

## **Networks Northwest Board Public Comment Policy**

Any person shall be permitted to attend any Networks Northwest Board or Committee meeting, in accordance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act. No conditions on attendance may be placed on the public. A person shall not be excluded from a public meeting except for a breach of the peace actually committed at the meeting.

Any person shall be permitted to address a meeting of the Networks Northwest Board or Committee meeting which is required to be open to the public under the provisions of the Michigan Open Meetings Act. **Networks Northwest welcomes public comment in relation to any topic on the board's agenda. To ensure an orderly, fair process, the board asks that participants observe the following rules of procedure for Public Comment:**

- Public Comment may be made only during the Public Comment agenda item.
- The Chairperson will recognize each speaker. Any person wishing to address the Board or Committee must state his or her name and address prior to making his/her comments.
- Persons may address the Board or Committee only on matters or issues which are relevant and germane to the Networks Northwest Board's responsibilities.
- Each person's public comment shall not exceed three (3) minutes. However, the Chairperson may, at his or her discretion, extend the amount of time any person is allowed to speak, up to an additional two (2) minutes.
- No person shall be allowed to speak more than once on the same matter, excluding time needed to answer board members' questions.
- Any board member wishing to ask a question following an individual's public comment must receive permission from the Chairperson.
- Whenever a group wishes to address the Board or Committee, the group shall identify itself and make it known ahead of time that it wishes to address the Board. The Chairperson may require the group to designate a spokesperson; the spokesperson's public comment shall not exceed ten (10) minutes.
- Each person who speaks shall direct his-her comments to the Chairperson. In order to avoid unscheduled debates, the board generally will not question, comment, or respond to a person who is addressing the board. Silence or non-response from the board should not be interpreted as disinterest or disagreement by the board.
- The Chairperson shall call to order any person who is behaving in a disorderly manner or otherwise disrupting the proceedings, by failing to be germane, by speaking longer than the allotted time, or by speaking vulgarities. Such person shall thereupon be seated. If a person is ruled out of order, he or she shall not be permitted to speak further at the same meeting. If the person shall continue to be disorderly or disruptive of the meeting, the chairperson may order the individual to leave the meeting room. If the individual does not cooperate by leaving, the Chairperson may ask the local police to remove the person from the meeting.