



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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### PROPOSED ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

#### AN AMENDMENT TO THE RULES OF ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE OF THE COOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**BE IT ORDAINED**, by the Cook County Board of Commissioners, that Chapter 2 - Administration, Article III - County Board, Division 2 - Rules of Organization and Procedure, Sections 2-105(i) and 2-105(l) of the Cook County Code are hereby amended as Follows:

#### Sec. 2-105. - Board of Commissioners; meetings of the Board.

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(i) Public testimony. The Board encourages public participation in the legislative process. To preserve order and decorum and in the interest of efficiency, the presiding officer may impose time and subject matter limits on public comment or testimony. The following rules shall apply at any meeting of the Board and its committees at which public comment or testimony is taken:

~~Subject to the provisions herein, public testimony will be permitted at regular and special meetings of the Board.~~

(1) Authorization as a public speaker shall only be granted to those individuals who have submitted in writing, their name, address, subject matter, and organization (if any) to the Secretary 24 hours in advance of the meeting. Duly authorized public speakers shall be called upon to deliver testimony at a time specified in the meeting agenda. Public testimony must be germane to a specific item ~~or items~~ (s) on the meeting agenda, and the testimony must not exceed three minutes; the Secretary will keep track of the time and advise when the time for public testimony has expired. ~~Persons authorized to provide public testimony shall not use vulgar, abusive or otherwise inappropriate language when addressing the Board. Failure to act appropriately; failure to speak to an item that is germane to the meeting, or failure to adhere to the time requirements may result in expulsion from the meeting and/or disqualify the person from providing future testimony.~~

(2) Disruptions of meetings are prohibited. Disruptions include, but are not limited to:

- a. Speech by an individual after expiration of the time allotted for the speaker's public comment or testimony;
- b. Speech by an individual that is not germane to a specific item or items on the meeting agenda;
- c. Speech by an individual who has not been recognized by the presiding officer for public comment or testimony, who is speaking in a volume louder than a low, conversational level appropriate for communication between persons seated next to each other in the chamber, or whose speech is audible by others; or
- d. Holding or placing a banner or sign during a meeting in a way that may endanger other individuals or that obstructs the free passage or view of others attending or viewing the meeting.

Verbal comments must be conducted in respectful speech with no personal attacks.

- (3) If an individual engages in disruption of the meeting, including but not limited to any of the actions described above, the presiding officer may rule the individual out of order, direct the individual to cease the activity and impose other reasonable conditions for the individual's continued presence at the meeting. If the individual does not immediately comply with the presiding officer's order, the presiding officer may direct the removal of the individual from the meeting. Unless otherwise ordered by the presiding officer, any individual ordered to be removed from a meeting is excluded from returning to that meeting, unless the decision of the presiding officer is overruled by a majority vote of those members in attendance. Any two members may place before the body the question of whether to permit the individual to return to the same meeting.
- (4) If an individual is removed either from two or more committee meetings within a fifteen day period or from two or more consecutive meetings of the Board, the Board President may exclude the individual from participation in public comment or testimony periods at future Board or committee meetings.
- a. The Board President shall notify the individual in writing of the type of exclusion, the specific reasons for the exclusion and the specific terms and length of the exclusion.
- b. The notice of exclusion shall advise that the individual may submit written comments to the Clerk for distribution to the Board members at future public comment or testimony periods.
- c. The notice of exclusion shall be filed with the Clerk, who shall post it on the door to the Board chambers and on the Board's web page, provide a copy of the notice to Board members and mail the notice to the individual's last known address, if any. The notice is effective when posted. The exclusion order shall remain posted on the door to the chambers for the duration of the exclusion period.
- (5) In determining the scope and length of an individual's exclusion allowed under subsection (i) of this section 2-105, the Board President may consider the seriousness of the disruptions to the orderly conduct of the meeting, the number of disruptions in which the individual participated and other reasons deemed relevant by the President.
- a. The Board President may issue an exclusion from future participation in public comment or testimony periods for up to twenty-eight calendar days.
- b. At the next regular meeting of the Board, following the filing and posting of the exclusion notice, the exclusion order may be overruled or modified by a majority vote of those Commissioners in attendance. Any two members may place before the body the question of whether to overrule or modify the exclusion decision.
- (6) Any individual excluded from participation in future public comment or testimony periods may appeal the exclusion by submitting a written appeal to the Clerk within five calendar days after the exclusion notice is posted. The Clerk shall distribute copies of the appeal to all Board members. The Board shall consider the appeal at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting if any two members place it before the body. The individual's exclusion from public comment or testimony periods shall remain in effect during the Board's consideration of the appeal.

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- (1) *Decorum.*
- (1) The presiding officer shall preserve order and decorum, may speak to points of order in preference to other Commissioners, and shall decide all questions of order, subject to appeal.

- (2) In case of any disturbances or disorderly conduct the presiding officer shall have the power to require the chamber to be cleared. If the disturbance is of a type described in subsection (i), above, the provisions of that subsection shall apply.

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**Effective date:** This ordinance shall be in effect immediately upon adoption.