

Boyne City Housing Commission (BCHC)

Public Comment Policy

Adopted by BCHC Board of Commissioners 10/22/2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear, fair, and transparent rules for public participation at meetings of the Boyne City Housing Commission (BCHC). This policy ensures compliance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act (MCL 15.263(5)), which guarantees the public an opportunity to address a public body.

2. Policy Statement

BCHC recognizes and supports the right of the public to participate in open meetings. Every open meeting of the Commission shall include at least one period during which members of the public may address the Commission, subject to reasonable rules of order and decorum.

3. Opportunity to Speak

A public comment period shall be included on every meeting agenda. The President may allow additional comment periods (e.g., one at the beginning for agenda items and one at the end for general comments). Each person wishing to speak must be recognized by the President before speaking.

4. Speaker Identification

Speakers should state their name and residence or affiliation (e.g., "Litzenburger Place resident," "Boyne City landlord," "member of the public"). Speakers are not required to provide their address in full. Anonymous comments may be allowed at the President's discretion if identification could create hardship or retaliation risk.

5. Time Limits

Each speaker shall be allowed up to three (3) minutes to make a comment. The President may extend or reduce the time limit depending on the number of speakers or the nature of the meeting. No person may transfer or 'yield' their time to another speaker.

6. Rules of Decorum

To maintain an orderly and respectful environment:

- A. Speakers must address the Commission as a whole, not individual members or staff.
- B. Comments must relate to the business of the Commission or matters under its jurisdiction.
- C. Personal attacks, threats, or slanderous statements are prohibited.
- D. Disruptive conduct (shouting, profanity, interruptions) may result in termination of speaking time or removal from the meeting, consistent with state law.
- E. Audience applause, demonstrations, or outbursts are discouraged to maintain decorum.

7. Commission Response

The Commission is not required to respond to public comments during the meeting. Questions or concerns may be referred to the Executive Director or appropriate staff for later follow-up. The President may briefly clarify factual information if it aids understanding but shall avoid debate during the comment period.

8. Documentation in Minutes

The minutes shall indicate that a public comment period was held. The names of speakers and general topics or issues raised may be summarized, but full transcripts are not required.

9. Remote or Written Comments

When meetings are held virtually or hybrid, public comments shall be accepted via the same remote platform or by email submitted before the meeting. Written comments received in advance may be read aloud or summarized by the Executive Director during the meeting and included in the minutes by reference.

10. Enforcement and Oversight

The President, or the person presiding, is responsible for enforcing this policy. Any modification of public comment procedures must be approved by majority vote of the Commission and recorded in the minutes. This policy shall be posted publicly and reviewed annually to ensure continued compliance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act.

11. References

- A. Michigan Open Meetings Act (MCL 15.263(5))
- B. Michigan Attorney General Opinion No. 5183 (1977)
- C. MCL 15.269 — Requirements for meeting minutes