

At our last meeting, I was requested to draft a public comment policy for consideration. The draft presented below encompasses legally required elements, as well as items that this board requested.

Submitted by John Rucker



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## DRAFT PUBLIC COMMENT POLICY

Adopted: Month DD, YYYY

Last Revised: n/a

### Reason for Policy

The Branch District Library Board of Trustees ("Board") welcomes and encourages comments from members of the public who attend Board meetings. Pursuant to the requirements of the Open Meetings Act, a person is permitted to make a public comment during a meeting under rules established and recorded by the Board.

### Meeting Agendas and Public Comment Period

The Board has sole discretion to determine the content of each meeting agenda and is not obligated to add any item to the agenda. At minimum, one shared printed copy of the agenda will be available for members of the public who attend a meeting, in addition to the agenda available electronically on the library website. The agenda will indicate the designated time(s) for the public to provide comments. The Board will include at least one public comment period during each meeting, typically at the end of the meeting.

Members of the public have no right to address the Board or make comments outside of the Public Comment period. At any time, the Board, at its discretion, may accept comments or information from the public or library staff outside of the Public Comment period. However, outside of the Public Comment period, the Board is under no obligation to hear comments from the public during a meeting. Issues requiring possible action by the Board may be added to a future meeting agenda at the Board's discretion. The Board is under no obligation to take any action on any issue raised during the Public Comment period. Members of the public are also encouraged to contact the library during regular business hours to ask questions, raise concerns, and request information about library matters.

Board members will refrain from interacting with or interrupting speakers during Public Comment period. The Board President or their designee may answer questions of an informational nature from a speaker at the Board President's discretion. However, no Board



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member will engage in discussion, debate, or give opinion or position on an issue during the Public Comment period.

## **Rules of Public Comment**

The Board is committed to conducting its meetings in a civil and productive manner that will allow the Board's regular business to be completed in a reasonable period of time while allotting a fair and adequate opportunity for public input. The rules below apply to the public comment period in any regular or special meeting ("Public Comment").

1. When the Board meeting reaches a designated time for Public Comments, the Board President, or other presiding officer, will invite attendees to make Public Comments.
2. The Board President will ask persons wishing to speak to wait in line in an orderly fashion at a designated place until recognized by the Board President. The Board President will recognize one person to speak at a time, and all speakers must provide their name and address for the record. No person in attendance may make a comment without being recognized.
3. Public Comments must be addressed to the Board, not to other members of the audience or library staff.
4. Each speaker is entitled to only one (1) three-minute time during any Public Comment period per meeting and may not split the time or "give" the time to another speaker. If the speaker's time is interrupted or delayed, their time may be extended at the discretion of the Board President.
5. In lieu of speaking, a person may submit written comments to the Library Director or Board President via email or via physical mail sent to the library's administrative offices. Written materials must be received by 4:30pm to be considered for that day's meeting; materials received after will be reviewed at a subsequent meeting. Written materials submitted to the Board are considered public documents and may be read aloud in the meeting, provided they can be read in a three-minute period and may be subject to Freedom of Information Act requests.
6. The Board encourages free and complete public dialogue on Board issues within the bounds of civil discourse. Speakers may not breach the peace of the meeting. No person shall engage in disruptive, discourteous, belligerent, or other uncivil behavior. The Board President may, without prior warning, limit or end the comments of any person who engages in this conduct.

7. If a speaker includes specific questions to the Board, the Board has no obligation to respond.
8. All signs are prohibited at Board meetings.
9. The Board may determine, in its sole discretion, how Public Comments will be summarized in the meeting minutes. Members of the public should not expect the minutes to include verbatim transcripts or details of any individual comment.

Failure to adhere to these rules may result in removal from the meeting. A copy of these rules will be available to members of the public at Board meetings and may also be found on the library's website.