

BENNER TOWNSHIP
Centre County, Pennsylvania

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-9

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A POLICY TO GOVERN PUBLIC
COMMENT AT MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF BENNER TOWNSHIP, CENTRE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of Benner Township (the "Board") welcomes and encourages public comment by its residents as a valuable mechanism to evaluate and address issues of concern within Benner Township (the "Township") as well as offer members of the public an opportunity to actively participate in their local government by commenting/influencing issues directly related to the governance of the municipality in which they reside.

WHEREAS the Board also strives to balance the objectives with the need to ensure that all public meetings are conducted in an orderly, efficient, and productive manner; and

WHEREAS to facilitate these cumulative goals, the Board desires to formalize a policy of decorum to be adhered to by all those in attendance at public meetings held by Benner Township.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF BENNER TOWNSHIP, as follows:

The following rules and regulations governing public comment and the decorum associated therewith are hereby adopted by the Board, as amended from time to time:

RULES AND REGULATIONS OF BENNER TOWNSHIP, CENTRE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA REGARDING CONDUCT OF PUBLIC MEETINGS

WHEREAS, pursuant to the laws governing open meetings, 65 Pa.C.S. §701 et seq. (hereinafter the “Sunshine Act”), an “agency” as defined by the Sunshine Act; and

WHEREAS, the Benner Township Board of Supervisors shall use Robert’s Rules of Order (as revised from time to time) (hereinafter “Robert’s Rules”) as a general guide for the conduct of meetings; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this document is to set forth rules and regulations regarding the conduct of public meetings of the Board of Supervisors of Benner Township (hereinafter the “Board of Supervisors”) including guidelines for public comment, conduct and protocol and the use of recording devices at such meetings.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ADOPTED by Benner Township, Centre County, by the Board of Supervisors, and it is hereby

ADOPTED by the authority of the same as follows:

- 1. SCOPE OF PUBLIC COMMENT:** The scope of public comment, as defined in the Sunshine Act, shall be limited to matters of concern, official action or deliberations which are or may come before the Board of Supervisors. These matters are defined by the Second Class Township Code which sets forth the powers and responsibilities and delineates the corporate and specific powers of the Board of Supervisors. Public comment is not intended for purposes of solely reciting legislation, ordinances, or other such documents.
- 2. PROCEDURES FOR ACCEPTING PUBLIC COMMENT:**
 - a. REGULAR OR SPECIAL MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**
 - (i) Resident/Taxpayer: The Board of Supervisors shall provide a reasonable opportunity for residents and/or taxpayers of the Township at the beginning of each regular or special meeting to comment on all matters listed for official action and to comment on any other matters or concerns or deliberations which are or may come before the Board of Supervisors. In the course of each regular and/or special meeting, residents and/or taxpayers may also be recognized at the discretion of the Board of Supervisors Chairman, Vice Chairman or president pro tempore (hereinafter the “presiding officer”), whoever is presiding over the meeting on behalf of the Board of Supervisors, in order to provide comments or information which may be helpful to the Board of

Supervisors in its deliberations on a matter before the Board of Supervisors.

- (ii) Nonresident/non-taxpayer: Extending the courtesy of public comment to nonresident/non-taxpayer individuals is discretionary. If a nonresident/non-taxpayer wishes to address the Board of Supervisors on a matter for official action or a matter of concern, the Board Supervisors may extend the courtesy of public comment and may want to provide for this comment, especially if the individual(s) has information that may be helpful or in the best interests of the Township for the Board of Supervisors to consider.
- (iii) Time limits: The purpose of a time limit is to assure that all wishing to speak have the opportunity to do so, that all shall have an equal opportunity to speak that, that the Board of Supervisors shall receive all comments on matters for official action prior to voting, and that the Board of Supervisors shall be able to conduct the required business of the meeting agenda.

Generally, each person to address the Board of Supervisors shall be provided a maximum of five (5) minutes.

If a time limit of fewer than five (5) minutes is to be utilized, it shall be indicated at the beginning of the public comment portion on the meeting. In no case shall a time limit of fewer than two (2) minutes be designated.

The presiding officer shall designate the timekeeper, usually the Board Secretary. The speaker will be told when one (1) minute remains on the time.

If, after one-half (1/2) hour, at a meeting where a sign-in form has not been used, public comment has not been contemplated, the presiding officer may ask by show of hands those persons desiring to speak to agenda items, and those desiring to speak to other matters of concern until the end of the meeting, prior to adjournment or, within his or her discretion, to the next regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors or to a special meeting occurring in advance of the next regular meeting.

- (iv) Agenda: A resident and/or taxpayer of the Township may request to be placed on the agenda for the public comment period of a regular meeting or special meeting of the Board of Supervisors. Such request must be made directly to the Board Secretary a minimum of three (3) business days prior to the date of the meeting.

- (v.) Sign-in forms: When it becomes known, either in advance of a meeting or upon arrival to a meeting, that there may be many persons wishing to comment, the Board Secretary may have a sign-in form available and require that all those present who desire to make public comment sign up to speak. This form will provide, name, address, and indicate whether the matter is an agenda item for action or other matters of concern.

After review of the sign-in form, the presiding officer shall determine if a time limit of less than five (5) minutes for each speaker is required.

b. TOPICAL WORK SESSIONS/COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Topical work sessions and committee meetings are non-voting meetings held to gather information, work on items to get ready for consideration of placement of the agenda, and to prepare the agenda of items for official action. It shall be the policy of the Board of Supervisors to provide for a period of comment on matters of concern within the allowed scope at the beginning of each session. Given the topic(s) of the work session, required participation of committee members, other professionals or consultants, the presiding officer, or committee chair, as appropriate, may set a time limit on the period for public comment and/or defer it to the end of the work session or committee meeting.

3. CONDUCT AND PROTOCOL

- a. All public comment shall be directed to the presiding officer, who will provide response as appropriate. This shall include comment related to any presentation made to the Board of Supervisor. In those instances, the present, when asked to make responses, shall do so through the chair (presiding officer), as Robert's Rules direct.
- b. If a member of the Board of Supervisors has information he or she wishes to offer, the member may request to be recognized and then provide the information to the presiding officer. The presiding officer may also, at his or her discretion, request or offer a member of the Board of Supervisors the opportunity to respond to a comment.
- c. The public and members of the Board of Supervisors are at all times to demonstrate mutual respect and decorum. The Board of Supervisors are not to engage members of the public in argument, nor are members of the public to speak out from their seats or engage one another in argument. Any Board member or members of the public engaging in any such conduct shall be called out of order.

- d. Comments which make statements of personal attacks or statements that could be construed as libelous, slanderous, or that defame the character of any elected or appointed official or any member of the public, shall not be permitted.
- e. Comments of a partisan political nature to speak either in favor or in opposition to any political candidate shall not be permitted.
- f. On the occasions when a topic or issue is brought forward during a public comment that a member of the Board would like discussed, the member may request that the Board of Supervisors take up this item under the appropriate category of the agenda for discussion or future action.
- g. Robert's Rules shall be used as a guide for public meetings. However, any actions by the Board of Supervisors which may not be in strict accordance with Robert's Rules or the within Rules and Regulations shall not be deemed invalid or illegal unless and except any federal, state or local law or ordinance is violated.

4. USE OF RECORDING DEVICES:

- a. Recording devices, including tape recorders, video cameras, television cameras, microphones, cameras, wireless telephones, and other similar mechanical, electric or electronic devices shall generally be permitted in public meetings. However, no recording devices which produce sound distracting to the audience or to meeting participants shall be permitted. No recording devices shall be permitted prior to the commencement of a public meeting, following the adjournment of a public meeting, during a recess of a public meeting, during a conference held pursuant to §707(b) of the Sunshine Act, or during an executive session of the Board of Supervisors held pursuant to §708 of the Sunshine Act.
- b. Recording devices shall be operated from the area set aside for the general public so as not to interfere in any way with the activities of the Board of Supervisors or the ability of the general public to observe the Board of Supervisors.
- c. Recording devices shall be positioned only in the location designated by the Board of Supervisors, which designation shall provide reasonable access to record the proceedings, without distracting or blocking the view of the audience and without being affixed to or occupying spaces on furniture, walls or fixtures in the meeting room.
- d. Only available light shall be used for recording devices unless prior approval for additional lighting is granted by the Board of Supervisors Chairman or the Vice Chairman if the Chairman is unavailable.

- e. Movement about the room while a meeting is in progress may be distracting and bothersome to the audience and to meeting participants. Persons operating recording devices shall remain in a single location during the meeting and shall not be permitted to move about in order to record while the meeting is in progress.
- f. No recording devices may be operated while concealed.
- g. No recording device may be operated prior to a meeting being called to order, while a meeting is in recess, or after a meeting is adjourned.
- h. No recording device may be used to record private conversations between audience members, officials, or others whose comments or questions are made privately and not for public consumption.
- i. Operators of recording devices, who violates these Rules and Regulations and who do not immediately remedy the violations at the request of the Board of Supervisors, shall not be permitted to continue recording during the meeting.

5. AMENDMENTS:

The Board of Supervisors may adopt amendments to these Rules and Regulations from time to time in order to comply with the Sunshine Act or as it deems necessary to further ensure order in the conduct of public meetings.

6. POSTINGS:

A copy of these Rules and Regulations shall be conspicuously posted at the Benner Township Municipal Building, 1224 Buffalo Run Road, Bellefonte, Pennsylvania.

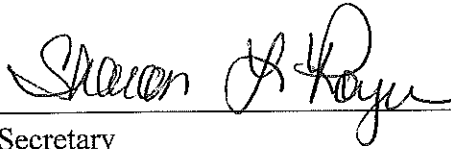
7. EFFECTIVE DATE:

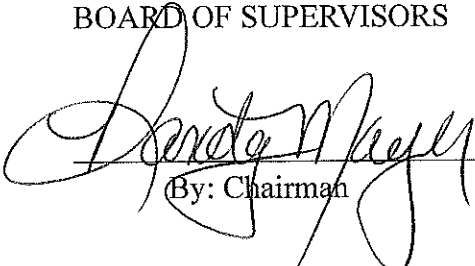
These Rules and Regulations shall take effect on April 7, 2026.

ADOPTED, this 6th day of April, 2026, at a duly advertised regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Benner Township.

ATTEST:

BENNER TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS


Secretary


By: Chairman

(SEAL)