

Comprehensive Planning Implementation Committee Working Agreements - June 2025

INTRODUCTION

To maintain an orderly and effective meeting, the Town of Bowdoinham committees shall follow the following guidelines and agreements. The suggestions made in this document are based on previous working agreements ("*Comprehensive Plan Committee of 2016 Working Agreements*"; "*Creating Capacity-A Beginning*") as well as Best Practices provided by the Midcoast Council of Governments.

MEETING OBJECTIVES

While the Agenda may set the topics for discussion, the following objectives are etiquette-based terms that should be followed to help conduct effective and welcoming meetings.

- Recognizing the opinions and backgrounds of the participants.
- Understanding the commitment and contributions made by those in attendance.
- Allow others to be heard and considered.
- Understand the importance of questions - and how questions are clustered by type.
 - Are the questions being asked relevant to the current topic and not just your personal interest?
- Creating a strong organizational foundation to help implementation in the future.
- Establishing shared priorities and ensuring alignment on goals, so that all members are working toward the same objectives.
- Following a committee-approved workplan and assigning tasks collaboratively rather than individually.

Avoiding side projects or communications that are not endorsed by the committee as a whole. Clarity on roles and tasks helps the committee stay effective and avoid duplication or confusion.

AGENDA

The agenda is more than just words on a paper. The agenda is meant to outline how the meeting should be run, the deadlines and time limits for certain topics to provide an opportunity to cover as much as possible, and limits distractions.

- When setting the agenda, review progress on the workplan and ensure that the meeting advances the group's shared priorities.
- Topics on the agenda should be known to the Committee in advance.
- A chance shall be given to all stakeholders from the committee and public.
- Topics from previous meetings should be discussed even if it is a brief acknowledgement of no activity from the prior meeting.
- Topics for discussion need to have realistic time limits.
- A set time to open and close the meeting to hold people accountable for time.
 - Any change in the time should be agreed upon by the committee.

BEFORE THE MEETING

An effective meeting doesn't just start when the quorum is called. Time and effort from select individuals goes into the meeting room.

- Communication between the Committee (Chair & Vice Chair) and Town Staff.
 - Setting the agenda to cover topics discussed by the Committee.
 - Anything on the agenda should be previously covered by the Committee from a prior meeting.
 - New topics should not take up a significant amount of time.
 - Each topic should have an idea for how long it will last.
- Having an available space to allow the public to attend.
- Having all materials sent out to the public and committee ahead of the meeting.
- If required, have visual aids working and prepared.

DURING THE MEETING

As mentioned under "Meeting Objectives", there is more to a meeting beyond just the agenda:

- The Chair, or their designee, runs the meeting and is responsible for keeping the Committee on track and following the timeline set out in the agenda.
 - An effective Chair should facilitate so everyone has a chance to speak.
- Honor the "Meeting Objectives" and respect the effort that went into setting up the meeting.
- Decisions are made by the Committee and through discussion.
 - Members who wish to research topics should be encouraged with permission from the Committee with updates at each gathering.
 - Minutes and recordings must reflect the decisions made by the Committee.
- Be sure everyone has a chance to speak. The Committee meeting is a chance for multiple people to gather and discuss the topic(s) of the night.
- If objectives need to be achieved by the next meeting, the Committee should decide who is accomplishing those tasks, and the chosen party is able to accomplish it. The end of the meeting should be a summary of the decisions made at the meeting, and what the goals are for the next meeting.

AFTER THE MEETING

Even after the meeting, there are still tasks to do:

- Review the agenda items that were tabled so they can be on the next agenda.
- Send out meeting minutes and a reminder on what decisions were made.
- Check in on assigned action items to ensure accountability and alignment with the committee's agreed-upon goals.