

## **ORDINANCE # O-84-2014**

### **AN ORDINANCE TO ADD ARTICLE 21 RULES OF CONDUCT IN OPEN MEETINGS TO THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

WHEREAS, the Village Council has had rules governing conduct in public meetings for many years, but realizes the need to have these rules published in the Village's Policies and Procedures, so that interested individuals may read those rules outside of a meeting;

WHEREAS, the Village Council of the Village of Bolivar, Ohio, wishes to add Article 21 to of the Policies and Procedures of the Village of Bolivar, entitled Rules of Conduct in Public Meetings;

WHEREAS, Article 21 shall contain the following language:

#### 21.1 Conduct at Public Meetings

21.1.1 The Village of Bolivar has a significant interest in conducting orderly, efficient, effective, and dignified meetings. Therefore, all visitors to council and other Village public meetings must not disrupt the conduct of the meetings by physical actions, excessive noise, or other disruptive or distracting behaviors. Such actions delay and interfere with the testimony of others and disrupt the legislative proceedings. Any person attending a public meeting, whether a Village official or a member of the public, shall behave in a decorous manner, and no shouting, disrespect, personal attacks, hate speech, slanderous remarks, or obscenities shall be tolerated. Interrupting other speakers or disrupting the meeting in general shall not be tolerated. The Village strives to be courteous and civil even in disagreement.

21.1.2 One warning for violations of this Article shall be given by the Mayor (and President of Zoning or Head of Committee, as applicable). If the behavior continues, then the individual shall be ruled out of order and asked to leave the meeting. In the event that the individual does not leave the meeting when ruled out of order, that individual may be escorted out by a law enforcement officer. In cases of excessive disruptive behavior, as set forth in O.R.C. 2917.12, the mayor may ban individuals from all council and other public meetings for a period of 60 days, in addition to any other penalties incurred at law. The Clerk shall be responsible for notifying suspended individuals of the duration of their suspension.

#### 21.2 Public Speaks

21.2.1 The laws of the State of Ohio do not require that the public be granted an opportunity to speak in a public meeting. All public bodies of the Village of Bolivar have the discretion to allow or not allow public comment at each meeting. The public body shall announce whether or not there will be public comment at the meeting by verbally making an announcement regarding Public Speaks.

21.2.2 If the meeting contains a "Public Speaks" portion, the public at large shall be permitted to speak only on issues pertaining to matters relating to the Village.

21.2.3 Members of the public shall be permitted to speak only once during each Public Speaks session, and shall only be permitted to speak during the time allocated to Public Speaks, and not during any other portion of the meeting.

21.2.4 Individuals wishing to speak during Public Speaks shall sign up on the sign-in sheet by the beginning of each meeting on a first-come, first-serve basis. The individual shall print his/her name and home address (no business or Post Office Boxes), and indicate that they wish to speak. If not completed as required, the Council will not recognize that particular speaker.

21.2.5 During Public Speaks, each speaker shall identify himself or herself by name and state whether or not they are a resident of the Village. Each speaker shall be limited to a maximum of three minutes to present his or her comments. This time limit shall be strictly enforced. Council has the power to allow each individual additional time if the circumstances warrant, but Council is not required to do so. Individuals may not sign up to speak and then attempt to transfer their allotted time to another speaker.

21.2.6 A speaker shall observe all rules of decorum as prescribed in Section 21.1 above, or face removal from the meeting and potential additional sanctions.

21.2.7 Speakers may pose questions to the Village Officials, who have discretion as to whether or not to answer those questions. At no time is a speaker entitled to an answer to his or her question. Once an official has declined to answer a question, this question shall not be repeated at that meeting.

21.2.8 Councilmembers, other elected officials and administration representatives shall not engage in debates with public speakers.

21.2.9 A Village Official shall notify a speaker when his or her time is expired, at which time he or she shall promptly conclude his or her sentence and cease speaking. If the speaker does not cease speaking at that time, he or she may be subject to removal by a law enforcement officer.

21.2.10 A speaker may present written materials to Council. Any speaker submitting written materials must identify the material clearly as to subject, relevancy, and source.

21.2.11 Speakers shall be on notice that their comments may be recorded as part of the Village's record-keeping of public meetings.

Now, therefore be it ordained by the Village Council the Village of Bolivar, Ohio, as follows:

**SECTION 1.** The Village Council for the Village of Bolivar hereby adds Article 21 Rules of Conduct in Open Meetings to the Policies and Procedures of the Village of Bolivar to include the above language.

READ: December 2, 2013, January 9, 2013, and February 3, 2014

**PASSED: February 3, 2014**

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**REBECCA HUBBLE, MAYOR**

**ATTEST:**

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**MARIA APP, CLERK/TREASURER**