

Public Participation at Library Board Meetings and Petitions to the Board

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Policy No: 1.10

Policy

In accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act, the Ela Area Public Library Board of Trustees (“Board”) provides an opportunity for public comment at all Board meetings.

The Board has a responsibility to conduct the business of the Library in an orderly and efficient manner and to establish reasonable procedures for public comment at its meetings. The Board President, as Chair of the meeting (or the Chair Pro-Temp in the Board President’s absence) is responsible for ensuring the orderly conduct of the meeting and will rule on the appropriateness of any public comment issues that may arise.

The following procedures for public comment are intended to maintain the orderly conduct of meetings and ensure fairness to those who wish to address the Board:

1. Anyone interested in speaking publicly at a Board meeting is welcome. Individuals are asked to sign in just prior to the start of the meeting to promote the efficiency of the public comment period. Each speaker may, if he or she chooses, state his or her name and/or address.
2. Only one person may speak at a time during any public comment period. No person may assign their time to any other person.
3. Speakers will be limited to five (5) minutes per person during the public comment portion of the meeting, unless extended by the Board President, in his or her discretion.
4. The Board President may deny a person who has previously addressed the Board the opportunity to speak again during the same meeting on the same topic.
5. No person may address the Board or engage in public comment except during the defined public comment period, when recognized by the Board President, and only while the speaker is at the microphone.

6. During any public comment period, Board members may ask questions of the speaker while he or she is at the microphone, if recognized by the Board President. However, the Board need not answer questions from a speaker during any public comment period. If a person has a question for the Board, the individual may be asked to submit the question in writing.
7. Any person who engages in threatening, slanderous, or disorderly behavior when addressing the Board, or who speaks out of turn or otherwise disrupts the Board meeting, shall be deemed out-of-order by the Board President, and the Board President may end that person's public comment time. Repeated or extraordinary occurrences of disorderly conduct shall be grounds for the Board President to cause the violator to be removed from the meeting room. The Board President will rule on whether remarks made are in violation of this policy.
8. Members of the audience shall refrain from applauding, cheering, or making derogatory remarks during, or at the conclusion of, remarks made by any speaker, including members of the public body, staff, the audience, or the public
9. The Board President has the authority to determine procedural matters regarding public participation not otherwise defined in this policy.
10. Petitions or written correspondence to the Board shall be presented to the Board at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.