

Item 4 – Discussion of District Bylaws Regarding Public Comment

There were questions asked and statements made at the November 14, 2019 Regular Board meeting concerning the public's right to speak at an open meeting and the procedures used by the District to accommodate the public. Below is the excerpt from the current District Bylaws (Section 2.8) which addresses public comments:

2.8. Public Comment.

During Board meetings, other than a work session, public comment may be heard by the Board. Public comment during a Board meeting will be of two types:

- (1) Public comments of a general nature may be made under the public comment item on the agenda; or
- (2) Specific comments on any posted agenda item may be made following recognition of the speaker by the Board chair. Such comments may be made after the presentation of the item, or during the Board discussion of the item, if the speaker is called upon.

Public comments of either type will be accepted by the Board chair only after the person wishing to speak has completed an information card, which is available at the meeting. The card must contain the speaker's name, address, phone number, and the number of the agenda item that will be addressed, if applicable. A speaker may speak for three (3) minutes or less. Speakers shall address only the item for which they signed up, unless their general comment is heard during the Public Comment period. No speaker will be allowed to pass his time to someone else, nor will be permitted to repeat comments made by another, except to concur with those remarks.

Changes made to The Texas Open Meeting Act (TOMA) during the 86th Legislative Session via HB 2840, were identified by the district legal counsel who then notified the General Manager in July, 2019. The General Manager observed that the current District Bylaws exactly address the contents of HB 2840 with one exception. HB 2840, which became law on September 1, 2019, allows the public in need of a translator to have twice the amount of time to speak.

It should be noted that since the enactment of the law, no violations have occurred.