



Public Comment Period Information and Guidelines

Pursuant to [Tennessee Public Chapter No. 300](#) effective July 1, 2023, the City of Martin Mayor and Board of Aldermen and all City Committees and Boards will reserve time for public comment during all public meetings where there are deliberative or actionable items or matters on the agenda.

All such public comments must be germane to such items on the agenda, and it does not allow for discussion between board members and the speaker or a time for obtaining either answers to questions raised or responses to requests made for information or action to be taken. Anyone who might be seeking information or making requests should contact Martin City Hall to make an appointment with the Mayor or other appropriate official or send an inquiry to info@cityofmartin.net.

All speakers and members of the public are to be respectful and comport themselves with appropriate decorum. The presiding official or committee or board chair has discretion to warn and/or end a speaker's time if a speaker is disruptive, off topic, or not speaking germane to an item on the agenda, including the use of any violent, threatening, vulgar, or obscene language, action, or behavior or using the floor to personally attack or denigrate others.

The presiding official or committee or board chair will not permit any illegal activities or behavior, including Disorderly Conduct or Disrupting a Public Meeting, which are prohibited by Tennessee law.



Matters that require a dedicated public hearing by state law do not require anyone wishing to speak at such hearing to sign up in advance as an opportunity by the public to speak is mandated otherwise.

A public comment period shall not apply to any public meeting of the City of Martin Mayor and Board of Aldermen or other City Committees and Boards, or a portion thereof, where: (1) a disciplinary hearing is being conducted for a member of the governing body or a person whose profession or activities fall within the jurisdiction of the same; or (2) a meeting for which there are no actionable items on the agenda.

Public Comment Procedures

Persons wishing to speak during any public comment period shall sign-up in advance through the public comment sign-up form linked at the bottom of this page. Forms are also available at Martin City Hall, 109 University Street, Martin, TN 38237 during regular business days/hours (Monday through Friday, 8am-5pm) to be completed in person.

Completed sign-up forms must be received no later than 4:00 pm on the Thursday before Formal City Board Meetings (2nd Monday of each month) and all other committee or board meetings ([committee schedules link](#)). On any Thursday that City Hall is closed for a holiday or other reason, 4:00 pm the last business day before any such closure shall be the deadline for City Hall to receive a completed request to comment sign-up form.



Municipal staff will review public comment request forms in advance of each meeting to ensure that opposing viewpoints, if any, are represented fairly in accordance with Tennessee law and to schedule the services of an interpreter, if needed.

Public comment requests to City Hall for any public comment period shall be on a first-come, first-served basis, but with practicable steps to be taken by the City such that any opposing viewpoints are represented fairly during the respective allotted public comment period. This may lead to some requesting speakers having to yield their spot on a last in-first out basis to another speaker with an opposing viewpoint in order for such fair representation to be achieved. Should this occur, any affected speakers shall be notified and requested to submit their comments to City Hall in person or to info@cityofmartin.net.

Public comment shall be limited to up to 21 minutes total at the Formal City Board meeting (i.e., no more than 7 speakers) and up to 12 minutes total at all other committee and board meetings (i.e., no more than 4 speakers).

Each speaker is allowed up to 3 minutes to speak and no speaker shall be allowed to yield the balance of their allotted 3 minutes to speak if not fully utilized. Once a speaker has so utilized 3 minutes, they shall cease and yield the floor. The presiding official or committee or board chair have the authority to adjust the speaker time if necessary or as otherwise provided in these Guidelines.



Public comments must be germane to a matter listed on the meeting agenda on the date the speaker appears.

Municipal staff will notify speakers and confirm their public comment date in advance of the meeting along with notifying anyone who will be unable to speak due to all reserved time or speakers for any Public Comment period being previously reached or as otherwise provided in these Guidelines.