

**RULES OF PROCEDURE, CONDUCT AND DECORUM  
AT MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSIONERS COURT  
OF ROCKWALL COUNTY, TEXAS**

1. All Regular, Special, Emergency and Executive Session Meetings of the Rockwall County Commissioners Court will be called and conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551, Government Code.
2. Regular, Special and Emergency Meetings of the Rockwall County Commissioners Court are open to the public and to representatives of the press and media. Executive Sessions of the Commissioners Court are not open to the public, the press or the media and only those individuals expressly requested or ordered to be present are allowed to attend Executive Session.
3. The Rockwall County Commissioners Court meets in Regular Session on each 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of each month. In order for a matter or issue to appear as an agenda item on the Agenda of any Regular Meeting of the Commissioners Court, a request must be filed with and approved by at least one member of the Commissioners Court by 12:00 p.m. (noon) on the Tuesday immediately preceding the next Regular Meeting of the Commissioners Court.
4. The business of Rockwall County is conducted by and between the members of Rockwall County Commissioners Court and by those members of the Rockwall County staff, elected officials, department heads, consultants, experts and/or members of the public requested to be present and participate. While the public is invited to attend all meetings of the Commissioners Court (except Executive Sessions) the public's participation therein is limited to that of observers unless a member (or members) of the public is requested to address the Commissioners Court on a particular issue (or issues) or unless the member (or members) of the public completes a Public Participation Form and submits same to the Chief Assistant of the Commissioners Court prior to the time the agenda item (or items) is addressed by the Commissioners Court.
  - A. Each member of the public who appears before the Commissioners Court shall be limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes to make his/her remarks. Time for each speaker shall be maintained by the County Judge, or such other designated representative of the Commissioners Court.
  - B. Maximum discussion on any agenda item, regardless of the number of members of the public wishing to address the Commissioners Court on such agenda item (or items), shall be limited to thirty (30) minutes. In the event that more than six (6) members of the public wish to address a particular agenda item (or items), then time allocated to members of the public recognized to speak shall be divided equally between those members of the public wishing to speak for the agenda item (or items) and those members of the public wishing to speak against the agenda item (or items).
  - C. In matters of exceptional interest, the Commissioners Court may, by the majority vote of the members of the Commissioners Court in attendance at the meeting, either shorten or lengthen the time allocated for all members of the public and/or the amount of time allocated for all agenda items and/or a specific agenda item.

- D. It is the intention of the Commissioners Court to provide open access to the citizens of Rockwall County to address the Commissioners Court and express themselves on issues of under consideration by the Commissioners Court. Members of the public in attendance at any Regular, Special and/or Emergency Meeting of the Commissioners Court shall conduct themselves with proper respect and decorum in speaking to, and/or addressing the Commissioners Court; in participating in public discussions before the Commissioners Court; and in all actions in the presence of the Commissioners Court. Proper attire for men, women and children is mandatory. Those members of the public who are inappropriately attired and/or who do not conduct themselves in an orderly and appropriate manner will be ordered to leave the meeting. Refusal to abide by these Rules of Decorum and/or continued disruption of the meeting may result in a request by the Commissioners Court for the Sheriff to remove the offending party, or to file criminal charges for disruption of a public meeting under Chapter 42, Texas Penal Code. The Commissioners Court has, in addition, powers of contempt, and under appropriate circumstances, where necessary to maintain public order and to conduct the public business required of the Commissioners Court, any individual acting in a deliberate or provocative manner with intention to disrupt or impede the business of the Commissioners Court may be held in contempt of Court.
- E. It is not the intention of Rockwall County Commissioners Court to provide a public forum for the demeaning of any individual or group. Neither is it the intention of the Commissioners Court to allow a member (or members) of the public to insult the honesty and/or integrity of the Commissioners Court, as a body, or any member or members of the Commissioners Court, individually or collectively. Accordingly, profane, insulting or threatening language directed toward the Commissioners Court and/or any person in the Commissioners Court's presence and/or racial, ethnic, or gender slurs or epithets will not be tolerated. These Rules do not prohibit public criticism of the Commissioners Court, including criticism of any act, omission, policy, procedure, program or service. Violation of these rules may result in the following sanctions:
1. Cancellation of a speaker's remaining time;
  2. Removal from the Commissioners Court room;
  3. A Contempt Citation; and/or
  4. Such other civil and/or criminal sanctions as may be authorized under the Constitution, Statutes and Codes of the State of Texas.
5. The County Judge, as the presiding Officer of the Commissioners Court, is a fully participating member thereof. In the event of the absence of the County Judge, the senior member of the Commissioners Court (in terms of total number of years as an elected representative) present at the Regular, Special, Emergency Meeting or Executive Session, shall serve as the Judge Pro-Tem of the Court. However, nothing herein shall prevent the senior member of this Commissioners Court from delegating this duty to another member of the Commissioners Court.
6. The County Judge, or the Judge Pro-Tem, as presiding officer of the Commissioners Court, is responsible for conducting all meetings and members of the public who have properly completed a Public Participation Form and submitted same to the Presiding officer must wait to be recognized before they will be allowed to address the Commissioners Court.

7. Special Rules for the Press and Media:
  - A. No media personnel or equipment, including lights, cameras or microphones will be located closer than ten feet (10') in front of the Commissioners Court bench or table.
  - B. Reporters and media technicians are required to structure their movements, equipment set-up and takedown and adjustments, etc. in such a manner as to not disrupt the Commissioners Court deliberations or the ability of the public to see, hear, and participate in the proceedings.
  - C. Interviews by reporters, either print or electronic, shall not be conducted inside the Commissioners Court meeting room during the time the Commissioners Court is in session.
  - D. Media interviews which are conducted outside the Commissioners Court meeting room should be conducted in such a manner that the interview does not disturb, impede or disrupt the proceedings of any Regular, Special, Emergency and/or Executive Session Meeting of the Commissioners Court.
8. The Sheriff of Rockwall County, Texas, or his designated deputy, shall serve as the Bailiff at all Regular, Special and Emergency Meetings of the Commissioners Court. However, in the event of the absence of the Sheriff, or in the event that there exists a conflict of interest between the Sheriff, any member of the Sheriff's Department, and the Commissioners Court, the Commissioners Court may appoint such other commissioned peace officers to serve as Bailiff as may be necessary.
9. From time to time, the Commissioners Court shall conduct town meetings and public hearings. These rules of procedure, conduct and decorum shall also apply to such town meetings and public hearings, however, the Commissioners Court may adopt such additional and supplemental rules for such meetings as may be necessary and appropriate to conduct such meetings in an orderly, efficient and proper manner.
10. These Rules of Procedure, Conduct and Decorum at Meetings of Rockwall County, Texas Commissioners Court shall be effective immediately upon adoption by the Commissioners Court and shall remain in full force and effect until amended or repealed by a majority vote of the Commissioners Court.

**ADOPTED BY THE UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE ROCKWALL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT**  
on this the 27 day of August, 2019.