

## **Cattaraugus Free Library Open Meetings Policy**

The Cattaraugus Free Library is subject to New York's Open Meeting Law Pursuant to Article 7 of the Public Officers Law. The law requires that board meetings be properly posted and open to the public. In addition, working sessions of the board (even if they are not formal meetings) must be advertised and open if a quorum of the board is expected to attend. A copy of New York's Open Meetings Law is available at <http://www.dos.state.ny.us/coog/openmeetlaw.html>.

### **Notice of Meetings**

Notice of board meetings are posted in the library, posted to the library's on line calendar of events, posted to the library's bulletin board outside the library, sent to the local paper and published on the library website. Monthly meetings are held on a Wednesday at 4:30pm. In the event that it is necessary for the Board to change the date of a regularly scheduled meeting or to hold a special or emergency meeting, advance notice will be posted on the library's website and in the library at least 72 hours in advance, if possible.

### **Teleconferencing, Videoconferencing, and Other Forms of Communication**

Meeting of the board must either take place in person or through videoconferencing as long as the video conference sites are open to the public and cited in the notice of the meeting. Meetings may not be conducted by telephone, email, or mail. However, it should be noted that nothing in the law precludes the trustees from conferring individually or by telephone, email, or other means as long as a series of communications among trustees does not result in a decision or a meeting being held. In addition, although trustees who are not physically present in person or through video conference may not vote, they may participate in library board meeting from remote locations by speaker phone, provided that any discussion may be heard by the public.

### **Executive Sessions**

During an open meeting of the board, the board may go into executive session during which the public is excluded. An executive session is convened only as part of a public board meeting. The board must vote to enter executive session and state the general nature of the session for its minutes. The board may take formal action and vote on any matter in executive session except the appropriation of public monies. Executive sessions may be convened for a limited number of specific purposes:

- Matters which will imperil the public safety if disclosed
- Any matter which may disclose the identity of a law enforcement agency or informer
- Information relating to current or future investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense which would imperil effective law enforcement if disclosed
- Discussions regarding proposed, pending or current litigation
- Collective (bargaining) negotiations pursuant to Article 14 of the Civil Service Law
- The medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation
- The preparation, grading or administration of examinations
- The proposed acquisition, sale or lease of real property or the proposed acquisition of securities, or sale or exchange of securities held by such public body, but only when publicity would

substantially affect the value there of

### **Public Expression at Meetings**

Board meetings are for the conducting of library business and as required by the Open Meetings Law are open for observation by the public. They are not public hearings about library affairs. Under the Open Meetings Law provision for public participation is not required, though the Board sets aside a period for public expression in the agenda. In the interests of time and the effective conduct of business, individual public comment may be limited so that all members of the public attending a meeting will have an equal opportunity to speak. Under no circumstances shall an individual's opportunity for public expression exceed (3) three minutes in length, unless by prior arrangement. However, this time limit may be adjusted by the Board President depending on the size of the audience or the number of requests to speak. The Board requests that an individual wishing to speak register on a sign up sheet that will be made available before the start of the meeting. The Board President or designee will call each name listed on the sign up sheet and, when a person's name is called they may make their comments.

Persons wishing to speak will identify themselves, any organizations they may be representing at the meeting and, where applicable, the agenda topic they wish to discuss. Comments should be as brief as possible and relate to library matters. Undue interruption or other interference with the orderly conduct of Board business will not be permitted. Defamatory or abusive remarks are always out of order. The presiding officer may terminate the speaker's privilege of address if, after being advised of improper conduct or remarks he or she persists. Continued violation may result in the individual being excluded from the meeting. At a public meeting of the Board, no person shall verbally initiate charges or complaints against individual employees of the library or challenge materials owned by the library. All such charges, complaints, or challenges shall be presented to the Library Director or the Board in writing, signed by the complainant. All such charges, if properly presented, shall be referred to the Library Director for review and appropriate action, if any.

Board members may question speakers but the Library Board will not enter into a debate or conversation during the meeting. The Board President or designee will thank the speaker and may refer the issue to the Director for investigation, study and/or recommendation or designate the issue be included as a future agenda item or answer the issue through written communication.

Comments from the public to the Library Board are welcome in writing, addressed to:

Cattaraugus Free Library Board  
21 Main Street  
Cattaraugus, NY 14719

### **Minutes**

As required by the Open Meetings Law, minutes are taken at all board meetings. Minutes of a regular session of the board must consist of "a record or summary of all motions, proposals, resolutions, and any other matter formally voted upon and the vote thereon." Although it is not required by law, most minutes also include a summary of discussions relating to the issues covered. The minutes, along with statements and other official records, are kept in a secure but accessible place and available to the public upon request to the director. Minutes must be on hand for public inspection (2) two weeks after the meeting, even if they have yet to be approved.

Minutes of executive sessions are required only if the board took formal action in the executive session. If no vote or other action is taken, no minutes are required, Otherwise, the minutes of an executive session must provide “a record or summary of the final determination” or action the board took in the session.

For review at our next board meeting on 12/15/2021