

Open Meetings Policy

Application

The conduct and record of meetings informing or consisting of acts of governance of the library is dictated in part by this policy. Members of the Board of Trustees are the principle parties affected by this policy. Public access to the workings of governance of the library is enabled by this policy.

Statement of Purpose

The investment of public funds in the library entails an expectation of inclusion in meetings concerning governance of the library. Meetings between members of the Board of Trustees in whole, comprising a quorum, or of committees concerning the library are directly in the public interest and protected by the Open Meetings Law. The law gives the public the right to attend meetings of public bodies, listen to the debates and watch the decision making process in action. This policy serves to demonstrate understanding of the scope and application of the Open Meetings Law, to inform Trustees and the public how the library meets the requirements and the intention of the law.

Policy

Meetings of two or more Trustees including regular business meetings, working sessions and advisory meetings are open to the public. Meetings may be closed to anyone not invited by the Board in eight limited circumstances, detailed in the attached *Lawful Executive Sessions* guide. Meetings will be advertised in the news media and within the library including online venues. Minutes detailing votes taken on motions, proposals, resolutions and any other matter formally voted on by a quorum of the Board of Trustees will be kept; documentation of supporting discussions may also be retained.

Meetings scheduled a week or more in advance will be publicized in the media (including library websites) at least three days in advance of the meeting. When a meeting is scheduled a week or less in advance, public notice will be provided in the most ready manner available. Any documents to be formally considered by the Board will be made readily available to the public. Minutes of open meetings will be made available within two weeks of the meeting. Minutes of Executive Sessions will be made available within one week of the Executive Session. Minutes that have not yet been approved at an open meeting may be marked 'draft' or similarly, indicating they have yet to be evaluated.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the Board to perform or delegate all procedural steps pertaining to public notice of meetings, provision of documents under consideration and minutes of meetings; Officers of the Board will determine the validity of proposed Executive Sessions. The Library Director or a designee holds responsibility for providing documents related to the policy to the concerned parties. The Library Director is responsible for training and supporting staff regarding this policy.

Approved Date: 10/13/2016

Reviewed: 3/14/2024

Revised: 3/11/2021

Evaluating Executive Sessions

For an Executive Session to proceed lawfully, take several procedural steps:

First, a motion must be made during an open meeting to enter into executive session;

Second, the motion must identify “the general area or areas of the subject or subjects to be considered;”

Third, the motion must be carried by a majority vote of the total membership of a public body.

The general area of the subject to be considered MUST meet one of the following conditions:

- Commonly thought of as a ‘personnel’ issue, does the discussion have to do with any of the following related to a particular, specific person or corporation?
 - Historical matters
 - Medical
 - Financial
 - Credit
 - Employment
 - Details pertaining to employment actions including
 - Appointment
 - Employment
 - Promotion
 - Demotion
 - Discipline
 - Suspension
 - Dismissal
 - Removal
- Will public safety be imperiled if the discussion were public?
- Does the discussion disclose the identity of a law enforcement agency or informer?
- Is the discussion related to current or future investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense that would imperil effective law enforcement if disclosed?
- Does it relate to other proposed, pending or current litigation?
- Is the discussion about collective negotiations covered in Article 14 of Civil Service Law (the Taylor Law)?
- Does the discussion have to do with preparation, grading or administration of examinations?
- Is the discussion about real estate deals for property held by the organization and would public discussion substantially affect the value of those deals?

NOTE that for ‘personnel’ issues, the following do not allow for exclusion of the public:

- Employee compensation, broadly
- Personnel policy

Upon coming out of Executive Session if a vote was taken it will be summarized in the regular meeting minutes if no vote was taken there will be no summary in the regular meeting minutes.