



BOARD of TRUSTEES
MIAMI TOWNSHIP
HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO
3780 Shady Lane North Bend, Ohio 45052
Phone: (513)941-2466 Fax: (513)941-9307
E-mail: administration@miamitownship.org

Trustees
Daniel K. Blanton
Mike Robison
Tim Vollrath

Fiscal Officer
Cindy Oser

Administrator
Jim Brett

Miami Township

Rules of Civility and Decorum at Public Meetings

Section 1. Purpose and Policy

Public meetings are essential to the democratic process and shall be conducted in a manner that is open, fair, orderly, and respectful. These Rules of Civility and Decorum are adopted to ensure that the public's business is conducted efficiently, to protect the rights of free expression, and to maintain a safe, productive, and harassment-free environment for elected officials, Township employees, and members of the public.

Nothing in these rules is intended to prohibit the lawful expression of opinions or robust debate on matters of public concern. These rules are intended solely to regulate the time, place, and manner of conduct so that meetings may proceed without disruption.

Section 2. General Standards of Civility

- (A) Elected officials, Township employees, and members of the public shall treat one another with courtesy, dignity, and respect.
- (B) Threats, including threats of violence, are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.
- (C) Hostile, intimidating, harassing, or disruptive behavior is prohibited in all Township facilities and at all public meetings.
- (D) Participants are expected to:
 1. Treat all persons courteously;
 2. Listen respectfully to differing viewpoints;
 3. Exercise self-control and professionalism;
 4. Focus comments on issues, not individuals; and
 5. Respect disagreement and dissent as part of the democratic process.

Section 3. Prohibited Conduct

No person shall engage in conduct that disrupts or threatens to disrupt Township operations or public meetings, including but not limited to:

- (A) Insulting, demeaning, intimidating, abusive, profane, or slanderous language;
- (B) Harassment or intimidation of any elected official, employee, or member of the public;

- (C) Shouting, yelling, heckling, booing, hissing, clapping, or other audible disruptions;
- (D) Conduct that threatens, provokes, or incites violence;
- (E) A continuing pattern of disruptive behavior after a warning;
- (F) Willful destruction of, or damage to, property;
- (G) Unwelcome physical contact;
- (H) Use of audible electronic devices during meetings;
- (I) Display of signs, banners, or posters that obstruct views, impede safe passage, or disrupt the orderly conduct of the meeting; and
- (J) Campaigning for public office, soliciting funds, or promoting private business ventures within the meeting room.

Section 4. Public Comment Rules

- (A) Public comment shall be permitted only at times designated on the agenda or during a properly noticed public hearing.
- (B) Speakers are required to complete a Speaker Card prior to being recognized to address the Board. Speaker Cards shall be available at the entrance to the meeting room.
- (C) All speakers shall:
 1. Be recognized by the Chair of the Township Board;
 2. Speak from the designated podium;
 3. State their name and address for the record;
 4. Direct all remarks to the Board, as a body, through the Chair; and
 5. Confine remarks to the subject under discussion or current Township business.
- (D) Public comment is not a debate. There shall be no question-and-answer exchanges during public comment unless permitted by the Chair. Individual speakers shall be limited to three (3) minutes.
- (E) Any individual wishing to make a formal presentation to the Township Board of Trustees shall submit a request to the Township Administrator no later than forty-eight (48) hours prior to the scheduled meeting. The request shall include the name(s) of the speaker(s), the topic to be discussed, and the amount of time requested. The Township Administrator shall notify the individual of the decision to allow the presentation no later than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting.
- (F) Comments shall be concise, non-repetitive, and relevant to the agenda item or current Township business.
- (G) No comments shall be permitted outside the public comment portion of the agenda.

Section 5. Audience Conduct

- (A) Audience members shall remain seated and shall not address the meeting unless recognized by the Chair of the Township Board.
- (B) Mobile phones and other electronic devices shall be silenced.
- (C) Private conversations shall be avoided.
- (D) Persons entering or leaving the meeting room shall do so quietly and with minimal disruption.
- (E) Eating, smoking, or possession of weapons or other objects deemed a safety threat is prohibited in the meeting room, except as permitted by law.

Section 6. Authority of the Chair of the Township Board

- (A) The Chair of the Township Board is responsible for maintaining order and decorum and for uniformly enforcing these rules.
- (B) The Chair may call any person out of order and direct that person to cease conduct that violates these rules.
- (C) If a person continues disruptive behavior after a warning, the Chair may order the person to leave the meeting.
- (D) If a person refuses to comply with an order to leave, the Chair may direct law enforcement to remove the individual from the meeting so that the meeting may continue.

Section 7. Applicability and Enforcement

- (A) These Rules of Civility and Decorum apply to all meetings of the Township Board of Trustees, boards and commissions, work sessions, and other public meetings conducted by Miami Township.
- (B) Township boards, commissions, and Township staff shall promote awareness of and adherence to these rules.
- (C) These rules may be included in meeting agendas and may be read or referenced at the beginning of public meetings.

Adopted to promote respectful discourse, meaningful public participation, and effective local governance.