

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 shall comply with the intent and purposes of the “Act”.

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 topics 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’s 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 Chairman, Chief, Board Committee or other appropriate District personnel.

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.

This Policy does not modify existing Board policies, procedures, guidelines, rules, regulations or directives and shall be read and construed in conjunction with other Board policies, procedures, guidelines, rules, regulations or directives so that any inconsistencies or ambiguities in this Policy may be resolved by referencing other Board policies, procedures, guidelines, rules, regulations or directives. Any interpretation as to the meaning of this Policy shall not be contrary to federal, state or local laws, or contrary to or inconsistent with the mandated charge of the Board. If any provision paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase set forth in this Policy is for any reason held or determined to be unconstitutional or invalid, same shall not affect the remainder of this Policy.

Legal References:        N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, et seq.  
                                     N.J.S.A. 10:4-7

1<sup>st</sup> Reading:

Effective Date:

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:

Revised Date: