

**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1
BOROUGH OF MANASQUAN**

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT POLICY

In 1975 the Legislature enacted the OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT commonly known as the "Sunshine Law." The Legislature found and declared that the right of the public to be present at all meetings of public bodies, and to witness in full detail all phases of the deliberation, policy formulation, and decision making of public bodies, is vital to the enhancement and proper functioning of the democratic process and that secrecy in public affairs undermines the faith of the public in government and the public's effectiveness in fulfilling its role in a democratic society. The legislature further declared it to be the public policy of the State to insure the right of its citizens to have adequate advance notice of and the right to attend all meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting the public is discussed or acted upon in any way except only in those circumstances where otherwise the public interest would be clearly endangered or the personal privacy or guaranteed rights of individuals would be clearly in danger of unwarranted invasion. The "Act" was meant to have a profound effect on the visibility of government at all levels.

The Board desires to hear the view points of citizens throughout the District in an orderly and efficient manner and may schedule one or more periods during each meeting for public participation. Although the law does not require the District to permit public participation, the Board has chosen, in the best interest of the District to do so. The Board reserves the right to set a time limit on the length of this period and/or a time limit for each speaker. Comments and questions at a regular meeting may deal with any topic related to the Board's conduct of the District. Comments at special or pre-agenda (executive/workshop) meetings must be related to the call of the meeting.

The Board Presiding Officer shall be responsible for recognizing all speakers who shall properly identify themselves, for maintaining proper order, and for adherence to any time limits. Questions asked by the public shall, when possible, be answered immediately by the Presiding Officer or referred to staff members present for reply. Questions requiring investigation shall be referred to the Chief, Board Committee or other individual for consideration and later response.

The Board shall enact Rules and Regulations, procedures or guidelines and directives to implement or otherwise effectuate the purpose and intent of this Policy and Federal, State and local laws, and Rules, Regulations, Procedures, Guidelines or Directives promulgated thereto, as amended, which were enacted to insure or supplement the intent and purpose of this Policy. Said Rules and Regulations, procedures or guidelines and directives may be amended or supplemented by the Board as it deems necessary.

LEGAL REFERENCES: N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, et seq.
N.J.S.A. 10:4-7

1st Reading:
2nd Reading:

Effective Date:
Revised Date: