

RULES REGARDING PUBLIC ACCESS TO MEETINGS
OF THE RENSSELAER COUNTY ETHICS BOARD

Section 1 Purpose and scope:

1. The people's right to witness and observe the governmental decision-making process in action is basic to our society. Access to public portions of meetings of public bodies must be protected and maintained.
2. We adopt these guidelines in order to provide direction concerning the procedures by which public meetings of this public body may be photographed, recorded and broadcast.

Section 2 Recording and Broadcasting Public Portions of Meetings:

1. The public portion of any meeting of a public body may be photographed, recorded and broadcast.
2. A public body may adopt reasonable rules governing the location of equipment and personnel used to photograph, record or broadcast the public portion of a meeting in order to ensure that the use of such equipment does not detract from or interfere with the deliberative process.
3. There is no privacy interest in statements made during public portions of meetings of public bodies. Distaste or embarrassment shall not constitute a basis for prohibiting or limiting the photographing, recording or broadcasting of those present at a meeting.

Section 3 Rules for Recording and Broadcasting Public Portions of Meetings:

1. Operation of equipment to photograph, record or broadcast a meeting is permitted unless it is obtrusive, disruptive, or interferes with the deliberative process or the right of persons in attendance to observe or listen to the proceedings.

2. Use of equipment necessary to photograph, record or broadcast is permitted without notice to or express permission from the public body or those in attendance at the meeting.
3. Use of equipment necessary to photograph, record or broadcast is permitted in a supervised or unsupervised manner.
4. Use of special lighting or large equipment necessary to photograph, record or broadcast a meeting is permitted unless it is obtrusive or disruptive.
5. Personnel who operate equipment necessary to photograph, record and/or broadcast a meeting shall be permitted to move about the room, as long as such movement does not disrupt or interfere with the deliberative process.
6. Use of equipment necessary to photograph, record and/or broadcast a meeting shall not be limited to a location from which such equipment is not reasonably capable of photographing, recording and/or broadcasting.
7. Persons operating equipment necessary to photograph, record and/or broadcast shall be given a reasonable opportunity to modify their actions in order to avoid interference with the deliberative process.

Section 4 Public notice:

These rules governing the operation of equipment necessary to photograph, record or broadcast a meeting shall be posted in a designated location. Written copies of such rules shall be provided upon request, free of charge, to those in attendance at or who seek to attend a meeting.

Section 5 Severability:

If any provision of these guidelines or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is adjudged invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such judgment shall not affect or impair the validity of the other provisions of these regulations or the application thereof to other persons and circumstances.

Adopted by Ethics Board on February 24, 2023