

1.3 Public Comment Policy

The Schenectady County Public Library Board of Trustees values the voices of our community. We welcome and encourage public input as part of our ongoing commitment to transparency, equity, and responsive public service. This policy establishes procedures to ensure public comments are welcomed and addressed in an orderly and respectful manner. This policy applies to all regular and special meetings.

1. A public comment period shall be held at the beginning of each regular Board of Trustees meeting.
2. Sign-in procedure: Individuals wishing to speak must sign in prior to the meeting providing their name, address and topic they wish to discuss. Sign-in sheet will be available at least 15 minutes prior to the meeting.
3. Speaking order: Speakers will be called in the order in which they signed up.
4. Time allocation: Each speaker will be allocated (3) minutes to present their comments. The board reserves the right to adjust the time limit based on the number of speakers and the meeting's agenda.
5. Groups are encouraged to designate a single representative to speak on their behalf.
6. Public comment may be sent via email up until noon the day of the meeting to board@scpl.org and the person shall state it is intended to be public comment for the meeting. Written comments, including anonymous ones, are welcomed and thoughtfully reviewed. However, anonymity can limit our ability to ask follow up questions or engage in deeper dialogue. We encourage those comfortable doing so to include their contact information to help us better understand and respond to their concerns.
7. Board Response: Generally public comment is to hear the community's thoughts; therefore, trustees and staff may not respond to public comments during the public comment period except in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the President. If necessary, responses will be provided in writing or discussed at a future meeting.

Guidelines for Conduct

1. Speakers must address all comments to the Board as a whole, not to individual members, staff or the audience.
2. Comments must be relevant to library-related issues.
3. Disruptive, obscene or threatening remarks will not be tolerated and individuals engaging in such behavior will be asked to leave.
4. Personal attacks against library staff or other members of the public are prohibited.
5. The President of the Board may intervene if comments are excessively repetitive, off topic or violate an established decorum.