RESOLUTION #25-356/2020  To adopt the attached rules regarding public participation at Town Board Meetings.

On Motion of Councilmember Barley  Seconded by Supervisor Schultz

WHEREAS, the Henrietta Town Board previously enacted the "Henrietta Town Board Public Meeting Rules of Conduct on June 3, 2016 by Resolution #12-170/2016," and

WHEREAS, the Town Board updated and re-implemented public meeting rules by repealing the same and replacing them with the attached "Points of Order for Public Participation at Henrietta Town Board Meetings," by Resolution #25-47/2018 on January 3, 2018, and

WHEREAS, in updating said rules, the Town Board sought to ensure that all members of the public are afforded a fair and adequate opportunity to speak to their elected representatives at Town Board meetings, and

WHEREAS, the Town Board believes that such update helps ensure that all persons are afforded a reasonable time to speak, people can hear and understand what is being said at meetings, people can speak without being interrupted, and proper decorum is maintained at Town meetings so that all residents are comfortable attending and public business may be conducted.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Henrietta Town Board hereby adopts the “Points of Order for Public Participation at Henrietta Town Board Meetings, effective immediately, and which shall be reviewed annually at the Town’s Organizational Meeting.

Duly put to a vote:
Councilmember Barley  voting  Aye
Councilmember Stafford  voting  Aye
Councilmember Sefranek  voting  Aye
Councilmember Bolzner  voting  Aye
Supervisor Schultz  voting  Aye

Carried
Points of Order for Public Participation at Henrietta Town Board Meetings

Vitally important to the Town of Henrietta is engagement and participation by the public. As such, the Henrietta Town Board values and seeks public input during Town Board meetings. In order to ensure that all members of the public are afforded a fair and adequate opportunity to speak to their elected representatives at Town Board meetings, the Town Board has implemented the following points of order. The points of order are aimed at ensuring that public participation during a Town Board meeting is carried out in an orderly manner such that all persons are afforded a reasonable time to speak, people can hear and understand what is being said at meetings, people can speak without being interrupted, and proper decorum is maintained at Town meetings so that all residents are comfortable attending and public business may be conducted. The points of order follow.

1. The Town Supervisor or the Supervisor’s designee is responsible for maintaining order and control over Town Board meetings, including during public hearing and public participation segments of the agenda. The Supervisor or designee shall have the ability to administer these points of order and may remind speakers of the same and request compliance therewith. Should a speaker refuse, he or she may be asked to step down.

2. Public participation at meetings of the Town Board is welcome during public hearings and also during the public participation segment of the Town Board agenda. Additionally, the Town Board may call for public participation during a meeting at any other time it sees fit.

3. Each speaker is encouraged to be thoughtful about ensuring that reasonable time is afforded for other members of the public at the meeting to speak, as well as for the Town Board to conduct business. As such, each speaker shall make a good faith effort at keeping the length of their comments reasonable, including, for example, refraining from repeating oneself and keeping comments relevant to Town business (as set forth below). Should a speaker wish to make multiple, lengthy points, the speaker should consider yielding the floor after a single such point, and then returning to make further comments after other speakers have had an opportunity to speak.

4. The Town Board requests that an individual wishing to speak sign up on a signup sheet that will be made available before the start of the meeting. The Supervisor or designee will call each name listed on the signup sheet and, when a person’s name is called, he or she should then approach the podium, introduce him or herself, and speak. Once all of those individuals who signed up have been called and given an opportunity to speak, the Supervisor or designee will then ask if anyone who has not signed up to speak would like to speak. The Supervisor or designee will then call on those with raised hands to speak. After speaking, those who have not signed up shall then sign the signup sheet so that the Town can ensure it keeps accurate minutes.

5. Comments should relate to the purpose of the public hearing or to Town business. Further, comments shall be addressed to the Town Board. Speakers shall refrain from directly addressing or engaging in discussion with other attendees of the public meeting. A speaker may disagree with or support a point made by a prior speaker through comments directed to the Town Board. In order to maintain order and allow an opportunity for all to speak, attendees shall not address the Town Board until recognized by the Supervisor or designee.

6. Statements made during Town Board meetings are expected to be civil and respectful. Comments should not involve attacks on individuals, and the use of profane, vulgar, inflammatory, threatening, abusive, or disparaging language or racial or ethnic slurs is disruptive, contrary to decorum, and shall not be tolerated.

7. Members of the Town Board, speakers and audience members must observe proper decorum so that each person’s opportunity to speak is respected, and so that Town business may be carried out. No person shall disrupt the meeting with loud outbursts, shouting, threats or other disruptive conduct or behavior. Continually disruptive individuals may be asked to leave the meeting so that other speakers may have an opportunity to speak and Town business may be conducted.

8. Statements (outside of quiet statements to his or her audience neighbors) by a person attending the meeting which are not made during his or her duly recognized opportunity to speak are disruptive, contrary to decorum, and should be refrained from.