

Greene County Board of Supervisors Open Meetings Policy

Intent. This policy is intended to implement the provisions of Iowa Code Chapter 21.

Purpose. The Greene County Board of Supervisors (the “Board”) is committed to both transparency and public participation in government. Accordingly, the purpose of this policy is twofold: first, to assure that the basis and rationale of decisions by the Board, as well as the decisions themselves, are easily accessible to the public; and second, to provide members of the public with the opportunity to address the Supervisors in a safe and orderly manner during Board meetings while ensuring the integrity of the Supervisors’ decision-making process and protecting the Board’s deliberations from interference or interruption.

Scope. This policy applies to all meetings of the Board.

Public Meetings. Except when the Board enters into closed session as provided under State law, all Board meetings shall be held in “open session,” as defined in Iowa Code section 21.2(3). No person shall be excluded from attendance at a Board meeting unless the Board enters into closed session or the person is interrupting or otherwise interfering with the conduct of the Board’s business. Individuals who engage in conduct intended to disrupt a Board meeting may be referred to the Greene County Sheriff’s Office for possible criminal charges pursuant to Iowa Code section 723.4(1)(d).

Members of the public attending a Board meeting shall not pass beyond the partition wall that separates the public gallery from the Supervisors’ meeting space unless invited to do so by the Board Chair. Members of the public may use cameras or recording devices at any open session unless such use interferes with the conduct of the Board’s business or the ability of other attendees to observe the meeting.

The Greene County Auditor or his or her designee (the “Auditor”) shall provide public notice of all Board meetings in accordance with the provisions of Iowa Code section 21.4. In addition to complying with the requirements of Iowa Code section 21.4, the Auditor shall provide notice of a meeting of the Board at least one full business day prior to the commencement of the meeting. The Auditor shall keep minutes of all Board meetings as provided in Iowa Code section 21.3(2).

Electronic Meetings. Members of the public shall be provided access to a live audio stream of all Board meetings except when the Board enters into closed session. However, the Board shall not conduct a meeting solely by electronic means unless an in-person meeting is otherwise impossible or impractical and the Board complies with each of the following:

1. The public is provided access to the conversation of the meeting to the extent reasonably possible;
2. The public is provided notice of the meeting as required under Iowa Code section 21.4;
3. Minutes are kept of the meeting and the minutes include a statement explaining why a meeting in person was impossible or impractical; and

4. The Board satisfies any other requirements for an electronic meeting under Iowa Code section 21.8.

Unless the Board is meeting electronically pursuant to this policy, only Supervisors physically present at a Board meeting shall be considered present for purposes of determining whether there is a quorum of the Board under Iowa Code sections 331.212(1) and 331.213(2). A Supervisor who is not physically present during an in-person meeting of the Board shall be deemed absent from the meeting and shall not vote on any matters pending before the Board even if the Supervisor is participating by telephone or by other electronic means.

Public Participation. Iowa law does not require governmental bodies to allow public comment at public meetings. However, it is the policy of the Board to set aside a period of time for public comment at or near the beginning of every Board meeting. Only those who are physically present at a Board meeting shall be permitted to address the Board during the period for public comment. Those wishing to address the Board are invited to provide their name but are not required to do so. Each person wishing to address the Board shall be limited to three minutes. However, when there is an issue pending before the Board that is especially significant or complex, the Chair of the Board may, at his or her discretion, give anyone wishing to comment on that issue up to five minutes to address the Board. The total time period allowed for public comment shall not exceed one hour unless the Board votes by majority vote to extend the time period. Those requesting the opportunity to address the Board will be permitted to do so in the order in which their requests were submitted to the Board until the time period allotted for public comment has expired.

An item may not be placed on the Board's meeting agenda unless the item is requested by a Supervisor or approved by the Auditor. Except for the period reserved for public comment or during a public hearing, members of the public may not address the Board in reference to items on the Board's agenda unless expressly authorized by the Board Chair. Individuals who have business items included on the Board's agenda may address the Board by telephone or by other electronic means.

Closed Session. Pursuant to Iowa Code section 21.5, the Board shall not enter into closed session except as necessary for one or more of the reasons enumerated in Iowa Code section 21.5(1). The Board may hold a closed session only by affirmative public vote of either two-thirds of the Board or all of the members present at the meeting. The vote of each Supervisor on the question of holding the closed session and the reason for holding the closed session by reference to a specific exemption under Iowa Code section 21.5(1) shall be announced publicly at the open session and entered in the minutes. The Supervisors shall not discuss any business during a closed session which does not directly relate to the specific reason announced as justification for the closed session. Final action by the Board on any matter shall be taken in an open session unless some provision of the Code expressly permits such actions to be taken in closed session. The Auditor shall keep detailed minutes of all discussion, persons present, and action occurring at a closed session, and shall also audio record all of the closed session. The Auditor shall keep the detailed minutes and audio recording of the closed session for a period of at least one year from the date of that meeting, except as otherwise required by law.