Written comments. Written comments may be submitted to the board secretary. Written comments will be received but may not be read aloud unless the Chair chooses to do so.

4.11 Recording. Recording, filming, and photographing are permitted during open session, provided it does not disrupt the meeting.

5. Decorum and conduct

The Chair is responsible for keeping order. The following conduct is not allowed:

- Interrupting a speaker or talking over others
- Shouting, threatening, or using intimidating behavior
- Threats, profanity directed at individuals, repeated interruptions, or refusal to yield the floor after time is called
- Refusing to follow the Chair's directions after a warning

Applause, booing, or side conversations should also be avoided because they make it hard for everyone to be heard.

6. How the Chair will enforce these rules

To keep things fair, the Chair will generally follow this step-by-step approach:

1. Reminder of the rule or a clear warning
2. Redirection back to the agenda item or topic

3. End the speaker's turn and move to the next person
4. Call a short recess to restore order
5. If needed to restore order, ask a disruptive person to leave the meeting area

The Chair may skip steps if there is a safety concern or serious disruption.

7. Recommended Chair scripts

These short statements help the Chair be consistent:

Opening public comment: Public comment is limited to agenda items. Please address your remarks to the Chair. Each speaker has three minutes. I will give a 30-second warning.

Thirty-second warning: You have 30 seconds remaining.

Time is up: Time. Please finish your sentence and yield the floor. Thank you.

Off-topic: Please tie your comments to an item on tonight's agenda.

No interruptions: Please do not interrupt. You will have a turn if you signed up.

Cooling off: We are going to take a short recess to restore order.

8. Review and updates

The Board may review these rules as needed and may update them by motion at a properly noticed meeting.