

## **Governance and Organizational Structure**

### **BOARD MEETING PUBLIC COMMENT**

#### **Policy Statement**

The regular meetings of the Library Board are for the purpose of conducting the business of the Bucks County Free Library. The Board encourages public attendance and participation in its meetings as it pertains to Library business.

As provided by the “Sunshine Act,” 65 Pa. C.S. §§ 701-716, the Board shall provide a reasonable opportunity at each public meeting for residents and/or taxpayers of Bucks County (“speakers”) to comment on Library matters of concern, official actions or deliberation which are or may be before the Board, during the designated public comment period.

#### **Rules and/or Guidelines for Public Comment**

Public comment at Library Board meetings shall be governed by the following rules and/or guidelines:

1. Public comment is welcome during the public comment period, as designated in the publicly posted agenda. Generally, a period of public comment will be held on agenda items prior to the Board’s action on the items, and another period of public comment at the end of each public meeting.
2. The Board President shall preside over the public comment period.
3. Only attendees who fully identify themselves by signing the Board meeting attendance sheet will be permitted to comment. Prior to the start of the public comment period, all speakers shall sign-in and provide their name and address in the sign-up sheet provided.
4. All speakers shall first identify themselves to the Board. Speakers who are the official representative of an organization shall also state the name of the organization.
5. Public comment shall be made only on topics listed and identified on the current Board meeting agenda or which pertain to the operations of Library business.
6. Each speaker has a maximum of three (3) minutes for public comment or a maximum of five (5) minutes where the speaker comments on multiple topics over the course of a single meeting. Time limits will be monitored by Library staff and

the speaker's microphone will be silenced at the conclusion of the time allotted. Speakers may not cede any of their time to other speakers.

7. The Board is not required to respond to public comments made at the meeting; therefore, the public comment period is not an opportunity for dialogue with the Board nor a "Q&A." However, the Board President may, at or after the public meeting, direct appropriate staff to follow up on any comments or issues raised during public comment. The Board also may, in its discretion, make responsive comment at the current meeting or decide to take action at a future meeting, as it deems appropriate.
8. The Board understands that each speaker has the right to express his or her own opinion without interference and will not restrict or prohibit a speaker from exercising this right. However, the Board requests that each speaker be respectful, and refrain from using profane or vulgar language and from hateful or demeaning language based on a person's race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability.
9. The Board will not entertain comment in its public meeting concerning matters for which it is permitted to address in an executive session, such as confidential personnel matters or any item in litigation or threatened litigation.
10. The total time for each public comment period during a meeting shall be stated in the publicly posted agenda and will be reasonable in light of the items to be addressed during the meeting, but in no event shall the total amount of time for public comment be less than thirty (30) minutes.
11. If the time period allotted for public comment is insufficient to provide a reasonable opportunity for public participation given the nature of the issues to be addressed, the Board President may entertain a motion to extend the public comment period, defer public comment until the next meeting, or schedule a special meeting.

## **Disorderly or Disruptive Conduct**

Each attendee must act in an orderly manner. Each attendee, whether making public comment or during the entirety of the meeting, may not disrupt or interfere with the proceedings. Disruptive conduct includes:

- Addressing the Board without first being recognized;
- Failing to cease making comment when the time allotted has expired;
- Failing to address the agenda items during the relevant public comment period;
- Repetitiously addressing the same subject matter;
- Yelling, shouting or screaming in a manner which makes it difficult or impossible to maintain decorum; and/or
- Engaging in other conduct which is unduly disruptive to the proceedings, unduly interrupts the business of the Board or otherwise prevents the Board from conducting its meeting in an orderly manner as determined by Board President or by a majority of the Board.

When disorderly or disruptive conduct interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting, the Board President may call a recess until the disruptive party or parties are able to conduct themselves in an orderly fashion. Should disorderly or disruptive conduct continue, the Board may direct the disorderly party or parties to leave the meeting or the Board may adjourn the meeting to another date and time. Depending on the severity of the conduct, such as threatening harm to another, pervasive harassment or refusal to leave the meeting when directed to do so by the Board, the Board may direct that local police respond to the meeting to address that conduct.

### **Other Board Communication and Board Response**

The Board always welcome written correspondence, comments, and feedback concerning Library matters. Anyone who wishes to communicate with the Board on topics other than those addressed at a Library Board meeting may contact the Library Board via the comment form at <https://buckslib.org/contact-board> with specific and detailed information about the individual's concerns. At its own discretion, the Library Board will choose whether to place a requested topic or subject on a future Board agenda or respond to the request by phone or in writing.

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS January 19, 2021  
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