



# Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN RULES OF PROCEDURE – ADOPTED DECEMBER 4, 2023

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Selectmen adopts the following rules of procedure: These Rules of Procedure establish the rules and procedures for Simsbury Board of Selectmen (“Board”) meetings. The provisions of the Simsbury Charter (“Charter”), the Simsbury Code or any ordinance adopted by the Board shall govern and apply in the event there is any conflict with these Rules.

**§A162-1.1. General rules.** All official meetings of the Board shall be open to the public and the media with the exception of executive sessions. Use of cellular telephones is prohibited in the meeting. It is the Board’s objective to complete meetings by 10:30 PM if possible. The Board will conduct its business in accordance with all other applicable rules and regulations including Connecticut General Statutes and the Charter.

**§A162-1.2. Rules of Procedure.** The Board adopts Robert’s Rules of Order as a general guide for the conduct of all regular and special meetings.

**§A162-2. Meeting Types.** There are two (2) types of Board meetings:

For regular Board meetings; the Board shall meet according to their regular meeting schedule. When a Board meeting falls on an observed holiday, the Board may determine an alternate day for the meeting or cancel the meeting.

For special meetings; a special meeting may be called by the First Selectperson or any four (4) Board members. Special meetings may be called in less than 24 hours, and without notice, for special topics, and to deal with emergencies involving injury or damage to persons or property or the likelihood of such injury or damage if the notice requirements would be impractical.

**§A162-3. First Selectperson & Chair.** The First Selectperson (“Selectman”, “Selectwoman”), shall be a voting member and, if present, shall preside as Chair at all meetings of the Board. In the event of absence or conflict of interest of the First Selectperson, the Deputy First Selectperson shall preside. In the event of absence or conflict of interest of both, First Selectperson and Deputy First Selectperson, the Board shall elect a Chair and the Town Manager shall call to order the meeting for the election of a temporary Chair.

The First Selectperson shall chair the Board's Personnel Sub-Committee. The First Selectperson may present a “State of the Town Message” at the beginning of one regular meeting per month.

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The Chair shall call to order Board meetings. The Chair shall be responsible for maintaining and preserving order throughout the meeting and enforcing the rules of decorum. The Chair shall state all questions submitted for a vote and announce the result. The First Selectperson, as Chair, may participate in debate and shall refrain from making a motion or seconding a motion until it is apparent that no other Board member will do so. The Chair shall determine all motions and points of order, subject to the right of any Board members to appeal, by motion, to the Board. If the motion is seconded and passes by a majority vote, then the ruling of the Chair shall be overruled.

**§A162-4. Decorum & Standards of Conduct.** The Board supports the right of a resident to criticize their local government. The Board strongly urges that all comments addressed to the Board be made appropriately and responsibly, with civility and discretion. This section is not intended to deprive any person their right to freedom of expression or speech, but only to maintain, a safe, productive and harassment-free workplace and environment for Town staff and visitors. All meeting participants should address the Board, maintain a civil tone and should not impugn the motive, character or integrity of any individual. The Board reserves the right to curtail any speaker addressing the Board in a manner that is not consistent with this Section.

The following standards of conduct are considered the minimum requirements for elected and appointed officials, as well as, public audience and visitors.

- I. Elected and appointed officials shall conduct themselves in a mature, appropriate and professional manner, shall respect one another, and shall respect members of the public, and expect the same in return.
- II. Board members shall not communicate between or amongst themselves by any form of electronic communication during a Board meeting.
- III. Members of the public will refrain from behavior that disrupts, or threatens to disrupt, government operations.
- IV. No person attending a public meeting shall engage in disorderly conduct that disrupts, or threatens to disrupt, the orderly conduct of the meeting.
- V. In the event that any member(s) of the public breach these standards of conduct, the Chair shall order them to cease the offending conduct.
- VI. If any member(s) of the public continue to breach these standards of conduct following an order from the Chair to cease the offending conduct, the Chair, may order them to leave the public meeting.
- VII. If any member(s) of the public refuse to leave the public meeting following an order from the Chair, then the Chair, may direct any law enforcement officer on duty to remove them from the public meeting.

**§A162-5. Board Agenda.** A notice, in the form of an agenda, of a Board meeting will be posted publicly by the Town Clerk. When possible, the agenda for a regular meeting, along with relevant resource material, will be distributed to the Board members four (4) days prior to the meeting. Agendas for special meetings shall be posted in the correct timeframe as outlined in State Statute. The First Selectperson shall determine the agenda in consultation with the Town Manager.

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When a board, commission, organizations, or individual is invited to a Board meeting to discuss a particular agenda item, in the interest of their time, that item shall be placed on the agenda at the time requested, if possible.

A Board member may place a legislative item on the agenda by contacting the First Selectperson at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting. The First Selectperson shall consult with the Town Manager and exercise discretion to determine if the matter should be included on the agenda.

Items not specifically included on the agenda may be included, and items included on the agenda may be deleted, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting.

Under no circumstances will any item be added to the agenda later than two (2) hours after the beginning of the meeting. In accordance with Connecticut General Statutes, no items will be added to a special meeting agenda.

**§A162-6. Public Audience.** Recognition of a speaker by the Chair is a prerequisite and necessary for an orderly meeting. No comments shall be made from any other location other than those approved by the Board before the meeting. Any person may address the Board by written communication in regard to any matter concerning Board business for the meeting. The written communication may be submitted by direct mail, email or by addressing the communication to the Town Manager who will distribute copies to the Board. Written comments will be sent to all Board of Selectmen members but not read aloud at meetings or entered into the record.

One period of not less than twenty (20) minutes may be set aside at the beginning of each regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen to allow members of the public present to address the Board. Each speaker will be limited to five (5) minutes and will be asked to sign in ahead of speaking.

Prior to the start of public audience, the Chair may create a speaking list and require that all persons wishing to be heard, “sign in” by giving their name, their address, indicate if they are speaking on behalf of a group or organization. Any person who does not sign in may not be permitted to speak until all those who have signed in have given their testimony. The Chair may change the order of the speaker list and allow additional speaking time. When the Chair identifies a number of speakers who wish to speak in public audience, which would exhaust the reasonable length of time allowed, the Chair may set a shorter period for each speaker.

**§A162-7. Public Hearing & Comment.** The Chair, or Town staff, will introduce the agenda item, describe the matter under consideration, provide any presentation by the Town, the applicant shall have the opportunity to present information or respond to the Town’s presentation, the Board shall have the opportunity to ask questions of Town staff and the applicant, the Chair will open the public hearing for public comment, and speakers must “sign in” because an official transcript of the public hearing is being made. After proponents, opponents and all other individuals who wish to speak regarding the matter under consideration have spoken, and after all questions have been addressed, the Chair closes the public comment component.

If the volume of public comments requires a continuation, if additional information is required or if the Board determines that additional time is warranted to consider the matter of the public

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hearing, the Board may continue the public hearing to a later date and may re-open the public comment portion of the public hearing at any continued public hearing.

**§A162-8. Presentations.** Before presentations begin, the Chair, subject to the concurrence of a majority of the Board, may establish time limits and otherwise control presentations by placing parameters and boundaries on them. There will be no demonstrations during or after the conclusion of any presentation.

**§A162-9. Consent Agenda.** Any item of a routine nature, such as ratification of bid awards, grant applications, donations, public gathering permits, tax refunds, committee and board resignations and appointments, approval of minutes etc., may be placed in a consent agenda portion of that meeting's agenda.

All actions in the consent agenda may be accepted and approved through a unanimous vote by the Board. If there is no unanimous vote to approve the consent agenda, any item on the consent agenda may be removed and considered separately as an agenda item at the request of any Board member.

**§A162-10. Votes & Minutes of Board of Selectmen.** The minutes from each Board meeting shall be open to public inspection and kept by the Town Clerk. In accordance with Chapter 14, Section 1-225 of the Connecticut General Statutes entitled *Freedom of Information Act*, the votes of each Board member upon any issue before the Board of Selectmen shall be reduced to writing and made available to the public within forty-eight (48) hours. These votes shall also be recorded in the minutes of the Board meeting. Further, a draft of the minutes of the Board meeting shall be available for public inspection within seven (7) days of the session to which they refer. The Town Manager, in cooperation with the Town Clerk, will post the actions taken by the Board of Selectmen and both the draft and final version of the meeting minutes on the Town's website when available.

**§A162-11. Expiration.** These Rules of Procedure will be in effect until the end of the Board's term on December 1, 2025.