

Tips for Presenting to the Renville County Board of Commissioners

1. **Anything that will be handed out to the commissioners should be submitted with the corresponding agenda item by noon on Thursday preceding the meeting.** You may want to have copies of a concise summary of your key points to hand out to commissioners, staff, and the news media.
2. **Arrive early.** Getting to the meeting early will give you a chance to survey the meeting space, identify commissioners, and make last-minute changes to your presentation (this applies to in-person and virtual participation).
3. **After you're invited by the Chair to address the Board, approach the podium.** When speaking to the board, clearly identify yourself and the organization you represent, if any. Then clearly state your information.
4. **Speak through the Board Chair.** All questions and answers during board meetings and work sessions are routed through the Board Chair. Address the Chair as "Madame Chair" or "Mr. Chair." This makes it easier for the Board Chair to conduct an orderly meeting.
5. **Don't be intimidated.** Commissioners are elected to represent their constituents and set policy direction for the County. They want to hear what you have to say. Just state your case clearly and in simple terms, as you would to anyone.
6. **Be brief.** Make your key points as concisely as possible. Provide specific information about why your position is in the County's best interest. Commissioners may want to know what, if anything, has been done in other counties, what the costs might be, and what groups support or oppose your proposal. If you know the answers, include them in your statement.
7. **Request action.** Clearly state what action or decision you're seeking from the Board. Make it easy for them to understand what is expected of them.
8. **Be prepared to answer questions.** The best way to make your case is to provide straightforward answers to commissioners' questions. If you don't know the answer, say so. If possible, find the answer and pass it on to Board members through the County Administrator.
9. **Be flexible.** Be prepared to adapt your presentation based on the Board's feedback and questions. Remember that successful board presentations require thorough preparation, effective communication, and the ability to connect with your audience. By following these steps and being mindful of your audience's needs and expectations, you can increase your chances of delivering a successful board presentation.
10. **Display mutual respect.** Mutual respect is an expectation of the County Board. There are many sides to every issue and each one has merit. Understand the difficult position commissioners have in reaching their decisions and ensure your tone of voice and body language are conveying an open, respectful approach.