



Policy Category: Board of Trustees
Policy Title: Public Comment at Board Meetings
For Consideration: 4/15/2025

Policy: While the New York Open Meetings Law does not require that the public be allowed to participate in meetings, the Port Jervis Free Library has, at this time, adopted a policy to set aside a limited period of time at each meeting designated for public comment consistent with the following:

- Members of the public who wish to speak (“Speakers”) at the meeting shall sign in (“Sign in”) prior to the start of the public comment period.
- The Board may hold one or more comment periods:
 - The first comment period shall be limited to items on the Board’s current agenda for such meeting; such agenda shall be posted at least 72 hours in advance of such meeting. Each Speaker shall have a maximum of five (5) minutes to speak after being recognized by the Chair.
 - Additional comment periods may be added after the first comment period, at the sole discretion of the Board, and comments may encompass either the current agenda or any issue of public concern regarding the Port Jervis Library.
 - Speakers who have completed the Sign in will be recognized by the Chair to speak during the designated comment period in the order in which they completed the Sign in.
 - Each Speaker shall have a maximum of five (5) minutes to speak after being recognized by the Chair to speak during the designated comment period.
- Speakers must keep to the time limit.
- Speakers may not “donate” their time to another Speaker.
- Speakers must direct their comments to the Board, or the Chair, and may not address individual Trustees, staff, members of the public, or otherwise.
- The Board may, in its discretion, change the order of business, and determine or change when the public comment periods may take place during the meeting.
- Neither Board members nor staff will engage in dialogue with a Speaker, other than they may thank each Speaker.
- The Chair, or designee, shall maintain order, a respectful environment, and an efficient process during public comment.

- The Chair, or designee, is empowered to interrupt and/or terminate any Speaker's time and/or have the Speaker removed, if the Speaker violates this policy, applicable law, or if the Speaker is, in the sole discretion of the Chair or designee, loud, obscene, disruptive, defamatory, attacking, inappropriate, uncivil, abusive, filibustering, badgering, or under the influence of alcohol or narcotics.
- Meeting minutes are a summary of the Board's discussion and actions. Speaker requests to attach written statements or other documents to the minutes will not be honored.
- If an individual has been invited by the Board in advance to speak at the meeting for purposes of a presentation or similar purpose, the Board may, in its sole discretion, allocate more time for such invited speaker to speak and/or make their presentation.