

### **South Portland**

Aside from allowing comments on all agenda item for that specific item, we have general public comment at the beginning and end of each business meeting, limited to 3 minutes per person, but no overall time limit, so it could go on for hours.

### **Gorham**

If our Council is faced with repetitive comments from a large group, the chair reserves the right to ask who in attendance is supporting the same comments / material and limit repetitive comments. At least that has been our practice.

### **Cape Elizabeth**

For public comment on items NOT on the agenda, Cape has added a step where after 15 min of comments, the Council has to vote to continue the open public comment period. I've never seen them vote not to extend it, and the 15 min should probably be a longer period of time, but adding a check in with Council to see if they want to keep going seems like one step you could perhaps try. I don't believe it has been legally challenged or tested here.

#### *Citizen Opportunity for Discussion of Items Not on the Agenda*

Limited to 15 minutes; 3 minutes per person. Time may be extended by majority vote of the councilors present. When recognized by the chair, the speaker shall give their name and address or local affiliation, if the affiliation is pertinent.

### **Cumberland**

In Cumberland there is the opportunity for comments on items not on the agenda, comments are limited to 5 minutes per person, but no time limit on for how long this segment of the agenda may go.

## **Scarborough**

See below for the portion of the Town Council Rules and Policies that governs public comment. I think you are interested in Section 202.2a General Public Comment, and as an added bonus I have also included the provision relating to "decorum". Tom

### *202.0: Procedures For Addressing The Council.*

Any person wishing to address the Town Council will be given an opportunity to do so in accordance with the following procedures:

#### *202.1: Procedure.*

A Public Comment Period shall be conducted prior to the start of any Council business at each regular Town Council meeting, at which time citizens shall be given the opportunity to be heard on matters concerning Town business in general. Additional public comment shall be allowed during public hearings and on agenda items. Such public forums and/or public comment periods may be waived if no member of the public wishes to speak. Persons wishing to speak will preface their comments by giving their name and address. [Amended 10/21/2009]

#### *202.2: Time Limit.*

All such public forums, public comment periods and public hearings shall be conducted under the following guidelines:

*202.2a: General Public Comment:* Persons addressing the Town Council during the public comment period at the beginning of the meeting shall limit their comments to (3) three minutes. Individuals may be permitted to speak more than once at the discretion of the Chair of the Council. The first (30) thirty minutes of the Council meeting will be allocated for general public comment. If it appears that the public comment period will exceed 30 minutes, public comment may be suspended by the Chair, so the Town Council may conduct its business, in any case to occur prior to adjournment. [Amended 10/21/2009]

*202.2.b.: Public Hearing Comment:* Persons addressing the Town Council during a public hearing shall limit their comments to the particular agenda item and shall limit their comments to (3) three minutes. Individuals may be permitted to speak more than once at the discretion of the Chair of the Council. [Amended 04/18/2001; 10/21/2009]

*202.2.c: Public Comment on Agenda Items:* Following the reading of each agenda item, the Chair shall ask if any member of the public wishes to speak on that item. Persons who have previously addressed the Town Council during the public comment portion and wishes to speak on an agenda item may do so only if there is new and pertinent information to be added and limit their comments to (3) three minutes. [Amended 10/21/2009]

*202.2.d: Council Member Comments:* Each Council Meeting Agenda schedules an opportunity for Council Member to share personal comments that may be of community interest, at the close of each meeting. Town Council members shall limit their comments to (10) ten minutes. Individual Councilors may be permitted to speak more than once at the discretion of the Chair of the Council.

*202.3: Decorum.*

Persons present at Council meetings, including Elected Officials, are requested not to applaud or otherwise express approval or disapproval of any statements made or action taken at such meeting.

*202.3.a:* Persons addressing the Council shall direct their remarks exclusively to the Council Chair unless the Chair allows otherwise. Persons will strive to be accurate in their statements and avoid making comments that are obscene, threatening, or disruptive. All statements should respect the dignity and seriousness of the proceeding. Persons conduct themselves in a manner expected of all meeting participants. [amended 04/18/2001; 04/01/2015; 02/19/2025]

*202.3.b.:* It shall be at the discretion of the Council Chair to ask any persons violating the expectation outline in 202.3.a, to cease such action or risk being asked to be seated or removed. [Adopted 10/21/2009; 02/19/2025])

## **Portland**

The city council used to put on the agenda public comment at the end of the council's agenda - ensuring that we could always get through the agenda - and indicating if there was on the agenda comment needed after a certain hour (like 10pm, etc), it would not be allowed.

That changed about 6 years ago. Now the council takes comment (3 mins per person/entity/etc) at the beginning of the meeting - at a specified time (5pm) - and the mayor can limit that time period to 45 mins total (you could do whatever amount of time you'd like) and he can also make people wait to the end of the meeting if there is too much comment for the given time period - so the council can get to its agenda-ed work.

Lastly, I would note that the council did research other restrictions (like requiring people to sign up on a list before they would be able to comment at a given meeting; limiting the time period even further (to 30 mins or less - total); and/or moving the agenda comment period back to the end of the meeting), but the council chose not make any of those changes in their rules this year.

## **Freeport**

The Freeport Town Council Rules of Order limits public comment to 3 minutes per speaker and a total of 30 minutes for the period; however, the Town Council also has the power to expand the total time allotted by vote of the members present.

## **Sebago**

The new public comment mandate for matters addressed by the municipal governing body at any regularly scheduled public meeting goes into effect September 24, 2025.

We intend to amend our policy to meet this standard and to also limit individual and total comment time. I will send you a copy when it is approved.

There is a great "comment section" guide provided by the Municipal Research and Services Center, if you would like a copy, please let me know.