

**RULES OF PROCEDURE
FOR THE CHEROKEE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

I. APPLICABILITY

Rule 1. Applicability of Rules. These rules apply to all meetings of the Board of Commissioners of Cherokee County at which the board is empowered to exercise any of the executive, quasi-judicial, administrative, or legislative powers conferred on it by law. They are intended to be consistent with all North Carolina law. Any rules that are mandated by law cannot be suspended by vote of the board. If a conflict or inconsistency arises between these rules and the law of the State of North Carolina then the North Carolina law shall control.

II. OPEN MEETINGS

Rule 2. Meetings to be open pursuant to §143-318.10.

- (a) The public policy of North Carolina and of Cherokee County is that the hearings, deliberations, and actions of this board and its committees be conducted openly.
- (b) Except as otherwise provided in these rules and in accordance with applicable law, each official meeting of the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners shall be open to the public and any person may attend.
- (c) For the purposes of the provisions of these rules concerning open meetings, an official meeting of the board is defined as any gathering together at any time or place or the simultaneous communication by conference telephone or other electronic means of a majority of board members for the purpose of conducting hearings, participating in deliberations, or voting upon or otherwise transacting public business within the jurisdiction, real or apparent, of the board.

Rule 3. Closed Sessions pursuant to §143-318.11.

- (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 2, the board may hold a closed session and exclude the public, but only under those circumstances and for those purposes as authorized by of the North Carolina General Statutes.
- (b) The board may go into closed session only upon motion made and adopted at an open meeting. This motion shall state the general purpose of the closed session and must be approved by a majority of those board members present and voting.

- (c) Unless the motion to go into closed session provides otherwise, the county manager, assistant county manager, county finance officer, county attorney, and clerk to the board shall attend the closed session. No other person shall attend the closed session unless their attendance is relevant and necessary to the issue under consideration and they are specifically invited by a majority vote of the board.

III. ORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD

Rule 4. Organizational Meeting.

- (a) **Even numbered Years.** The board shall hold an organizational meeting at its regular time and place on the first Monday in December of each even-numbered year. The agenda for this organizational meeting shall be limited to induction of newly elected members of the board of county commissioners and other elected county officials and organization of the board for the ensuing year. The organizational meeting shall be convened and concluded before the regular December meeting is convened. The clerk to the board of commissioners shall call the meeting to order and shall preside until a chair is elected. If they have not already been sworn and inducted into office, the newly elected members of the board shall take and subscribe the oath of office as the first order of business. As the second order, the board shall elect a chair and the vice-chair from among its members. As the third order, the board shall approve the bonds of the sheriff and the register of deeds and induct them and any other newly elected county officials into office. As the fourth and fifth orders of business, the board may appoint a clerk and an attorney.
- (b) **Odd-numbered Years.** At the first regular meeting in December of each odd-numbered year, the first order of business shall be approval of the minutes of the previous meeting. The second order of business shall be election of the chair and vice-chair for the ensuing year. The third and fourth orders of business may be appointment of the clerk and county attorney.

Rule 5. Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair. The chair and vice-chair of the board shall be elected annually by a majority of the votes cast for a term of one year and shall not be removed from the office of chair or vice-chair during the term unless he or she becomes disqualified to serve as a Commissioner. No Commissioner shall be elected to serve consecutive terms as the Chair.

IV. REGULAR AND SPECIAL MEETINGS

Rule 6. Regular and Special Meetings pursuant to §153A-40.

- (a) **Regular Meetings.** The board shall hold regular meetings pursuant to a schedule adopted and published pursuant to applicable North Carolina General Statutes. The board may change the place or time of a particular

regular meeting or of all regular meetings within a specified period by resolution adopted, posted and noticed at least seven days before the change takes effect. Such a resolution shall be filed with the clerk to the board and posted at or near the regular meeting place, and copies shall be sent to all persons who have requested notice of special meetings of the board by regular United States mail or by email. The regular meeting schedule shall also be posted on the Cherokee County Website.

- (b) **Special Meetings.** The chair or a majority of board members may at any time call a special meeting of the board by signing a notice stating the time and place of the meeting and the subjects to be considered. The person or persons calling the meeting shall cause the notice to be posted on the principal bulletin board of the county or the door of the regular meeting place if there is no principal bulletin board and delivered to the chair and all other board members or left at the usual dwelling place of each member or emailed at least forty-eight hours before the meeting. In addition, the notice shall be mailed, emailed or delivered to individual persons and news organizations having requested such notice as provided in subsection (e) below at least forty-eight hours before the meeting. Only items of business specified in the notice may be transacted at a special meeting, unless all members are present or those not present have signed waivers. Any notice of special meeting shall be posted on the Cherokee County Website.
- (c) **Emergency Meetings.** If a special meeting is called to deal with an unexpected circumstance requiring immediate consideration, the notice requirements of this rule do not apply. However, the person or persons calling an emergency meeting shall take reasonable action to inform the other members and the public of the meeting. Local news organizations having requested notice of special meetings as provided in subsection (e), below, shall be notified of such emergency meeting either by e-mail, by telephone, or by the same method used to notify board members and shall be given immediately after notice has been given to the board members. Only business connected with the emergency may be discussed at the meeting. Any notice of emergency meeting shall be posted on the Cherokee County Website.
- (d) **Work Sessions and Committee Meetings.** The board may schedule work sessions, committee meetings, or other informal meetings of the board or of a majority of its members at such times and concerning such subjects as may be established by resolution or order of the board. A schedule of any such meetings held regularly shall be filed in the same place and manner as the schedule of regular meetings. Work sessions and other informal official meetings not held regularly are subject to the same notice requirements as special board meetings.
- (e) **Sunshine List.** Any individual and any newspaper, wire service, radio station, and television station may file a written request with the clerk to the board of

commissioners for notice of all special meetings of the board. Requests by individuals must be renewed by the last day of each calendar year and are subject to a \$10.00 nonrefundable annual fee; requests by news organizations must be renewed annually by December 31 and are not subject to any fee.

Rule 7. All Meetings Within the County. All meetings shall be held within the boundaries of Cherokee County, except as otherwise authorized and permitted by applicable North Carolina General Statutes.

Rule 8. Broadcasting and Recording of Meetings.

- (a) Except as provided in this rule, any radio or television station may broadcast all or any part of an official board meeting required to be open to the public. Any person may photograph, film, tape-record, or otherwise reproduce any part of a meeting required to be open.
- (b) Any radio or televisions station wishing to broadcast any portion of an official board meeting shall so notify the county manager before the meeting. If the number of requests or the quantity and size of the necessary equipment is such that the meeting cannot be accommodated in the designated meeting room and no suitable alternative site is available, the county manager may require the news media to either pool equipment and personnel or to secure and pay the costs of an alternative meeting site mutually agreeable to the board and the media representatives.

V. AGENDA

Rule 9. Agenda.

(a) The clerk to the board, in cooperation with the county manager, shall compile all requests for items to be placed on the agenda for each regular, special and emergency meeting into a draft agenda. Requests must be received ten (10) calendar days prior to the requested meeting date. Requests must pertain to county business. County business is defined as: Any item of business that requires board action, or any item of business which the Board of commissioners has statutory authority to act upon. Requests must be accompanied by supporting documentation. Any board member may add an item until publication of the draft agenda by the clerk. The proposed agenda, as such may be modified, shall be adopted by majority vote of the Board and become the official agenda for the meeting.

(b) The agenda packet shall include the agenda document, any proposed ordinances or amendments to ordinances, and supporting documentation and background information relevant to items on the agenda. A copy of the agenda packet shall be delivered to each board member via e-mail at least seventy-two hours before the meeting. Documents in the agenda packet, if not previously

available for public inspection, shall become so when packets have been delivered to each board member.

(c) **Modification of Agenda** - The board may, by majority vote, add an item not on the agenda on findings by the majority of the board that such items could not have reasonably been placed on the agenda pursuant to normal procedures and it is essential that such business be considered at the meeting.

Rule 10. Public Address. Amended and added as Addendum A of this policy.

Rule 11. Order of business.

At regular meetings of the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners, the board shall proceed to business in the following order:

- (1) **Call to order by the Chair**
- (2) **Invocation**
- (3) **Pledge of allegiance**
- (4) **Ethics Statement**

- (5) **Modification of Agenda**
- (6) **Adoption of Agenda**
- (7) **Public Comment Period – Subject to Rules 10 & 10A**
- (8) **Scheduled Public Hearings**
- (9) **Meeting Minutes**
- (10) **Budget and Finance Items**
- (11) **Old Business**
- (12) **New Business**
- (13) **County Manager Items**
- (14) **Commissioner Comment Period**
- (15) **Closed Session (if necessary)**

(16) Open Session (if applicable)

(17) Adjournment

A recess may be called by a majority vote of the Board at any time or by the Chair at any time, without objection. Deviation from the herein above order of business shall be done only by a majority vote of the Board.

VI. CONDUCT OF DEBATE

Rule 12. Powers of the Chair. The chair shall preside at all board meetings. To address the board, a member must be recognized by the chair. The chair shall have the following powers; however, in exercising these powers the chair's decision is subject to appeal and review by the full board on the motion of any member:

- (1) The rule on points of parliamentary procedure, including the right to rule out of order any motion offered for patently obstructive or dilatory purposes;**
- (2) To determine whether a speaker has gone beyond reasonable standards of courtesy in his or her remarks, and to entertain and rule on objections from other members on this ground;**
- (3) To call a brief recess at any time, upon majority vote;**
- (4) To adjourn in an emergency.**

Rule 13. Action by the Board. The board shall proceed by motion. Any member, including the chair, may make a motion.

Rule 14. Second Required. A motion shall require a second in order to be debated and acted on by the board.

Rule 15. One Motion at a Time. A member may make only one motion at a time.

Rule 16. Substantive Motion. A substantive motion is out of order while another substantive motion is pending.

Rule 17. Adopted by Majority Vote. A motion shall be adopted if approved by a majority of the votes cast, a quorum being present, unless otherwise required by these rules or North Carolina laws. Any member of the Board who doubts the result of a vote may request that the Board be polled by roll call vote. The Clerk shall call the roll in alphabetical order, provided that for each subsequent roll call vote conducted within a calendar year the Clerk shall rotate the role so that voting will begin with the next Board member on the roll. The chair of the Board has the privilege of voting last on all such votes. A member is not allowed to pass when polled during a roll call vote unless that member has been excused from voting as provided in Rule 23.

Rule 18. Debate. The chair shall state the motion and then open the floor to debate for the other board members, presiding according to these general principles:

- (1) The board member making the motion or introducing the ordinance, resolution, or order may speak first.
- (2) A board member who has not spoken on the issue shall be recognized before someone who has already spoken.
- (3) If possible, the debate shall alternate between opponents and proponents on the measure.

Rule 19. Procedural Motions.

- (a) In addition to substantive proposals, the procedural motions listed in subsection (b) of this rule, and no others, shall be in order. Unless otherwise noted, each motion is debatable, may be amended, and requires a majority vote for adoption.
- (b) In order of priority (if applicable), the procedural motions are:
 - (1) **To Adjourn.** The motion may be made only at the conclusion of action on a pending matter; it may not interrupt deliberation of a pending matter. A motion to adjourn is not debatable and may not be amended.
 - (2) **To Recess.**
 - (3) **To Call to Follow the Agenda.** The motion must be made at the first reasonable opportunity or it is waived.
 - (4) **To Suspend the Rules.** The motion requires a vote equal to a quorum.
 - (5) **To Divide a Complex Motion and Consider it by Paragraph.**
 - (6) **To Defer Consideration.** A substantive motion whose consideration has been deferred expires one hundred days thereafter, unless a motion to revive consideration is adopted.
 - (7) **To call the Previous Question.** The motion is not in order until there has been at least fifteen minutes of debate and every member has had one opportunity to speak.
 - (8) **To Postpone to a Certain Time or Day.**

- (9) To Refer to Committee.** Sixty days after a motion has been referred to committee, the introducer may compel consideration of the measure by the entire board, regardless of whether the committee has reported the matter back to the board.
- (10) To Amend.** An amendment to a motion must be germane to the subject of the motion, but it may not achieve the opposite effect of the motion. There may be an amendment to the motion and an amendment to an amendment, but no further amendments. Any amendments to a proposed ordinance shall be reduced to writing.
- (11) To Revive Consideration.** The motion is in order at any time within one hundred days of a vote deferring consideration. A substantive motion on which consideration has been deferred expires one hundred days after the deferral, unless a motion to revive consideration is adopted.
- (12) To Reconsider.** The motion must be made at the same meeting where the original vote was taken, and by a member who voted with the prevailing side. It cannot interrupt deliberation on a pending matter but is in order any time before adjournment.
- (13) To Prevent Reconsideration for Six Months.** The motion shall be in order only immediately following the defeat of a substantive motion. It requires a vote equal to a quorum and is valid for six months or until the next regular election of county commissioners, whichever occurs first.

Rule 20. Renewal of Motion. A defeated motion may not be renewed at the same meeting.

Rule 21. Withdrawal of Motion. A motion may be withdrawn by the introducer at any time before receiving a second.

Rule 22. Duty to Vote. It is the duty of each member to vote unless excused by a majority vote according to law. The Board may excuse a member from voting, but only upon questions involving the member's own financial interest or official conduct or on matters on which the member is prohibited from voting under G.S. 14-234, 153A-340(g), or 153A-345(e1). (For purposes of this section the question of compensation and allowances of members of the board does not involve a member's own financial interest or official conduct.) This rule is consistent with and identical to N.C.G.S. § 153A-44 and shall be deemed amended by any legislative amendment to N.C.G.S. § 153A-44. A member wishing to be excused from voting shall so inform the chair, who shall take a vote of the remaining members. A member who fails to vote, not having been excused, shall be recorded as voting in the affirmative.

Rule 23. Prohibition of Secret Voting. No vote may be taken by secret ballot. If the board decides to vote by written ballot, each member shall sign his or her ballot and the

minutes shall record the vote of each member. These ballots shall be retained and made available for public inspection until the minutes of that meeting have been approved, when they may be destroyed.

Rule 24. Action by Reference. The board shall not deliberate, vote, or otherwise act on any matter by reference to an agenda or document number unless copies of the agenda or documents being referenced are available for public inspection at the meeting and are so worded that people at the meeting can understand what is being discussed or acted on.

Rule 25. Introduction of Ordinances, Resolutions, and Orders. A proposed ordinance shall be deemed introduced at the first meeting where it is on the agenda and a motion for its adoption or approval is made by a member of the board; its introduction shall be recorded in the minutes.

Rule 26. Adoption, Amendment, or Repeal of Ordinances. To be adopted at the meeting at which it is first introduced, an ordinance or any action having the effect of an ordinance (except the budget ordinance, any bond order, or any other ordinance on which a public hearing must be held before the ordinance may be adopted) must receive the approval of all the members of the board of commissioners. If the ordinance is approved by a majority those voting but not by all the members of the board, or if the ordinance is not voted on at that meeting, it shall be considered at the next regular meeting of the board. If it then or at any time thereafter within 100 days of its introduction receives a majority of the votes cast, a quorum being present, the ordinance is adopted. This rule is consistent with and identical to N.C.G.S. § 153A-45 and shall be deemed amended by any legislative amendment to N.C.G.S. § 153A-45.

Rule 27. Quorum. A majority of the board membership shall constitute a quorum. The number required for a quorum is not affected by the vacancies. If a member has withdrawn from a meeting without being excused by majority vote of the remaining members, he or she shall be counted as present for the purposes of determining whether a quorum is present. The board may compel the attendance of an absent member by ordering the sheriff to take the member into custody. This rule is consistent with and identical to N.C.G.S. § 153A-43 and shall be deemed amended by any legislative amendment to N.C.G.S. § 153A-43.

Rule 28. Public Hearings. Public hearings required by law or deemed advisable by the board shall be organized by a special order, adopted by a majority vote, setting forth the subject, date, place, and time of the hearing as well as any rules regarding the length of time allotted to each speaker and designating representatives to speak for large groups. At the appointed time, the chair shall call the hearing to order and preside over it. When the allotted time expires, the chair shall declare the hearing ended and the board shall resume the regular order of business.

Rule 29. Quorum at Public Hearings. A quorum of the board must be present at all public hearings required by law.

Rule 30. Minutes. Minutes shall be kept of all board meetings.

Rule 31. Appointments. The board shall use the following procedure to make appointments to fill vacancies in the board itself or in other boards and public offices over which the board has power of appointment.

The Board shall advertise notices of upcoming board appointments via media outlet, and on the county website. All applicants primary domicile must be in Cherokee County to serve on any county-appointed board, committee or commission. No single board term shall exceed three years.

The chair shall open the floor to nominations, whereupon the members shall put forward and debate names of possible appointees. After the debate, the chair shall call the roll of the members, and each member shall vote. The votes shall be tallied until each member has voted. Each vote shall be decided by a majority of the valid ballots cast (a majority is determined by dividing the number of valid ballots cast by two and taking the next highest whole number). It is the duty of each member to vote for as many appointees as there are appointments to be made, but failure to do so does not invalidate that member's ballot. All applicants must be a resident of Cherokee County to serve on any county-appointed board or committee.

The Cherokee County Board of Commissioners may remove, by majority vote, any county-appointed member from any board, committee, or commission when the Board feels that the county-appointed member is no longer representing the majority of the Board of Commissioners; and/or, for conduct that tends to bring the board, committee or commission into disrepute.

Pursuant to §128-1.2, any Cherokee County commissioner appointed by a majority vote to a board, committee or commission is considered to be serving on that board, committee or commission as a part of the individual's duties of elected office and shall not be considered to be serving in a separate office. In addition to §128-1.2, the commission board member's term shall end when vacating the elected office, or at any time prior when voted upon by a majority of the Board of County Commissioners.

The Board of Commissioners, by majority vote, may remove one of its own members from any board, committee or commission when it feels that the member is no longer representing the majority of the Board; and/or, for conduct that tends to bring the office into disrepute.

Rule 32. Reference to Robert's Rules of Order. To the extent not provided for in and not conflicting with the spirit of these rules, the chair shall refer to Robert's Rules of Order to resolve procedural questions.

ADDENDUM A

REPLACEMENT OF RULE 10 & ADDITION OF RULE 10A OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE CHEROKEE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Rule 10 of the Rules of Procedure for the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners is hereby repealed and declared null and void in lieu of the following, which shall replace Rule 10 in its entirety. Rule 10A is hereby added to the Rules of Procedure.

WHEREAS, NCGS 153A-52.1 provides for public comment period (aka: public forum) during regular meetings of the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners and reads as follows:

The board of commissioners shall provide at least one period for public comment per month at a regular meeting of the board. The board may adopt reasonable rules governing the conduct of the public comment period, including, but not limited to, rules (i) fixing the maximum time allotted to each speaker, (ii) providing for the designation of spokesmen for groups of persons supporting or opposing the same positions, (iii) providing for the selection of delegates from groups of persons supporting or opposing the same positions when the number of persons wishing to attend the hearing exceeds the capacity of the hall, and (iv) providing for the maintenance of order and decorum in the conduct of the hearing. The board is not required to provide a public comment period under this section if no regular meeting is held during the month. (2005-170, s. 2.)

WHEREAS, said statute states that the board may adopt reasonable rules governing the conduct of the public comment period.

WHEREAS, reasonable rules of decorum and order are required for the efficient and orderly conduct of the business of the Board.

IT IS ORDAINED that the Rule 10 of the Rules of the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners shall state as follows:

RULE 10. Public Comment Period

- 1. The Chair is vested with the authority to enforce the rules stated herein and to maintain order and decorum including the authority to forfeit a speaker's remaining time and/or having the speaker removed from the meeting.**
- 2. Anyone wishing to speak in public forum shall provide to the Clerk to the Board their name and the subject about which they wish to speak on a sign-up sheet.**
- 3. Speakers shall be limited to 3 minutes. The Chair may, in his/her discretion, allow up to 1 minute of additional time to a speaker, if the speaker requests such extension before their time expires.**

4. Public forum shall be limited to a total time of no more than 30 minutes unless the rules are suspended by a majority vote of the Board.
5. A speaker may not share or relinquish any remaining time they have not used to another speaker.
6. There will be no speaker substitutions.
7. Speakers are allowed to speak one time during public forum.
8. Speakers shall limit their comments to matters that are germane to, or within the jurisdiction of the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners.
9. Speakers shall address their comments only to the Chair.
10. All speakers shall comply with the Rules of Decorum as set forth in Rule 10A.
11. This Rule shall be effective upon adoption.

IT IS FURTHER ORDAINED:

RULE 10A. Decorum and Maintenance of Order at County Commission Meetings

The following rules are adopted and apply to all meetings of the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners.

1. This rule shall be effective upon adoption.
2. The Chair is vested with the authority to enforce Rule 10A.
3. Members of the audience shall be silent unless recognized by the Chair or the Clerk.
4. Anyone recognized by the Chair to speak shall direct their response or comments only to the Chair and not to individual Commissioners, staff or others.
5. There shall be no profanity or vulgarity in word or gesture, nor foul or abusive language of any kind.
6. All speakers shall refrain from personal attacks, threats, derogatory or inappropriate remarks directed towards County staff, elected Board members, or members of the public.
7. All electronic devices shall be silenced during meetings.
8. All in attendance shall conduct themselves in a respectful manner.

Individuals who violate any part of this Rule or engage in egregious or repeated violations may be asked by the Chair to leave the meeting or, should they refuse to leave, be escorted out of the meeting.

NCGS 143-318.17- "A person who willfully interrupts, disturbs or disrupts an official meeting and who, upon being directed to leave the meeting by the presiding officer, willfully refuses to leave the meeting is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor."

Amended the 18th day of March, 2024.