

FSPL Board of Trustees Public Comment Policy

The Fort Smith Public Library Board of Trustees welcomes public input. Library board meetings are conducted in compliance with the open public meetings subsection of the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act of 1967. It should be noted that while the law requires that meetings be open to the public, it does not require any sort of public forum.

Citizens who wish to speak to the Board during a meeting should call or email the library director by noon on the day of the scheduled meeting. This will allow the Board time to adjust the meeting to allow for public comments and ensure that a meeting venue large enough to accommodate the anticipated attendance is available. The following information should be provided when indicating a desire to speak to the Board: name, address, phone number, email address, and the subject to be addressed. If no one has contacted the library director by the deadline, there will be no time allotted for public comments.

Speakers may offer feedback, objective concerns and criticisms about library operations, resources, or services, and input about matters under consideration by the Library Board. Other channels provide for Board consideration of criticism or complaints about library personnel and will not be heard during public comments. Requests for reconsideration of library materials should follow the process outlined in the library's policies and will not be heard during public comments.

Public participation at Board meetings will be guided by the following principles:

- Commenters must have expressed a desire to speak in advance as outlined above.
- Commenters must be recognized by the presiding officer and preface their comments by stating their name and city of residence.
- Each commenter's statement will be limited to three (3) minutes. Their time will begin after they have stated their name and city of residence.
- No participant may speak more than once on the same agenda item.
- Comments should be free of language that is considered offensive, harassing, abusive, or profane.

Commenters who do not adhere to these rules may not be allowed to continue to address the Board.

The Board will take comments into consideration but will not answer questions or engage in dialogue or debate with commenters. The Board reserves the right to limit the number of commenters per subject per meeting.

The Board of Trustees is committed to conducting its meetings in a civil, orderly, efficient, and productive manner. The presiding officer has the authority to control the meeting and take whatever action is necessary to ensure an orderly meeting. Actions may include, but are not limited to, ending a commenter's time to address the Board, requiring that an individual leave the meeting, requesting assistance of law enforcement if a disorderly person refuses to leave, and recessing or adjourning the meeting if a lack of public decorum rises to a level that interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting.