

# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY

**Purpose:** In an effort to make the Billerica Housing Authority Board of Commissioners (the "Board") more accessible, this Public Participation Policy (the "Policy") provides for Billerica Housing Authority ("BHA") residents and members of the public to address the Board on a first-come, first-served basis.

The purpose of the Open Microphone period is for BHA residents to address concerns, complaints and, most importantly, to make suggestions to the Board. The Open Microphone period is not intended to circumvent the day-to-day operations or management of the BHA, to rectify concerns on the spot, or to interfere with the orderly conduct of the Board's meetings.

**Policy:** The Open Microphone period will be the first order of business on the Board's Meeting Agenda.

Those wishing to speak at the Open Microphone segment of a meeting will be given preference in the order in which they sign-up on the "Open Microphone Sign-Up Sheet," made available prior to the start of the meeting. The Sign-Up sheet must be fully completed by each speaker, providing the speaker's name and the topic the speaker intends to address to the Board.

BHA residents may address the Board, through its Chair. Non-BHA residents, who complete the Open Microphone Sign-Up sheet, may address the Board, through its Chair, after BHA residents have spoken if time remains.

All Open Microphone speakers will be allowed up to three (3) minutes to address the Board, and the total Open Microphone period at any meeting of the Board shall not exceed thirty (30) minutes. Once a speaker has offered comment, they shall not be recognized a second time during the same Open Microphone period. The Chair will curtail verbal comments exceeding the allotted time. All Speakers are limited to only speak about items on that meeting's agenda.

The Board shall not answer any questions or take any votes during the Open Microphone period. Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, the Chair will not permit Board discussion of a topic that is not specifically listed on the agenda. Therefore, no members of the Board will be permitted to respond to the public comments raised at that meeting during the Open Microphone period. At the discretion of the Chair, action on a matter raised during the Open Microphone period may be deferred to the Executive Director or placed on the Agenda for a later meeting.

At all other times during the meeting, the public shall not enter into discussion or debate on matters being considered by the Board, unless requested by the Chair.

Adopted by vote of the Board of Commissioners on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Revised on May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026