

# Ontario Public Library

## Policy 4001.1

### Public Participation at Library Board Meetings

1. Public participation at meetings of the Library Board shall be limited to the public participation segment of the agenda or at the invitation of the chair.
2. Public comment, whether during the public participation segment of the meeting or during a duly designated public hearing, shall be limited to four minutes per person. An individual's time may not be given or traded to other speakers or reserved for other portions of the meeting. The Chair or the presiding officer shall act as timekeeper or shall designate another board member as timekeeper.
3. Any comments in reference to an individual staff member will be addressed in executive session. Any action of the Board will be taken in open session.
4. Any person wishing to speak at a library board meeting during the public participation segment or during a public hearing must sign the sign-in sheet upon entering the room. The sheet will be used by the Chair or the presiding officer to recognize speakers.
5. Comments must relate to legitimate library business.
6. Members of the board, speakers, and audience members must observe proper decorum. Any statement made during the meeting or during a public hearing by the Chair, members of the Library Board and staff, or members of the general public shall not involve personal, impertinent, or slanderous attacks on individuals, regardless of whether the individual so attacked is an elected official, a Library Board member or staff, or a member of the general public.
7. The Chair or the presiding officer shall control the meeting. The use of profane, vulgar, inflammatory, threatening, abusive, or disparaging language directed at the Chair, members of the Library Board or staff or members of the general public, or statements by a person not recognized to speak will not be tolerated.
8. Banners, flyers or other signs are not permitted in the meeting room. Distribution of flyers in the meeting room is also not permitted.
9. Any person who disregards the directives of the Chair or the presiding officer in enforcing the rules or who generally conducts himself or herself in a boisterous or inappropriate manner while addressing the Library Board and disturbs the peace at a meeting, will be barred from further participation and will forfeit any balance of time remaining for his or her comments.
10. The Library Board is not obligated to respond to public comments during the meeting.

*Policy created per recommendation the New York State Committee on Open Government which suggests that a public body can adopt reasonable rules that treat members of the public equally and allow them to speak during open meetings.*

**POLICY ADOPTED:** 03/21/2017  
**REVISED:**  
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Board of Trustees  
Ontario Public Library  
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