

# Policy For Public Comments At Meetings

## I. Purpose

The Portage District Library welcomes and encourages comments from members of the public who attend Library Board meetings. Pursuant to the requirements of the Open Meetings Act, a person is permitted to make a public comment during a meeting under rules established and recorded by the Library Board.

## II. Public Comment Period; Meeting Agendas

- A.** If an agenda is available, the Library Board will have copies of the agenda available for the public who attend the meeting. The agenda will indicate the designated time(s) for the public to provide comments. The Library Board will include at least one public comment period during each meeting. These rules apply to the public comment period in any regular or special meeting or in any committee meeting that is open to the public ("Public Comment").
- B.** Members of the public have no right to address the Library Board or make comments outside of the Public Comment. At any time, the Library Board, at its discretion, may accept comments from the public. However, outside of the Public Comment time, the Library Board is under no obligation to hear comments from the public during a meeting.
- C.** The Library Board has sole discretion to determine the content of each meeting agenda and is not obligated to add any item to the agenda.

## III. Rules of Public Comment

The Library Board adopts the following procedures to receive Public Comments:

- A.** When the Library Board meeting reaches a designated time for Public Comments, the Chair will invite attendees to make Public Comments. If the Chair is absent, the acting chair of the meeting will perform the Chair's duties under this policy.
- B.** The Chair will ask persons wishing to speak to raise their hands to be recognized by the Chair. The Chair will recognize one person to speak at a time, and each speaker must provide his or her name and address. No person in attendance may make a comment without being recognized.
- C.** Public Comments must be addressed to the Library Board, not to other members of the audience.
- D.** Each speaker is only entitled to one (1) three-minute time during each Public Comment period and may not split the time or "give" the time to another speaker.
- E.** In lieu of speaking, a person may submit any written comments to the Library Board Secretary. Written materials submitted to the Library Board are considered public documents.

- F.** The Library Board encourages free and complete public dialogue on Library Board issues within the bounds of civil discourse. Speakers may not breach the peace of the meeting.
- G.** If a speaker includes specific questions to the Library Board in his or her Public Comments, the Library Board has no obligation to respond.
- H.** Groups are encouraged to designate one or more individuals to speak on their behalf to avoid cumulative comments. However, there is no requirement to make this designation. If a speaker is speaking on more than one individual's behalf, they must state as such at the beginning of their comment and shall be entitled to one (1) five-minute time during Public Comment.
- I.** The Library Board may determine, in its sole discretion, how Public Comments will be summarized in the meeting minutes. Members of the public should not expect the minutes to include verbatim transcripts or details of any individual comment.
- J.** Members of the public are also encouraged to contact the Library during regular business hours to ask questions, raise concerns, and request information about Library matters.

#### **IV. Recording of Rules**

These rules will be recorded in the minutes and kept on file with the Library Secretary.