

COMMISSIONERS COURT RULES OF PROCEDURE, CONDUCT, AND DECORUM FOR MEETINGS OF THE ECTOR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

The Ector County Commissioners Court ("Court") adopts the following rules of decorum to govern regular and special meetings of the Court. The intent of these rules is to ensure the safety of the public, staff, and members of the Court, and to maximize citizen participation, while efficiently receiving public input, and maintaining respectful decorum during each meeting.

As used in these rules, the term "County Judge" refers to the County Judge when acting as the presiding officer of the Court, or to the member of the Court who serves as the presiding officer in the absence of the County Judge.

Rules of Procedure

- 1) All regular, special, emergency, and executive meetings of the Ector County Commissioners Court, will be called and conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code.
- 2) Regular, Special, and Emergency Meetings of the Ector County Commissioners Court are open to the public and to representatives of the press and media. Closed (Executive) session meetings are not open to the public, press, or media. Only those individuals requested or ordered to be present may attend a closed meeting.
- 3) The County Judge is the presiding officer of Ector County Commissioners Court and is a fully participating member thereof. In the event of the absence of the County Judge, the senior member of Commissioners Court (total number of years as an elected member of the Court) present at any meeting of the Court shall serve as Judge Pro-Tem. However, nothing herein shall prevent the senior member of the Court from delegating this duty to another member of the Court.
- 4) The County Judge (or the designated Judge Pro-Tem of the Commissioners Court), as presiding officer of Commissioners Court, is responsible for conducting all meetings.
- 5) Deliberations by Commissioners Court are limited to the matters listed on the posted agenda. The members of Commissioners Court may not discuss matters

raised during the "Public Comment" period except as allowed by Government Code 551.042.

- 6) In order for a matter to appear on the Court's agenda, a request from the public must be approved by at least one Commissioner or the County Judge. The request must be submitted to the Commissioner or County Judge no later than 12:00 p.m. (noon) on the Monday prior to the Tuesday preceding the next regular or special meeting of Commissioners Court. The Commissioner or County Judge must submit the request by 12:00 p.m. (noon) on the Tuesday immediately preceding the next regular or special meeting of Commissioners Court. These deadlines are necessary for the Court to comply with §551.043 of the Texas Government Code.
- 7) The Business of Ector County is conducted by and between the members of the Commissioners Court and by members of the Ector County staff, elected officials, department heads, consultants, experts and/or members of the public requested to be present to participate. The public's participation is limited to that of an observer and may only speak upon filling out a public participation form.

Public Participation

During the meetings of the Commissioners Court, members of the public shall have an opportunity to address the Court in a general public comment session on any subject matter. At all meetings of the Commissioners Court, members of the public who desire to address the Court regarding an item on the agenda shall be allowed to do so before or during the Court's consideration of the item. Members of the public may address the Court once they are verbally recognized by the County Judge or, in the absence of the County Judge, the presiding officer. The County Judge will recognize a potential speaker before a Court vote is taken on an agenda item or, for a matter not agenda itemized for action, during the public comment period. Each member of the public who appears before Commissioners Court shall state his/her name for the record of the Court.

Time Limits

- The speaking time limit is up to three (3) minutes per speaker whether the speaker is discussing an item on the posted agenda or during the public comment portion of Court. At the discretion of the County Judge, this time limit can be reduced for the purpose of efficiency based on the total number of public commenters on a particular topic. In making such adjustments to speaker time limits, the County Judge shall act in a reasonable and non-discriminatory manner. If an adjustment is

made to speaker time limits, such adjustment shall be applied equally to all speakers on a particular topic regardless of the position taken by the speaker on the topic. The County Clerk, serving as Clerk of the Court, or another person designated by the County Judge shall keep the time for all speakers.

- If a person is addressing the Commissioners Court through a translator, the speaking time limit is up to six (6) minutes and can be reduced for the purpose of efficiency based on the total number of public commentators on a particular topic in a similar manner applied equally as above. The maximum time includes the time the translator is translating for the Court.
- At the conclusion of the speaker's time, the County Clerk or other person designated by the County Judge shall verbally inform the speaker that the time has concluded or sound a buzzer, alarm, or other audible device to signal the conclusion of the speaker's time.

Public Comment Forms

Any person wishing to address the Commissioners Court at a regular or special meeting must complete and sign a public comment form located at the table by the door and submit the completed form to the basket by the County Clerk on the dais. Only those who have properly submitted a form shall be called on to address the Court. Failure to properly complete and submit a form will result in the individual not being recognized or allowed to address the Court. No one will be allowed to address the Court on an agenda item after the item has been voted on by the Court unless the Court itself brings the item back before the Court.

A member of the public who does not wish to speak may instead file a public comment form in the County Commissioner's Office during normal county business hours no later than 5 pm the day before the commencement of the regular or special Commissioners Court meeting. Forms will be available at the County Commissioners Office located at the Ector County Annex Building at the above address. The County Judge or presiding officer will not read the comments in open Court, but the comments will be filed into the Court record. The County Commissioners office is located at the following address:

County Commissioners Offices
1010 E. 8th St, Ste. 500
Odessa, Texas 79761
Phone: (432) 498-4000
Samantha.whirley@ectorcountytexas.gov

Guidelines for Speakers

- Speaker order may be on a first-come, first-served basis (using the date and time the public comment form is received). However, speaker order is wholly up to the discretion of the County Judge.
- Speakers will be called to speak by the County Judge or presiding officer.
- A member of the public addressing the Court during regular and special meetings shall do so only from the podium unless permission is given by the County Judge to address the Court from a different location.
- Before addressing the Court, speakers may be asked their name, address or Commissioner precinct number, and the agenda item that they will be addressing, if any.
- Speakers shall stop speaking when the allocated time to speak has expired.
- The County Judge maintains the right to interrupt and/or excuse a speaker when the allocated time has expired, if the speaker otherwise violates these guidelines, or for any other matter at the discretion of the County Judge. If a speaker continues to speak after being interrupted or excused, the behavior may be deemed a disruption of the meeting and may result in a Contempt of Court charge being pursued.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

During non-agenda items, public comments may not be addressed to staff or other members of the public; however, the Court may ask staff to review an issue. Members of the Court cannot respond to public comments on a non-agendized item except as permitted by Texas Government Code Section 551.042.

General Rules of Decorum

Everyone attending a regular or special meeting of Commissioners Court must adhere to these general rules of decorum, so each meeting is conducted in a timely and orderly manner.

- Members of the Public are expected to conduct themselves with proper respect and decorum when speaking and participating in public discussions.
- Proper attire is mandatory in the Courtroom. 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 the

Court's Order and/or continued disruption of the meeting will result in further action which may result in a Contempt of Court charge being pursued.

Prohibited Behavior

- Personal attacks, impertinent, profane, obscene, or slanderous remarks.
- Threatening, disruptive, or unruly behavior.
- Disruptive remarks (including speaking out or yelling from the audience and without filling out a form or being called on by the County Judge) or actions of approval or disapproval from the audience, such as feet stomping, snapping, whistling, yelling, clapping, verbal affirmation or rejection, or similar distractions, except that orderly clapping during the Proclamations, Resolutions, and Presentations section of the agenda is permissible.
- Speaking to, interrupting, or distracting the County Clerk while she is recording the meeting
- Speaking to, Interrupting, or Distracting the Department Heads, County Employees, Elected Officials, or members of the Court during a meeting.
- Approaching the box in which the Department Heads and Elected Officials are located during a meeting, unless by invitation of a member of the Commissioners Court or one of the Department Heads of Elected Officials.
- Approaching the dais on which the members of the Commissioners Court sit beyond the speaker's podium or to the immediate left or right of the podium, unless by the invitation of a member of the Commissioners Court or to approach the side of the dais where the County Clerk is located to place a speaker form in the basket.
- Wearing or displaying signs, flags, banners, props, placards, or similar items larger than 8 ½ by 11 inches. This includes items that can be illuminated or be attached to any pole, stick, or other device. This does not include words or symbols on personal apparel, such as shirts, hats, and other standard items of clothing.
- Possessing a Firearm of any kind, location-restricted knife, club, or prohibited weapon listed in Section 46.05(a) of the Texas Penal Code in the Commissioners Court Courtroom in accordance with Section 46.03(a)(14) of the Texas Penal Code.

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices

All cellular phones, electronic devices, or other communication devices are to be on "silent" mode at all times while Commissioners Court is in session.

Failure to Comply

Failure to comply with any part of the Ector County Commissioners Court Rules of Decorum may result in sanctions, including but not limited to, the following:

- removal from the Court by the County Judge or presiding officer;
- temporary prohibition from commenting in person during Court;
- cancellation of a speaker's remaining time;
- a finding of contempt of Commissioners Court pursuant to Texas Local Government Code Section 81.023 which is punishable by a fine of not more than twenty-five (25) dollars or by confinement of not more than twenty-four (24) hours;
- referral of matter for other civil sanctions and/or criminal charges as may be authorized under the Constitution and laws of the State of Texas.

Bailiff

The Ector County Sheriff, Constables, or designee shall provide Bailiffs at all meetings of the Court. Bailiffs are charged with maintaining order in the courtroom and will remove any person from the courtroom who has violated the decorum of the Court at the request of the County Judge.

The Bailiff is permitted to issue criminal trespass warnings barring entrance to the premises of the Ector County Annex Building during meetings of the Court to members of the public who have: 1) caused a continuing series of disruptions over a single or multiple meetings of the Commissioners Court and have failed to comply with less restrictive means of correcting the disruptions; or 2) caused a substantial and serious disruption of a Commissioners Court meeting such that less restrictive means of correcting the disruption would be futile. Any criminal trespass warning notice issued shall prevent entrance to the Commissioners Courtroom for a period determined by the Bailiff to be proportionate to the necessity to stop and remediate any misconduct but shall be for no longer of a period than one hundred and eighty (180) days per incident that results in a criminal trespass warning. A member of the public who has been issued a criminal trespass warning by the Bailiff shall have the right to appeal the warning to a third party (preferably a County Court at Law Judge or Justice of the Peace). Through the appeal, the third party individual may rescind the criminal trespass warning, reduce the amount of time for which it is in effect, or leave the warning in place. The Bailiff is a peace officer licensed in the State of Texas and has full power and authority to perform the duties and responsibilities of that position including proceeding with any criminal charges.

Courtroom Capacity

Members of the public are welcome to attend all public portions of Court meetings. In the event the courtroom is unable to accommodate seating for all members of the public or the fire safety capacity of the courtroom is reached, the Bailiff or Ector County Sheriff's Office may close admission to the courtroom. If admission to the courtroom is closed, an overflow room shall be made available where members of the public can view a live video feed of the meeting as space permits. In addition, meetings of the Court are publicly streamed online.

Requests for Accommodations

Persons with disabilities who plan to attend Court and need accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services such as interpreters, readers, or large font size are requested to contact the Ector County Commissioners Office at (432) 498-4000. The request needs to be made at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the Commissioners Court meeting. If the County receives a request less than forty-eight (48) hours before the Commissioners Court meeting, the County will make reasonable attempts to provide accommodations.

Contact Information

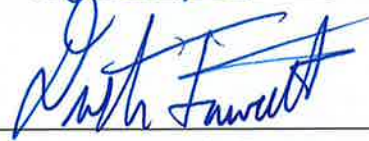
For any questions or clarifications, please contact us at:

Ector County Commissioners Court
1010 E. 8th St., Suite 500
Odessa, Texas 79761
Phone: (432) 498-4000
Samantha.whirley@ectorcountytexas.gov

These Rules of Procedure, Conduct, and Decorum for Meetings of the Ector County Commissioners Court shall be effective immediately upon adoption by the Court and shall remain in full force and effect until amended or repealed by a majority vote of the Commissioners.

ADOPTED BY ECTOR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

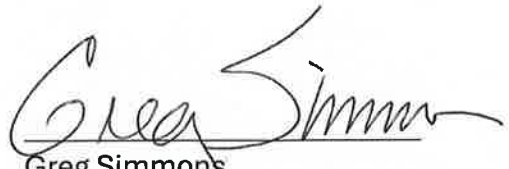
On this the 18th day of November, 2025.



Dustin Fawcett
County Judge



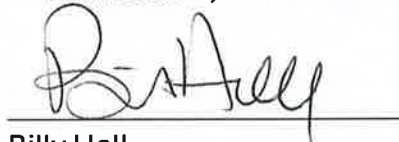
Mike Gardner
Commissioner, Precinct #1



Greg Simmons
Commissioner, Precinct #2



Samantha Russell
Commissioner, Precinct #3



Billy Hall
Commissioner, Precinct #4

Attest:



Jennifer Martin
Ector County Clerk

