

SERS Board Governance Policy Manual

Policy Name:	Public Comment in Board Meetings Policy
Policy Number:	2024-POL-BD-01
Effective Date:	September 24, 2024
Reviewed Date:	July 23, 2024, July 30, 2024
Applies To:	Public Speakers and Attendees
Contact Person:	SERS Director of Governance and Strategic Initiatives

I Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide an opportunity for public comments at open meetings of the SERS Board. While recognizing the importance of public participation in open meetings, the Board also recognizes its responsibility for proper governance and the need to conduct its business in an orderly and efficient manner. This policy governs public participation in open meetings in a manner necessary for the Board to conduct its meetings and to maintain order. For purposes of this policy, "Board" and "Board member(s)" include designee(s) and "Presiding Officer" includes the: Board Chair or Assistant Board Chair, as the case may be.

II Procedures

In order to permit fair and orderly expression of public comment, the Board shall provide an opportunity at each open meeting of the Board for the public to comment on matters of concern, official board action, or deliberation. Notwithstanding the foregoing, this policy shall not apply to: (1) Committee meetings of the Board, (2) any proceeding governed by the Administrative Agency Act in relation to adjudications, (3) any protests under the Procurement Code, (4) any proceeding related to the adoption of rules and regulations, (5) executive sessions, or (6) emergency meetings of the Board.

Public comments shall be governed by the following requirements:

1. All speakers are asked to remember that Board meetings are opportunities to engage in civil discourse. Individuals may be ruled out of order and have their speaking privileges terminated if they engage in personal attacks against SERS Board members or Staff or use vulgar, obscene, or physically threatening language.
2. All individuals wishing to participate in an open meeting shall register their request with the Board Secretary, SERS' Executive Director, by noon the Friday¹ before the Board

¹ Board meetings are generally scheduled on Tuesdays; however, for those instances when a Board meeting occurs on another day of the week, requests shall be received by noon two business days before the scheduled start of the Board

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meeting by completing the attached form (Form) at the [SERS Board Meeting Public Comment Request Form](#). When requesting to comment, the individual will include their name, email address if applicable, telephone number, topic to be addressed, group affiliation, if any, the number of attendees in addition to the designated speaker, and whether the individual(s) will appear in person or virtually. Only individuals who have submitted their request to provide public comment and have been approved by the Board Secretary will be recognized by the Presiding Officer.

3. If an individual has a disability that requires reasonable accommodation, they must indicate that request on the Form.
4. If English is not an individual's primary language and they wish to bring a translator, they must indicate that they intend to provide a translator at the meeting on the Form. Should a participant employ the services of a translator so they can address the Board in their primary language, an accommodation as to the length of time the participant is allowed to speak to accommodate the translation shall occur.
5. Approved requests to address the Board generally shall be scheduled in the order that they are received by the Board Secretary subject to the discretion of the Board Secretary for the efficient operation of the meeting. Those who have submitted requests that have been denied will be notified accordingly.
6. Once all the approved speakers have successfully registered, SERS staff will prepare a chart showing all the registered speakers, their organizations, topics to be addressed, and if they are participating in person or virtually. A copy of this chart will be provided to Board Members and designees and staff for use during the Board Meeting.
7. All public comments will occur at the beginning of the meeting after the welcome and roll call has been completed, as reflected on the published agenda.
8. Should a member of the public prefer to submit written comments to the Board instead of speaking at the Board meeting they should submit their written comments through the Form, and they will be distributed to the Board.
9. On the day of the Board Meeting scheduled speakers appearing in person will:
 - a. Appear at least 15 minutes in advance of their preliminary scheduled time to speak.
 - b. Check in at the front desk and inform the receptionist that they are scheduled to speak before the Board. The receptionist will verify against the speakers' list and inform

meeting.

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SERS staff who will escort the speaker into the board room to be seated. SERS staff will direct speakers to the microphone to speak at the assigned time. Once the speaker has finished, they may return to their seat or leave the meeting and the next speaker will follow.

10. On the day of the Board Meeting scheduled speakers appearing virtually will:
 - a. Log in at least 15 minutes before the start time of the Board meeting in advance of their preliminary scheduled time to speak and confirm that they are prepared to speak as described in their registration.
 - b. Activate their camera and audio features and test that both are operating prior to the beginning of the Board meeting.
11. When making public comments, individuals shall state their name, topic to be addressed, and group affiliation, if any.
12. All statements shall be directed to the Presiding Officer.
13. No public participant may address or question Board members individually.
14. Each statement shall be subject to a five-minute limitation, or to such time limits as may be imposed on each speaker or on all such participation at the discretion of the Presiding Officer.
15. No public speaker may speak more than once per meeting.
16. Board members will not respond to speaker questions in the meeting.

III Use of Recording Devices

1. The use of recording devices at open meetings of the Board and Board committees is permitted, as long as the use of devices does not disrupt the meeting or interfere with participation in or observation of the meeting by other attendees.
2. The use of video recording devices, including personal electronic devices such as cell phones, e-tablets or pads, and laptop computers, is limited to the area designated for video recording.

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Document Properties

- a. **Document Owner:** Executive Office
- b. **Document Author:** SERS Director of Governance and Strategic Initiatives
- c. **Summary of Changes:**
- d. **Attachments:** [SERS Board Meeting Public Comment Request Form](#)

Date	Version	Author	Summary
TBD	2024-POL-BD-xx	SERS Director of Governance and Strategic Initiatives	New policy was developed to provide for a method and process for the public to provide comments during the public portions of SERS' Board Meetings either in person or virtually.