

KNOX COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING GUIDELINES

The Knox County Board of Supervisors adopts the following general policy guidelines in accordance with Nebraska Public Meeting laws as outlined in Nebraska Revised Statutes Sections §84-1408 to §84-1414. Any inconsistencies or questions regarding this policy shall be resolved in favor of the statutory provisions.

It is the general policy of The Knox County Board that every meeting shall be open to the public in order that citizens may exercise their democratic privilege of attending and speaking at meetings of public bodies.

A. NOTICE

1. The County Clerk, as Board secretary, shall maintain the agenda for the County Board meetings. Advance public notice of all regular and special meeting dates and times shall be given in the method determined by the Board. Notice of each meeting shall be publicized according to statute and on the County's website.

B. AGENDA

1. All requests for items to be placed on the agenda shall be described clearly and explicitly, i.e., discussion of, resolution for, open or award bids, approval of, and whether official action is necessary. All requests shall be delivered to the County Clerk by noon two days prior to the meeting. (That is by noon Tuesday for a Thursday meeting.)
2. Agenda items submitted by the public will be included on the agenda, but discussion of these items is at the Board's discretion.
3. The agenda will be available at the County Clerk's office and County Board meeting room and posted on the County's website.
4. The Clerk shall require nine paper copies of ALL materials relating to agenda items which must be delivered to the Clerk by noon two days prior to the meeting. One copy shall remain at the County Clerk's office for record retention.
5. The Clerk will distribute a digital Board packet or printed copy of submitted materials to each Board member prior to the meeting for the member's review and preparation.

6. The Clerk shall schedule agenda items for no longer than 15 minutes.
7. The Board shall have the right to modify the agenda to include items of an emergency nature only at the public meeting.

C. RECORDING

1. The public shall have the right to attend and the right to speak at meetings of the County Board, and all or any part of a meeting of a County Board, except for closed sessions, may be videotaped, televised, photographed, broadcast, or recorded by any person in attendance by means of a tape recorder, camera, video equipment, or any other means of pictorial or sonic reproduction or in writing.
2. The County Board may make and enforce reasonable rules and regulations regarding the conduct of persons attending, speaking at, videotaping, televising, photographing, broadcasting, or recording its meetings.
3. Stationary video cameras must be placed in the back or sides of the meeting room so as not to interfere with the participation of meeting attendees.
4. Media representatives and persons otherwise electronically recording the meeting may be allowed in the meeting room one half hour prior to the Meeting time to set up equipment.
5. If the meeting is being recorded or televised at the Board's request, the Board shall announce that fact at the beginning of the meeting.
6. Any person videotaping, televising, photographing, broadcasting, or recording by means of a tape recorder, camera, video equipment, or any other means of pictorial or sonic reproduction, shall announce that fact before beginning such videotaping, televising, photographing, broadcasting, or recording, and again after any adjournment lunch break, or closed session.

D. PARTICIPATION AND DECORUM

1. Persons wishing to make public comment shall state his or her name and address and identify his or her position on the issue prior to any comment.
2. During debate, while the chair is speaking, or the Board is voting, the public shall not disturb the Board by whispering or being disruptive or distracting.

3. Speakers should confine their remarks to the question before the Board.
4. The County Board shall treat everyone in a fair and impartial way when receiving testimony or taking necessary action.
5. Rude, obnoxious behavior, or profanity will not be tolerated.
6. The chair reserves the right to have disruptive individuals removed from the meeting.
7. When the disorder is so great that business cannot be transacted and the chair cannot enforce order, the chair may adjourn the assembly as a last resort.
8. No person may speak a second time on any issue until all persons wishing to speak have done so.
9. Time limits on testimony given before the Board shall be at the discretion of the Board chair but shall not exceed 5 minutes per individual per agenda item as per discretion of the Board chair. The Board will attempt to give proponents and opponents equal time on each issue.
10. Those testifying should identify any organization or group they may be representing. Large groups in attendance which are supporting or opposing the same position with regard to the subject of a public hearing or matter should choose one or two spokespersons to represent the group.
11. Videos shall be emailed to the Board members prior to the meeting/hearing for their personal viewing. The videos will not be showed during a meeting/hearing.

E. ZOOM PARTICIPATION RULES

1. Board members, County officials and department heads, or members of the public may participate by Zoom or other remote video access.
2. You must arrange remote participation with the County Clerk by noon two days prior to the meeting.
3. You may be placed in a waiting room when you join the meeting.
4. Be on time.

5. Please immediately mute yourself by clicking on the microphone button usually found in the bottom left-hand corner of your screen (a red diagonal line through the microphone will appear that will indicate you have muted your device's microphone).
6. All person shall be stationary, whether seated or standing. If you need to move to an area with better internet connectivity or to an area where there are no other individuals around you, please do so prior to entering the Zoom Boardroom. It is not acceptable to be walking, moving, driving, or riding in a vehicle in a Zoom Boardroom.
7. Please be patient. While participation via Zoom allows for increased efficiency and decreased travel costs, please remember that the County Board of Supervisors likely have several matters scheduled at the same time and wants to afford all their opportunity to be heard.
8. A Board member may not vote when participating remotely but may state on the record how he would have voted if physically present.

F. THE CHAIR

1. The duties of the chair include, but are not limited to the following: to open the session at the required time by taking the chair and calling the Board to order; to announce business before the Board in the order it must be addressed; to state and put to a vote all motions; to announce the result of a vote on motions; to restrain members engaged in debate within the rules of order; to enforce order and decorum; to authenticate by his or her signature, when necessary, all of the acts, orders and proceedings of the Board; and to represent and stand for the Board in general.
2. The chair may vote on any issue and may be appointed to any committee.
3. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall preside at the Board meeting and any other meeting that would be the Chair's responsibility, shall perform the duties of the Chair and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Board.
4. In the event that the Chair and Vice-Chair are both absent, then the next most senior Supervisor based upon consecutive years of service as a Supervisor, shall stand in for the Vice-Chair and perform all duties as provided herein.

G. CLOSED OR EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

1. The Board may hold a closed session by an affirmative vote of a majority of the voting members if it is clearly necessary to protect the public interest or prevent needless injury to the reputation of an individual and if that individual has not requested a public meeting.
2. Any requests prior to the Board meeting for an executive session may be made by a Board member with the office of the County Clerk in the same manner as an agenda item and shall be filed at the County Clerk's office.
3. A closed meeting may not be held for discussion of the appointment or election of a new member to any public body. Closed sessions may be held for, but shall not be limited to, such reasons as:
 - a. Strategy sessions with respect to collective bargaining, real estate purchases, or litigation;
 - b. Discussion regarding deployment of security personnel or devices;
 - c. Investigative proceedings regarding allegations of criminal misconduct;
 - d. Evaluation of the job performance of a person when necessary to prevent needless injury to the reputation of a person and if that person has not requested a public meeting.
4. The vote to hold a closed session shall be taken in open session based on a motion to close the meeting to the public, with a majority vote of the Board approving the motion.
5. The Board may request the County Clerk's attendance as an observer only at the executive session. Other elected or appointed officials or other interested persons may attend the executive session at the request of the Board.
6. The vote of each member on the question of holding a closed session, the reason for the closed session, and the time when the closed session commenced and concluded shall be recorded in the minutes. The Board shall restrict its consideration to only those purposes set forth in the minutes as the reason for the closed session.
7. The meeting shall reconvene in open session before any formal action may be taken. Formal action shall not include guidance in negotiations given by members of the County Board to legal counsel or other negotiations as noted above.

8. Any Board member has the right to challenge the continuation of a closed session if that member determines that the session has exceeded the reason stated in the original motion to hold a closed session, or if the member contends that the session is not clearly necessary to protect the public interest or to prevent needless injury to the reputation of an individual. Such challenge shall be overruled only by a majority vote of the members of the public body and shall be recorded in the minutes.
9. The Board may not fail to invite a portion of its members to a meeting, and no Board may designate itself a subcommittee of the whole body for purposes of circumventing open meetings laws. No closed session, informal meeting, chance meeting, social gathering, or electronic communication be used for purposes of circumventing open meetings laws.
10. Open meeting laws do not apply to chance meetings or to attendance at or travel to conventions or workshops of members of a Board at which there is no meeting of the body then intentionally convened, if there is no vote or other action taken regarding any matter over which the public body has supervision, control, jurisdiction, or advisory power.

H. COMMITTEES/DUTIES

1. The Board shall appoint committees, boards, and commissions.
2. The first person named to a committee is the committee chair. Although the committee may elect another chair if they so choose. The Clerk shall advise the committee chair of the names of the other members of the committee, the matter referred to the committee, and any instruction from the Board. The chair of the Board may serve as a member or chair of a committee.
3. County members who are members of regional, state, or national committees or Boards relating to their County responsibilities shall make oral reports to the Board no less frequently than each quarter of the activities of that Board or committee.
4. The primary function of the committee shall be to study, analyze, advise and assist the Board on policy development.
5. The Sheriff and Deputy Sheriff(s) shall serve as Sergeant-At-Arms as necessary. Sergeants-At-Arms shall maintain order.

I. MINUTES

1. The County Board shall keep minutes of all meetings showing the time and place of the meeting, members present and absent, and the substance of all matters discussed.
2. The County Clerk or his or her designee shall attend the sessions of the County Board. The County Clerk or his or her designee shall sign the record the proceedings of the County Board and attest to the same with the County seal.
3. Any action taken on any question or motion duly moved and seconded shall be by roll call vote of the Board in open session, and the record shall state how each member voted or if the member was absent or not voting. (§84-1413(2)) The record need not state that the vote was by roll call but must show if and how each member voted.
4. The minutes of all meetings and evidence and documentation received or disclosed in open session shall be public records and open to public inspection during normal business hours.
5. The County Board shall publish, within ten working days of each Board meeting, a brief statement of the proceedings, including the amount of each claim allowed, the purpose of the claim, and the name of the claimant, except that payroll amounts may be included as one item. Specific salary information shall be published annually.
6. A brief statement of the proceedings for publication shall include those items required by §23-122 and may also include a list of Board members in attendance, the time and place of the meeting, major topics of discussion and their resolution, and other items which may be helpful in summarizing the meeting. The published statement need not contain the full meeting minutes.

J. BIDS

1. The time and date of receipt shall be stamped on all bid's envelopes submitted to the County Clerk. Bid envelopes shall remain sealed until opened on the published date and time. Bids received later than the published date and time to submit bids shall be rejected.
2. The submitted bids and envelopes may be photocopied for the Board Members after opening and before announcement and discussion.

Dated this 25th day of August, 2022.