

# TOWN OF CULPEPER



## TOWN COUNCIL CITIZEN PARTICIPATION POLICY

Adopted: October 14, 2025

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This Citizen Participation Policy is adopted to assist the Town Council in the orderly conduct of Town business consistent with applicable law.

### **DECORUM AND ORDER DURING MEETINGS**

**Audience Decorum.** No person shall address the Town Council while seated or standing in the audience area. No person shall engage in disorderly, disruptive, disturbing, delaying or boisterous conduct, such as, but not limited to, stomping of feet, whistling, yelling, heckling, clapping, use of profane language or obscene gestures, and other similar behavior from the audience which substantially interrupts, delays, or disturbs the peace and good order of the meeting.

**Speaker Decorum.** Once designated by the mayor to speak during Public Forum or a Public Hearing, individuals shall have three (3) minutes to speak (unless the Council sets a different time period per speaker) and shall comply with this Policy. Speakers shall direct their comments to the Council as a whole. The mayor may direct a speaker to cease speech that is irrelevant (as defined below), exceeds the permitted duration, or which disrupts the meeting due to its manner, or if the speaker fails to direct their remarks to the Council as a whole. Speakers may not grant all or part of their time to another person.

**Relevance.** Speakers should address matters relevant to the Culpeper town government. Speech during a public hearing must be directed toward the subject matter of that public hearing. Section 4.5 of the Town Charter limits the Council's control over Town staff, therefore, comments about staff should normally be directed to the Town Manager. The Council has no authority over elections and only the voters select candidates; therefore, supporting or opposing a candidate for elected office is not permitted.

### **ENFORCEMENT OF THIS POLICY**

This policy is to be applied evenhandedly without regard to the viewpoint or content of the speech.

If a speaker's remarks are irrelevant or do not meet the decorum requirements as provided above, the mayor may direct the speaker to confine his or her remarks to relevant topics and observe the decorum requirements. If the mayor directs a speaker to cease speaking on irrelevant topics or to observe the decorum rules and the speaker does not do so, or if a speaker violates the Virginia statute on disorderly conduct, the mayor may direct any individuals present to remove the speaker. A uniformed law enforcement officer shall

act as sergeant-at-arms or bailiff for the Town Council and shall furnish whatever assistance is needed to enforce this Policy or other procedures of the Town Council at the direction of the mayor.

Legal references:

[Charter - Culpeper](#) §§ 3.5, 3.6, 3.11, 4.5

Virginia Code [§ 18.2-415. Disorderly conduct in public places](#)