

## **Guidelines for Board Members and Meetings: Communication and Decorum**

JPAB Policy #102  
Adopted: 9/12/2005  
Revised: 10/7/2021  
Five-year Review Schedule: 2026

Although the duties of the Library Joint Powers Authority Board include adopting and overseeing the enforcement of rules, regulations, and policies for the Library System, it is the policy of the Library Joint Powers Authority Board that all matters concerning management functions and the day-to-day operations of the Library are the responsibility of the Director of Libraries, and in her absence, the designated person in charge. Therefore, requests for information about library operations will usually be made to the Director, who will respond or direct an appropriate staff member to respond. It is always helpful if requests are made in writing, outlining the purpose and intent of the request, so that the Director and staff can respond as thoroughly as possible. The Director of Libraries or her designees will make every effort to provide all relevant information on the topic.

Work assignments to staff desired by the Board or related to Board activities will also be arranged through the Director of Libraries.

However, members of the Board may have occasion or desire to talk directly with Library staff about library matters. If they do, they should follow the guidelines below, which have been developed to ensure that the Board has access to information about the Library, and to ensure that the information they receive is accurate.

The Library Joint Powers Authority Board welcomes comment from the public either on issues that are part of the regular Agenda, or as part of Oral Communications, when the public may comment on items not on the Agenda.

### **Communication**

Board members should distinguish between operating information questions of fact (Branch open hours, circulation data, etc.) that can easily be answered by most staff, and policy information, which would most appropriately be directed to the Branch Manager or another senior staff member.

Board members will never discuss with staff or ask for information about individual Library personnel matters: hiring, discipline, promotion, complaints about supervisors, or evaluations of other staff members.

Board members will never ask a staff member to research a question or take on a project involving added work. Individual Board members may not direct the work or actions of staff. Those questions and requests should be made to the Director of Libraries, who will make an assignment to appropriate staff.

Conversation between library staff and Board members is encouraged as a mechanism to obtain different perspectives on library operations; however, should a Board member be investigating a specific aspect of library operations, common courtesy warrants that the Library Director be informed as appropriate.

### Board Meetings Decorum

The following rules will govern behavior at Board meetings.

1. While the Library Joint Powers Authority Board is in session, all persons shall preserve order and decorum. Any person making personal, impertinent, or slanderous remarks, or becoming boisterous or otherwise disrupting the Board meeting shall be barred by the presiding officer from further attendance at said meeting unless permission for continued attendance is granted by a majority vote of the Board
2. Every member of the public and every Board member desiring to speak shall address the presiding officer, and upon recognition by the presiding officer, shall confine comments to the question under debate, avoiding all indecorous language and references to personalities and abiding by the following rules of civil debate:
  - a) We may disagree, but we will be respectful of one another
  - b) All comments shall be directed to the issue at hand.
  - c) Personal attacks shall be avoided.
3. Members of the public speaking in the Oral Communications section of the Agenda shall limit their remarks to time to be established by the Chair of the Board, and shall abide by the same rules of civil debate.