

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON OPEN GOVERNMENT
POLICY ON REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE COMMITTEE**

1. This policy sets forth the requirements to provide public comment at a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Open Government (the Committee) either in-person, in writing, or through electronic means if electronic participation is permitted.
T.C.A. § 8-44-108.
2. The Committee shall allow individuals the opportunity to provide public comment at any Committee meeting that includes an actionable item on the meeting agenda. Comments shall be permitted if the following requirements are met, subject to additional restrictions set forth in this policy.
 - a. The comment must relate to one or more items on the meeting agenda or one or more issues germane to the responsibilities of the Committee, as determined by the co-chairs.
 - b. The person is encouraged to submit a request as indicated on the notice of meeting or as otherwise directed at least two business days prior to the scheduled start time of the meeting. The request shall also identify the meeting agenda item(s) or issue(s) germane to the responsibilities of the Committee upon which the requester wishes to comment.
 - c. The request shall include the person's name. In order to facilitate participation in the meeting, the request should also include e-mail (if available); address; phone number; the organization, agency or individual being represented (if applicable); and any request for accommodation pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA").
3. A scheduled speaker must be physically present to address the Committee, unless one or more members of the Committee is participating through an electronic means of communication, in which case the speaker may appear through electronic means. A scheduled speaker who is unable to attend the meeting may not send a substitute.
4. A speaker is permitted to provide written comment via regular mail or e-mail as identified on the notice of meeting. Written comments are encouraged to be provided at least two business days prior to the meeting.

5. Additional Restrictions.

- a. Only one (1) representative for any person, organization, or agency shall be permitted to provide a public comment at a meeting. Additional members of an organization or agency may be permitted to provide a public comment if all requirements of Paragraph 2 have been met and if granted express permission by at least one of the co-chairs.
- b. No more than ten (10) speakers may deliver public comments at a Committee meeting. In the event that more than ten (10) persons have submitted a request to provide an oral public comment in compliance with all requirements set forth in this policy, the first ten (10) persons who submitted a request shall be permitted to provide a comment at the meeting. However, the co-chairs shall have discretion to expand the number of public comments permitted at the meeting beyond ten (10), based on the circumstances.
- c. A person who is permitted to provide a public comment in accordance with this policy shall be recognized by the co-chairs to provide a public comment for no more than five (5) minutes, but the co-chairs shall have discretion to extend the time to greater than five (5) minutes or to reduce the time to less than five (5) minutes based on the circumstances.
- d. Only one speaker will be permitted to speak at a time.
- e. Speakers appearing in person will not be allowed to use audio and/or visual presentation equipment during their remarks.
- f. Speakers who wish to provide written comments in addition to commenting in person are encouraged to provide written comments in advance of the meeting in accordance with Paragraph 4. A speaker appearing in person may bring written information to be distributed to the Committee but must bring at least seventeen (17) copies for distribution. Speakers are not allowed to personally distribute copies to the Committee for any reason. Written material will be distributed as directed by the co-chairs.
- g. All persons recognized by the co-chairs to provide a public comment shall confine their remarks to the topic(s) indicated in the notice of meeting or germane to the responsibilities of the Committee and indicated in the recognition by the co-chairs.
- h. The comment period is provided solely for comments, not debate. A person recognized to provide a public comment shall not directly question individual members of the Committee without express permission of the co-chairs, nor shall Committee members address questions directly to the commenter without permission of the co-chairs.

- i. A person who departs from the subject matter on which he or she has been recognized to speak, or who otherwise violates this policy, will be declared out of order.
- j. Disruptive behavior shall not be permitted in the meeting room or in a virtual meeting. The co-chairs may request building security to remove any person in violation of this requirement, or in the case of an electronic participant, request the person be muted or removed from the electronic meeting. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to, continuing to comment after allotted time has expired or when not recognized by the co-chairs, violating this policy, and any type of physical action or verbal utterance that disrupts the meeting in violation of T.C.A. § 39-17-306, which makes it unlawful for a person, with the intent to prevent or disrupt a lawful meeting, to substantially obstruct or interfere with the meeting by physical action or verbal utterance.

History

Adopted and Effective November 13, 2025.