Policy 012

Public Participation at Board Meetings

Each meeting of the Library Board shall be conducted in an orderly manner. While public comment periods are not required by law, the Library Board considers it important to encourage community involvement and to provide time for public comments at meetings.

In order to participate in a meeting of the Library Board, members of the public:

1. Must sign the sign in sheet at in person meetings, listing their full name, contact information and town of residence;
2. Must state their full name and town of residence before speaking;
3. Must address all questions or remarks to the Library Board through its President;
4. Must not include any references (either good or bad) to personnel of the library district by name;
5. Must refrain from any personal attacks;
6. Must observe the commonly accepted rules of civility, courtesy, decorum, dignity and good taste;
7. Must refrain from the use of intemperate, abusive, obscene or defamatory language; and
8. Must refrain from libelous statements, threats of violence and statements advocating racial, religious or other forms of prejudice.

Speakers may comment on any agenda item, matters related to agenda items or matters related to Library business. Speakers should be as brief as possible. The time for each person or representative of a group to speak shall be limited to five (5) minutes.

The total time devoted to public comments shall be limited to thirty (30) minutes.

If more residents wish to speak than time allows, the Library Board may carry over the item under consideration to the next meeting to enable residents who have expressed a desire to speak to do so.

Members of the public shall not shout out, jeer or disrupt the meeting of the Library Board. If a member of the public violates this policy they may be issued a warning, may be prohibited from addressing the Board, may be asked to leave, or may be removed.

Library Board Members and the Library Director shall have the privilege of asking questions of any person who addresses the Library Board.

Library Board Members or the Library Director may enter into a dialogue with a speaker for the purposes of clarification and information.
The Library Board is not required to answer questions posed during public comment. Accordingly, except in emergencies, the Library Board shall not attempt to decide upon any question posed which does not relate to agenda items before examining and evaluating relevant information. The Library Director shall be given an opportunity to examine and to evaluate all such information, and to recommend action before the Library Board attempts to make a decision.

The Library Board President shall be responsible for the orderly conduct of the meeting and shall rule on such matters as the time to be allowed for public discussion and the appropriateness of the subject being presented, as outlined in this policy and applicable provisions of law and regulation, and subject to the Library Board’s parliamentary procedure. The Library Board President shall have the right to discontinue any presentation which violates this policy.

The rules set forth in this policy may be changed by motion at any particular meeting (and for that meeting only).

*Adopted by the HWPL Board of Trustees, January 20, 2021*