

PUBLIC COMMENT PROCEDURES
FOR CITY COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF MORGANTON

In order to provide the public with an opportunity to address City Council during its regular meetings, and in compliance with state law, a public comment period will be included during the regularly scheduled Council meeting of each month (provided there is such a regularly scheduled meeting).

Speakers are asked to review these rules and guidelines before speaking. Any questions should be addressed to the City Clerk or the City Attorney.

1. **Public Comment Period.** Unless the Council directs otherwise, the public comment period shall be at the very beginning of the Council's meeting, before any business is conducted, and shall not exceed thirty (30) minutes in duration. Speakers will be called upon in the order in which the names appear on the sign-up sheet. If the allotted time period of thirty (30) minutes expires before all persons who have signed up are able to speak, the names of those not reached will be carried over to the next public comment period and placed first on the list.
2. **Sign up.** Anyone desiring to speak before Council may sign up to do so by contacting the Assistant City Clerk before 12:00 Noon on the day of any regularly scheduled Council meeting. If not signed up in advance, a prospective speaker must sign in, on the sheet provided, in Council Chambers prior to the opening of the meeting. No one will be allowed to speak during the public comment period unless that person has signed up. Sign up shall include the name and street address of the speaker, and the topic or issue which he or she wishes to address.
3. **Presentation.** Speakers will be called by the Mayor or presiding officer in the order in which they have signed up. Speakers shall address the Council from the lectern near the front of the room (unless physically unable), and begin their remarks by stating their name and address.
4. **Time Allowance.** Speakers during the monthly public comment period shall be limited to three (3) minutes each. No one may speak more than once during any one public comment period. The presiding officer may designate the City Attorney, City Clerk or another official as the time keeper for enforcement of this policy.
5. **Common Topics.** If more than three (3) persons have signed up to speak on any particular topic or issue, the presiding officer may request that a single spokesperson be selected to speak on that topic on behalf of those either supporting or opposing the same position. In

such cases, additional time may (at the discretion of City Council) be allotted to such a representative speaker, but not more than six (6) minutes in total. Where there are opposing or competing points of view on a particular topic, the presiding officer will allot like time to a spokesperson for the opposing view.

6. **Visual Aids or Exhibits.** If a speaker desires to present exhibits, or use any video, computer or other visual aid of any kind, arrangements for such must be made in advance with the Assistant City Clerk. No additional time will be allotted for setting up such videos or exhibits.
7. **Speaker Etiquette.** All comments shall be addressed to the Council as a whole, and not to individuals. Discussions of any kind between a speaker and a member of the audience will not be allowed. Use of obscene or vulgar words or gestures will not be allowed.
8. **Council Response.** The Council will not respond to any questions or comments made by any speaker, except if necessary to direct the speaker to a particular staff person for follow up or response. It is in the discretion of the Mayor and Council whether and when to take any action on items brought up in the public comment period.
9. **Topic Exclusions.** During the public comment period, speakers shall not address or discuss:
 - (a) Matters which are the subject of public hearings on the Council's Agenda;
 - (b) The candidacy of any person, including the speaker, seeking elective office; or
 - (c) "Closed Session" matters, including but not limited to threatened or pending litigation, matters within the attorney/client privilege, personnel issues, or property acquisition issues.

The presiding officer may stop any speaker who addresses or attempts to discuss any such matter.

10. **Audience Behavior.** Rowdy, disruptive or threatening behavior by members of the audience during or in response to a speaker's comments during the public comment period will not be permitted.
11. **Publications.** Copies of this Policy shall be available at the front desk of City Hall, and on the City's website, and shall be posted at the entrance to the City Council chambers before each scheduled meeting.