

City of Philadelphia
Office of City Commissioners
Proposed Public Meeting Rules
For the Board of Elections¹

Meetings

1. The meetings of the Board of Elections shall always be open and accessible to the public.
2. The stenographer shall record the entire proceedings including any discussions, policy determinations, and any vote taken. As soon as practical after the hearing and/or meeting the entire record shall be transcribed.

Notice

1. Notice giving the time, date, and location of public meetings shall be advertised not less than three days in advance thereof in a newspaper of general circulation, as defined by the Newspaper Advertising Act of July 9, 1976, published in Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act . Notice shall also be posted in the public building where the meeting is to be held and at the Board's principal office.
2. Notice of a special meeting of the Board shall be advertised not less than 24 hours in advance thereof, and must otherwise meet all of the criteria for a regular public meeting, defined in the rule above.
3. A meeting agenda shall be posted online 24 hours in advance of any public meeting, as well as in the building where the meeting is to be held. Copies of the agenda shall be made available to the public at the meeting.

Meeting Chair

1. The Chair of the Board of Elections shall be elected from among its members upon the organization of the Board, or upon the occurrence of a vacancy in said office, and such election shall be by a majority of all Board members by a roll call vote. The Chair shall serve at the pleasure of the majority of Board members. In the event of the Chair's prolonged absence or disability, the Vice Chair shall serve as acting head of meeting during said absence.
2. The Chair shall preside over all public meetings of the Board of Elections. In the event of the Chair's temporary absence from meetings, the Vice Chair shall, during the absence of the Chair, exercise all powers of the Chair.
3. The Chair shall preserve order and decorum, enforce all rules adopted for the government of the Board, prevent personal reflection, confine members in debate to the question under discussion; and when two (2) or more members rise at the same time for recognition of the Chair, decide who shall first be heard. The Chair shall decide all questions of order subject to an appeal made by two (2) members. The Chair's decision on questions of order shall not be

¹ These rules shall be read in conjunction with the Governing Rules for the Office of the City Commissioners for the 2024-2028 Term, as adopted by the Board of Elections on January 10, 2024.

debated, except upon appeal from the Chair's decisions. Questions of order may be raised while an appeal is pending, but no appeal from the decision of the presiding officer on such questions may be taken while the first appeal is pending.

4. The Chair shall vote on all questions, but the Chair's vote shall be the last to be recorded.
5. The Chair shall arrange for the transcription of the public meetings of the Board of Elections.

Rights of Members in Debate

1. Members speaking shall address the Chair and be recognized before speaking. When presenting a paper to other Board members, the presenting member shall first state its import. Members shall not be interrupted when speaking except by a call to order by the Chair, or by a member through the Chair, or by a call for the previous question.
2. The Chair may place reasonable limitations on the length of time a Board member may speak during debate.
3. A motion for adjournment shall always be in order and shall be decided without debate, except that it shall not be received while the Board is voting on another question, or while a member is addressing the Board.
4. If the foregoing order of business is interrupted by an adjournment, the business of the next meeting shall proceed as above set forth, unless the majority of the Board present shall decide that it shall commence where interrupted.

Rules of Order, Privileged and Subsidiary Motions

1. When a question is under consideration, no motion shall be received, except for motions:
 - a. to adjourn,
 - b. to lay on the table,
 - c. for the previous question, the effect of which is to end debate and have an immediate vote taken on the pending question(s),
 - d. to postpone,
 - e. to amend.

These motions shall have preference in the order in which they are above mentioned, and the first three (3) shall be decided without debate. An indefinite postponement shall be equivalent to a rejection.

2. The motion for the previous question must be seconded by at least one member, and shall require the vote of a majority of all the Board members to sustain it. If the motion for the previous question is sustained, the question shall be upon pending amendments and the main question in their order, and all incidental questions arising after a motion shall be decided, whether on appeal or otherwise, without debate.
3. On a call of ayes and nays, the Secretary shall read the names of the members and no member shall be permitted to change their vote after the member has voted, unless the member at the

time, and before the result is announced, declares that the member voted under a misapprehension.

4. The ayes and nays on any question may be called by two (2) members.
5. A point of order raised by a Board member must be procedural in nature.

Public Comment

1. At each meeting of the Board, opportunity shall be provided for residents and taxpayers to comment on action items that are listed on the agenda for that meeting of the Board.
2. Each resident or taxpayer who wishes to provide public comment shall be limited to two (2) minutes, or such other time period as the Chair may announce. The Chair may place additional reasonable limitations on public comment to permit the Board to conduct its meetings and to maintain order, including limiting repetitious comments.
3. Before providing comment, a resident or taxpayer shall state his or her name, address, and, if not a resident of the City, state that he or she is a Philadelphia taxpayer.
4. If in the Chair's judgment there is not sufficient time at a meeting for residents and taxpayers to comment, the Chair may announce that the public comment period will be deferred to the next public meeting, provided that no action shall be taken on an agenda item unless there was an opportunity for public comment on that item.