

PETITION TO ADDRESS SOUTH EAST AREA TRANSIT BOARD OF TRUSTEES RULES FOR SPEAKING BEFORE THE TRUSTEES

Members of the public should understand that SEAT Board of Trustee meetings are not public forums. These meetings though open to public are held to conduct SEAT business with a planned agenda. The Board of Trustees can impose reasonable rules on time, place and manner restrictions to ensure the efficient administration of SEAT business. Courts have upheld rules that limit public content to the agenda item at hand do not violate the First Amendment and that speakers can be cut off for being repetitious or irrelevant as long as they are not targeted because officials disagree with their views. With that in mind, SEAT wants to ensure that citizens have a right to express any views that are relevant to the affairs of public transportation while working to ensure the efficient administration of SEAT business.

SEAT welcomes, values, and appreciates the varied opinions and comments from members of the public. However, to ensure that the meetings are respectful, peaceful, and orderly, it is necessary to establish rules to prevent disruption and allow SEAT business to be accomplished in an efficient and productive manner. Members of the public will be permitted to address the Board of Trustees for the purpose of commenting on public transportation issues being considered by the SEAT and/or for the purpose of commenting regarding SEAT actions or services that the speaker believes should or should not be taken by SEAT or issues that should be addressed by SEAT.

Addressing the Board of Trustee shall not be utilized for the following purposes:

1. To debate or make personal or critical attacks against members of the public or businesses.

It is strongly recommended, but not required, that prior to submitting a Petition, the citizen contact the Transit Director to discuss and possibly resolve the Citizen's concern. This would also provide an opportunity for the Board of Trustees to act as an advocate for the Citizen if warranted. **For assistance, call the Transit Director at 740-454-8574 or email director@seatbus.org.**

Remarks are Limited to 5 minutes unless additional time is granted by Board (which shall be granted in 5 minute increments). To extend a speaker's time, a member of the Board shall make a motion to waive this rule and extend the speaker's time by 5 minutes, followed by a second of the motion, and a majority vote in favor by Board. This time limit shall not apply to Special Guests, Subject Experts, SEAT staff, Elected Officials and who are invited to provide information, reports, or testimony to the Board and they are not required to fill out a Petition to Address the Board. Numerous courts have upheld ejections from Board meetings based on speakers going off topic, being unduly repetitive, yelling, or refusing to stop speaking after their allowed time expired. The 5 minute time limit will be strictly enforced.

Speaking before the Board of Trustees is limited to only once for each Communication, Resolution or issue, and only once for a Private Petition/non-Agenda item per board meeting. A completed petition is required for each request. All comments must be directed to the President or the Board as a body.

The following General Rules of Decorum shall apply to all individuals addressing the Board of Trustees:

1. Individuals desiring to address the Board of Trustees shall wait to be recognized by the President. After having been recognized, he or she shall state his or her name and address and then proceed to address the Board as a whole and not any individual.
2. All comments will be made in a courteous and respectful manner by all parties and not in an overly loud or boisterous manner.
3. No person who addresses the board shall make personal, impolite, repetitive, disrespectful, hostile, disparaging, slanderous, offensive, threatening, obscene, or profane remarks. Speakers shall not conduct themselves in a manner that disrupts or impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting or otherwise constitutes disorderly conduct. "Disruption" has been held to include any conduct that violates generally or specially established rules such that the orderly conduct of the meeting is harmed. The following example has been held to being disruptive- "speaking too long, by being repetitious, or by extending discussion of irrelevancies."
4. The President shall have the sole discretion to determine whether or not a speaker's conduct is violating these Rules of Decorum. If in the President's discretion the rules are being violated, the President may take any action necessary to preserve the due conduct of the meeting, including but not limited to: (1) verbal warnings; (2) denial or termination of speaking privileges; (3) removal from the meeting; (4) banning an individual from speaking at future board of Trustee meetings; and (5) request for law enforcement to remove or arrest the individual (ORC 2917.12). These possible sanctions by the President need not be progressive in nature.

No repetition of remarks shall be permitted nor speaking on the same subject matter will be allowed at more than three meetings, unless there has been a substantive change to the legislation or situation as determined by the President.

To accommodate special needs or circumstances that are in the best interest of the SEAT, Board may temporarily suspend any of these rules, by motion, second and 2/3 majority vote which includes the opportunity to address the Board of Trustees without written notice.

If a speaker does not speak on a matter concerning the public transportation, the President may terminate the right to speak and refer the speaker to more appropriate public forum.

Signs and banners are not permitted in the Board of Trustees meeting room. This prohibition does not apply to charts, diagrams, enlarged photographs, or other demonstrative exhibits or visual media utilized by a speaker in presenting testimony to the Board.

Any variance or waiver of these rules shall be by a 2/3 majority vote of the Board of Trustees.

PETITION TO ADDRESS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

IT IS ADVISED THAT YOU READ AND FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE ABOVE-LISTED RULES AS WELL AS THE POLICY ASET FORTH BY SOUTH EAST AREA TRANSIT.

Those desiring to address the Board of Trustee must complete a "Petition to Address the Board." These Petitions are available at all SEAT offices, online, by email request. To speak on a non-agenda item, the completed Petition must be provided to the Transit Director on Wednesday the week prior to the Board of Trustee meeting to be eligible to speak at the meeting. To address the Board on an item that is on the agenda, the Petition must be provided to the Transit Director thirty minutes prior to beginning of the meeting. The Board of Trustees will not consider an incomplete Petition to Address the board, which requires the following: Name, Organization Representing (if any), Address, Telephone Number, Email Address (optional), Resolution or Issue and if not speaking on an agenda item list the Subject. Also required is a Signature and Date to indicate "I Have read the restrictions and guidelines regarding speaking, including those set forth in the SEAT Policy. I understand and agree to abide by these rules and acknowledge that my failure to abide by these rules may result in my request to speak being denied or terminated". It is recommended that any available supporting documentation be submitted with the Petition to ensure that Board and Staff have the information necessary to effectively respond to the concern. All documents submitted to the board become public documents, so please ensure that all personal and private information is redacted (deleted or removed).

NAME: _____

REPRESENTING AN ORGANIZATION (IF YES, PLEASE LIST): _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE : _____

EMAIL (OPTIONAL) : _____

COMMUNICATION/RESOLUTION/ISSUE: _____ FOR OR _____ AGAINST

IF YOU ARE NOT SPEAKING ON AN AGENDA ITEM, YOU MUST INDICATE YOUR SUBJECT BELOW:

I HAVE READ THE RESTRICTIONS AND GUIDELINES REGARDING SPEAKING BEFORE THE SEAT BAORD OF TRUSTESS, INCLUDING THOSE SET FORTH IN THE SEAT POLICY. I UNDERSTAND AND AGREE TO ABIDE BY THESE RULES AND ACKNOWLEDGE THAT MY FAILURE TO ABIDE BY THESE RULES MAY RESULT IN MY REQUEST TO SPEAK BEING DENIED OR TERMINATED.

SIGNATURE

DATE