

Privilege of the Floor Policy

Intent

WHEREAS, the Village Board of the Village of Dansville recognizes that it exists to serve the residents of the community and that public participation and access to elected officials are essential components of transparent and accountable local government; and

WHEREAS, the Village Board understands that members of the public attend meetings both to address the Board on matters of concern and to observe the conduct of Village business, and therefore recognizes the need to balance meaningful public comment with the efficient and timely conduct of Village operations, which is essential to effective governance; and

WHEREAS, the Board affirms the importance of providing residents with reasonable and consistent opportunities to address their elected officials; and

WHEREAS, the New York State Open Meetings Law is intended to ensure that the public may observe the deliberations and decision-making processes of public bodies, thereby promoting transparency in government, and does not itself require or mandate that public bodies provide an opportunity for public comment; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the foregoing, the Village Board recognizes that public participation through structured comment opportunities is an essential component of effective local government and meaningful civic engagement; and

WHEREAS, the Village Board is committed to full compliance with the Open Meetings Law and to maintaining meetings that are open and accessible to the public for the purpose of observing Village business; and

WHEREAS, the Board further recognizes the importance of providing a structured mechanism for public participation through Privilege of the Floor during regularly scheduled meetings; and

WHEREAS, the Village Board recognizes that this policy establishes a structured and defined framework for public participation that provides expanded and consistent opportunities for public comment beyond the minimum requirements of the New York State Open Meetings Law and reflects a level of procedural detail and accessibility that is more comprehensive than generally set forth in comparable policies adopted by other local governing bodies in the region; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village Board of the Village of Dansville hereby adopts this Citizen Participation / Privilege of the Floor Policy to ensure an appropriate balance between the public's right to be heard and the Village's responsibility to conduct its business in an efficient, orderly, and timely manner, while reaffirming its commitment to transparency, accountability, and public engagement.

C. Citizen Participation

The public and news media are welcome to attend all meetings of the Village Board in accordance with the New York Open Meetings Law. Public participation (“Privilege of the Floor”) is permitted pursuant to the procedures below and shall be administered in a content-neutral and viewpoint-neutral manner.

Privilege of the Floor shall be offered at regularly scheduled meetings of the Village Board only.

Public comment and Privilege of the Floor shall not apply to:

- Special meetings
- Budget workshops
- Department head meetings
- Any other meetings not designated as regular meetings of the Village Board

Nothing herein shall be interpreted to limit the public’s right to attend and observe any meeting as required by law.

Individuals may speak only upon recognition by the presiding officer.

1. Speaker Recognition and Time Limits

Speakers must be recognized by the presiding officer prior to addressing the Board.

Each speaker shall be limited to a maximum of five minutes.

Board members may interrupt only for clarification.

Additional time may be granted by the presiding officer or by majority approval of the Board.

2. Limit on Number of Speakers

A maximum of four speakers shall be recognized during each Privilege of the Floor session.

This limit is established solely to ensure orderly conduct of business and shall be applied uniformly.

The presiding officer may increase the number of speakers when reasonably practicable to ensure adequate participation.

3. Sign-Up and Agenda Placement

Requests must be made to the Village Clerk by the Friday preceding the meeting (or Thursday if closed on Friday).

Requests include name and subject matter for administrative purposes only.

Placement is first-come, first-served, subject to priority rules.

No prior approval from any Board member is required.

4. Overflow and Continuing Speaker List

If more than four individuals request to speak:

- First four are heard that meeting
- Others placed on a continuing list maintained by Clerk

List carries forward in chronological order

Village may extend comment period when reasonably practicable

5. Priority for Speakers

Priority is given to individuals who have not spoken within the preceding five months.

Applied in a content-neutral manner to broaden participation.

Ties resolved by date and time of request.

6. Additional Public Comment Opportunity

At the conclusion of the meeting, a brief additional comment period of 2 minutes per commenter may be allowed at discretion of presiding officer for topics raised during the meeting.

7. Addressing the Board

All remarks shall be directed to the Board as a whole.

8. Decorum and Order

Participants shall maintain civility and order.

Disruption is not permitted.

Criticism of Village officials or policies is allowed if not disruptive.

9. Enforcement

Presiding officer enforces rules consistently.

Violations may result in warning, loss of speaking privilege for that meeting, or removal for disruption.

10. Guest of the Board

Individuals invited or recognized as guests of the Board may be permitted to speak or participate on Village business at the discretion of the Board or presiding officer. Such recognition is intended for scheduled agenda-related presentations or official participation and shall not be used to circumvent or expand public comment limits. Guest participation does not create additional public comment rights and remains subject to orderly conduct of the meeting.

11. Administration

This policy shall be administered consistent with the New York Open Meetings Law and the First Amendment.

Adopted 5/20/2026