

Public Comment Policy

The Chillicothe Public Library District Board of Trustees welcomes public comments at its meetings. All of our meetings are conducted in compliance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act, which requires board meetings be open for public observation.

Each agenda includes time at each meeting for public comments. In order for the Board of Trustees to fulfill its obligation to complete the scheduled agenda in a timely manner, a maximum of 30 minutes of public participation will be permitted at each meeting when the public is present.

All visitors are required to sign in prior to the call to order. If a visitor wishes to speak to the Board of Trustees during the public comment section of the agenda, he/she must complete the required form and present it to the Board President prior to the start of the meeting. Completing this form will insure everyone who wishes to speak has the opportunity to do so. The speakers will be recognized in the order in which they sign in.

Each speaker will be given five (5) minutes to share her/his views with the Board of Trustees. If more than six people wish to speak, the 30 minutes allowed will be divided equally among all the speakers. The Secretary and/or Recording Secretary will monitor the allotted time. The Board has the right and responsibility to maintain its agenda. The Board President will call on speakers one at a time.

The speakers are asked to address the board by first stating their names, and their views/concerns/questions. If a resident wishes to share additional comments, they may schedule an appointment with the Library Director, who will then present a summary of that meeting to the board of trustees. If there are many residents concerned about an unresolved issue, the board may schedule a special meeting to address the issue.

Should items introduced by visitors not appear on the agenda, and be characterized as specific complaints in respect to library operations, it shall be board policy to allow the Library Director or Board members time to research the circumstances surrounding the dispute, especially if this meeting is the first the staff has heard of the matter. To avoid Illinois Open Meetings law violations, the dispute will be tabled to appear on the next month's meeting agenda. After discussion at the next board meeting the Board will respond to the person making the complaint in writing within 10 business days.

Comments should not include discussion of personnel matters. These matters should be brought directly to the attention of the Library Director, unless the matter is regarding the Library Director in which case the matter should be brought to the attention of the Library Board President.

Proper and polite behavior is expected of all participants, in the event the Board deems the conduct of the public speaker to be impolite and disruptive the public comment session can be called to an end by the President, or President pro-tem.

The meeting agenda will be given to the public present. Other documents can be requested through the Freedom of Information Act after the meeting. Request forms are available at the circulation desk or on the library's website. Open meeting minutes will be available on the website within one week from the date of their approval.

Public Bodies, like the library, may enter into Executive Session regardless if such disclosure is on the regular agenda; however, the body must specify under which exception(s) they will be

separately convening to discuss (see attached list of exceptions). When this occurs, the public will be asked to exit the meeting room, even if Public Comment time has not expired, until that time when the Board enters back into regular session.

The Board of Trustees appreciates all who participate in open and orderly meetings.

Exceptions Permitting Closed Sessions*

2(c)(1) The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee or against legal counsel to determine its validity.

2(c)(2) Collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees.

2(c)(3) The selection of a person to fill a public office, as defined in the Open Meetings Act, including a vacancy in a public office, when the public body is given power to appoint under law or ordinance, or the discipline, performance or removal of the occupant of a public office, when the public body is given power to remove the occupant under law or ordinances.

2(c)(4) Evidence or testimony presented in open hearing, or in closed hearing where specifically authorized by law, to a quasi-adjudicative body, as defined in the Open Meetings Act, provided that the body prepares and makes available for public inspection a written decision setting forth its determinative reasoning.

2(c)(5) The purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body.

2(c)(6) The setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the public body.

2(c)(7) The sale or purchase of securities, investments, or investment contracts.

2(c)(8) Security procedures and the use of personnel and equipment to respond to an actual, a threatened, or a reasonably potential danger to the safety of employees, students, staff the public or public property.

2(c)(11) Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular public body has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the public body finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the minutes of the closed meeting.

2(c)(12) The establishment of reserves or settlement of claims as provided in the Local Governmental and Governmental Employees Tort Immunity Act, if otherwise the disposition of a claim or potential claim might be prejudiced, or the review or discussion of claims, loss or risk management information, records, data, advice or communications from or with respect to any insurer of the public body or any intergovernmental risk management association or self-insurance pool of which the public body is a member.

2(c)(15) Professional ethics or performance when considered by an advisory body, appointed to advise a licensing or regulatory agency on matters germane to the advisory body's field of competence.

2(c)(16) Self-evaluation, practices and procedures or professional ethics, when meeting with a representative of a statewide association of which the public body is a member.

2(c)(21) Discussion of minutes of meetings lawfully closed under the Open Meetings Act, whether for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated by Section 2.06 of the open Meetings Act.

* The exceptions listed are those applicable to public libraries in the words of the statute. Other exceptions may apply to other forms of governmental bodies. Although stricken by statutory amendment, we believe a constitutional exception continues to exist permitting closed session to consult with an attorney on privileged matters.