

Under new amendments to the Open Meetings Act (P.A. 96-1473 effective Jan 1, 2011), public bodies must allow people to address officials at meetings. Governing bodies may adopt rules to control public comments, but some sort of comment must be allowed.

### **Public Participation at Library Board Meetings and Petitions to the Board**

Our current policy is:

*“All meetings of the Board of Trustees are open to members of the public who wish to observe.*

*Non-Board members who wish to address the Board should present a written request for a place on the agenda not later than 24 hours before the time established for the meeting.*

*Requests from non-Board members to be placed on the agenda must pertain to item (s) on the posted agenda for the meeting*

*Written requests may be directed to the President or the Secretary of the Library Board, or to the Library Director.*

*The Introduction of Visitors and Questions and Answers portion of the meeting will allow up to ten minutes total time for brief questions from the public.”*

Here are portions from other organizations regarding public comment that we may wish to incorporate into our policy. The time limits contained in each line may also be changed to meet our needs.

The individuals appearing before the Board are expected to follow these guidelines:

1. Address the Board only at the appropriate times as indicated on the agenda and when recognized by the Board President.
2. Identify oneself by full name and address, and be brief. Ordinarily, such comments shall be limited to 5 minutes. In unusual circumstances, and when the person has given advance notice of the need to speak for a longer period of time, such person may be allowed to speak for more than 5 minutes.
3. The Board President may shorten or lengthen a person's opportunity to speak. The President may also deny the opportunity to speak to a person who has previously addressed the Board on the same subject within the past 2 months.
4. No more than 20 minutes shall be allowed to each subject under discussion, except with unanimous consent of the Board.
5. The Board President shall have the authority to determine procedural matters regarding public participation not otherwise defined in Board policy.

6. There is an absolute prohibition on personal attacks on Board members or others, comments considered profane, frivolous, harassing, and are repetitive or are not appropriate for comment.
7. If more than one member of the public from a particular group has requested to speak, the group must select one representative of the group to present the group's view. In such a case the groups' representative will be allowed (? minutes) to speak.

Petitions or written correspondence to the Board shall be presented to the Board at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

We may also wish to add a form for requesting time to address the board. This form may request name, address, contact information. We may also ask for a brief description of the issue to be addressed or if any contract with the library administration or board on the issue has occurred prior to the board meeting.

The final issue that we may wish to address is rules regarding taping or video-recording board meetings. Video and audio taping is allowed, but boards may set down rules to govern the practice. Cell phones with video are now common so this could become an issue.

#### To Speak to the Board During the Meeting

The Winfield Library Board of Trustees welcomes you to this meeting. We conduct our meetings in strict

compliance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act. The law requires that our board meetings be open for public observation, but it does not require that the public be allowed to participate.

However, we value the ideas and insights of the members of our community and therefore we set aside a maximum of 15 minutes during each board meeting for a forum. If you wish to speak to the board during the forum section of our agenda, please complete the form on the bottom and hand it to one of the board members before the meeting begins.

Only those persons who have completed the form and given it to a board member prior to the meeting will be allowed to speak.

When the board reaches the "Citizens to Speak" section on its agenda, the board president will divide the 15-minute segment by the number of persons who have requested to speak to the board to determine how long each person may speak.

Please do not expect the board to respond at this meeting.

g to your questions or requests. The board will note your concerns or questions and respond in a manner and at a time that is appropriate and after the board has had time to deliberate.

At other times during this meeting, board members may wish to ask for information from persons in the audiences, but please refrain from comment unless asked by a member of the board. Members of the Board are always pleased to hear from constituents outside the meeting, but our agenda is usually full and does not allow for continuous open forum.

Thank you for your participation and for helping us to conduct an open and orderly meeting.

Request to Speak to the Winfield

Public Library Board

of Trustees

During the Forum

This form must be completed and handed to a board member prior to the beginning of the meeting if you wish to speak to the board during the "Citizens to Speak" section of the agenda.

Your Name

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Group or Organization you represent,  
if any \_\_\_\_\_

Address

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Subject about which you wish to speak

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