

ADOPTED  
4-3-23

## COLCHESTER DISTRICT LIBRARY

### PUBLIC COMMENT GUIDELINES POLICY

The public comment segment is an essential part of government meetings. This is an opportunity for members of the public to inform the governing body about their views. The board encourages public attendance at its meetings and provides an opportunity for public comment during that specific section of the agenda. The public provides input to the governing body, but does not participate in decision making. All of our meetings are conducted in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, which requires meetings to be open for public observation.

The following guidelines shall be used to ensure efficient conducting of public comment:

1. A maximum of 30 minutes of public participation will be allowed at each trustee meeting. Each person who has signed up to speak at the beginning of the meeting will be allowed 3 minutes to present their information. Each participant will be allowed only one 3 minute turn. The board secretary shall be the official time keeper.
2. Members of the public who wish to speak are asked to sign up ***before the meeting begins***. It is not necessary to be a CDL patron or district resident to speak to the board. Speakers will be called in the order in which they signed in. A speaker may not give their time to another person.
3. Keeping in mind tact and courtesy, a member of the public is allowed to speak on any topic, even sensitive ones. This assures their first amendment rights, which include the right to be passionate and even uninformed or incorrect. Speakers may make critical or harsh remarks, however disruptive demonstrations such as standing, booing, or clapping are not allowed.
4. Public comments will be addressed to the entire board, but no response is called for by the board or the library director.
5. If at any time the language or behavior become inappropriate, abusive or violent, it is the responsibility of the board president to declare that person out of order and refuse permission to continue.
6. The fact that comments were made become part of the meeting record, however they should not be specific or quoted.
7. There is no guarantee that suggestions brought forth by the public during this time will be addressed by the board at the current or a future meeting.
8. The speaker may be asked to respond to questions from the board.

9. If possible, each speaker will address the board and others present from a standing position in front of the assembly.
10. Written comments will be accepted from anyone who does not have the time or ability to address the group in person. These comments may be submitted to the board president or the library director in paper or electronic format.