

## BOARD MEETING PUBLIC COMMENT POLICY

### Policy Statement

The function of the regular meetings of the Library Board is to conduct the business of the Lower Merion Library System, as distinguished from providing an open citizen's forum. The Board does, however, encourage public attendance at, and participation in, its meetings when appropriate to the business at hand.

### Rules of Conduct

1. Public comment is welcome during the designated public comment period. If the agenda is open to comment during other parts of the meeting, the Board President will specifically indicate this to attendees.
  - a. Members of the public may attend regular LMLS Board meetings either in person or via Zoom. Zoom attendance information may be requested at [info@lmls.org](mailto:info@lmls.org).
2. Comments will be permitted only from attendees who fully identify themselves for the record by signing in on the Board meeting attendance sheet or by identifying themselves when requesting a Zoom link and while on Zoom. Video must be activated while making comments via Zoom.
3. The Library Board will permit comment only on topics listed on the current Board meeting agenda. Anyone who wishes to communicate with the Board on other topics should contact the library Board in writing with specific and detailed information about the proposed topic. Email communications should be addressed to [info@lmls.org](mailto:info@lmls.org). The Library Board, at its discretion, will choose whether to place a requested topic on a future Board agenda or respond to the request by phone or in writing.
4. Repeated requests on the same/similar topics or personal attacks on Board members or staff generally will not receive a response.
5. Comment is limited to three (3) minutes total per person/group per topic and five (5) minutes total per person/group on all topics in cases where attendees comment on multiple topics over the course of a single meeting. While commenting:
  - a. The commentor must state their name and address. Anyone refusing to identify himself or herself will be prohibited from commenting. If you are the official representative of an organization, please state the name of the organization.
  - b. The commentor must stay focused on the topics scheduled for review listed on the current Board meeting agenda.

- c. Every speaker must avoid characterizing the motives of others or speaking derogatively of them. Speakers should be prepared with facts to support their opinions or assertions.
  - d. Commenters should speak only for themselves or the organization they officially represent and not claim to speak on behalf of “the community as a whole” or others not in attendance or represented by them or their group.
  - e. Speakers may endorse but should avoid merely reiterating previous points that others have made or that have already made in prior Board meetings.
  - f. The Library Board will not entertain comment in its public meeting about any topic for which it is permitted to go into executive session, such as confidential personnel matters.
6. If any person has a complaint about a specific library Board member or employee, the complaint must be put in writing to the Board with specific and detailed information and will not be addressed in the public comment section of the Board’s meeting.
7. The Library Board reserves the right to waive this policy and these procedures when necessary to conduct Board meetings effectively.
8. Violation of this Policy may result in one or more of the following consequences, depending on the severity of the violation:
- a. Violators will receive a verbal warning and an opportunity to cease.
  - b. If the violation continues, the patron will be asked to leave the meeting or will be removed from the Zoom meeting.
  - c. The Lower Merion Police Department may be notified.
  - d. Repeated violations may result in Temporary denial of the right to be heard at future meetings, although written comments may be sent to the Board.
  - e. Repeated violations may result in suspension of library privileges for up to one year. The patron will receive written notification of the suspension from the Township Director of Libraries outlining the decision and the length of suspension.
  - f. Appeal of suspension decisions may be made in writing to the Director of Libraries within 30 days.
  - g. Further appeals of suspension decisions made by the Director may be submitted in writing to the LMLS Board of Directors within 30 days.