

Westhampton Public Hearing Ground Rules – Adopted by Selectboard January 6, 2020

The purpose of the public hearing is to _____.

The Board encourages all in attendance to ask questions and offer comments.

We want your input and assistance on the issues being considered. The Board is here to listen to public comment and to answer questions about the topic under discussion. The Board is NOT here to express its own views or opinions or to participate in a debate.

Purpose of ground rules for a successful public hearing:

- Keep to the topic and purpose of the hearing.
- Get the best results through honest and constructive input and discussion.
- Respect everyone's time and end the hearing in a reasonable time period.
- Treat all in attendance in a respectful and courteous manner.
- Everyone has the opportunity to participate. Anyone may attend, including non-residents and non-voters.

Ground Rules:

1. Please silence all cell phones.
2. Please raise your hand to be recognized by the Board Chairperson and speak when recognized.
3. Identify yourself by name and address.
4. Address your remarks to the Board and avoid debate.
5. Everyone who wishes to speak will have the opportunity to do so before anyone speaks a second time.
6. Please keep your questions or comments brief and on point. The Chairperson has discretion to impose a maximum time period for individual comments so that everyone has the opportunity to speak. The Board may also continue the hearing to another date to ensure everyone has the opportunity to give input or to gather additional information, subject to any time requirements required under applicable law.
7. Answers to questions may be answered or deferred for further review or study and answered at a later date.
8. If you are in favor or opposed please state that and give your reasons why.

9. Please do not repeat what others have said. Simply state that you agree with what has been stated by others.
10. Treat everyone with kindness, courtesy, and respect.
11. Listen quietly and attentively with the intention of understanding everyone's viewpoint. It is possible to respect other viewpoints without agreeing with them.
12. Respectfully challenge ideas not people.
13. The Board will not tolerate disruptive behavior in a public hearing; therefore, do not engage in demonstration, booing, handclapping, or otherwise disrupt the public hearing.
14. Anyone not following these guidelines will be asked to refrain from doing so, and may, in the sole discretion of the chairperson, be asked to leave the public hearing.
15. **Recording:** The board or any member of the public may make an audio or video recording of an open session of a public meeting under the following procedures:
 - a. Notify the chair and comply with reasonable requirements regarding equipment established by the chair so as not to interfere with the meeting.
 - b. The chair will inform other attendees of any such recording at the beginning of the meeting.
 - c. Anyone arriving after the meeting has begun wishing to record, should notify the chair prior to beginning recording, ideally in a manner that does not significantly disrupt the meeting in progress (such as passing a note for the chair to the board administrator or secretary). The chair will endeavor to acknowledge such notification and announce the fact of any recording to those in attendance.