



Public Engagement Board Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

The Board of Trustees (Board) of Kitsap Regional Library (Library) is committed to promoting community engagement throughout Kitsap County, ensuring that our services, programs, and resources are tailored to the diverse needs and aspirations of the individuals we serve. In line with this commitment, the Board strives to cultivate a collaborative and inclusive environment during its meetings, fostering opportunities for community members to actively connect with the Board and provide invaluable feedback. This feedback is crucial to the Board's role as stewards and overseers of the Library, allowing us to strengthen our ties with the communities we proudly serve.

- A. **Board of Trustees.** The Library's Board is comprised of five (5) community member volunteers appointed by the Kitsap County Commissioners to represent the geographic regions of Kitsap County. As a governing board, Trustees are invested with oversight responsibilities for effective and efficient delivery of library services, through strategic planning, policy review and approval, and fiduciary responsibility via the review and approval of capital and operating budgets. Management of Library operations is entrusted to the Library Director, who is hired and supervised by the Board. More information regarding the Board is available on the Library website at www.krl.org/trustees.
- B. **Intellectual Freedom.** As Trustees, we embrace the responsibility to steward Intellectual Freedom as a core principle of democracy and foundational to the Library's commitment as a public library to serve our diverse community, inclusive of expressions representing all points of view.
- C. **Listening to our community.** The Board believes that the ability for the public to observe and participate in the regular business of the Board through public comment is an essential part of its stewardship and oversight responsibilities for the Library. The Board invites input inclusive of a wide range of perspectives about how we can best steward the Library in service to its diverse communities. In support, the Board is committed to creating a welcoming environment by enhancing accommodations and/or removing physical barriers, and developing policy and procedures that provide opportunities for productive community engagement. To support participation in its meetings, the Board has adopted specific procedures outlined in its *Public Comment Board Guidelines* to facilitate the fair and orderly expression of public comments.

Additionally, it is the intent of the Board to manage substantive agenda items in a manner that is transparent, encourages discussion among members of the Board, and invites input from community members from across Kitsap County to hear perspectives different from their own.

- D. **Regular Board of Trustees Meeting.** The Library Board holds a regular monthly meeting, per its posted schedule. Meetings are generally held in-person and in a virtual format. Regular Board meetings are open to the public in accordance with RCW 42.30. Members of the public are invited to join us in person or virtually online, pending available technology.
- E. **Assistance for Access Accommodation.** It is the Board's intent to support a welcoming environment for everyone, including accommodating community members' special needs requests related to translation or interpretation for non-English speakers, as well as enabling persons with disabilities to participate in the Board's public meetings. Requests for accommodations may be made in writing, email or calling. Please see the Board's *Public Comment Board Guidelines* for specific contact information.
- F. **Public Comment.** Public comment is accepted on any topic of library interest, unless specifically excluded by this policy. Public comments include in-person or virtual oral remarks, as well as written comments and/or the text of emails submitted to the Board in advance of their meeting.

Except in special meetings and other Board meetings, public comments are welcomed by the Board at their regular monthly meetings, during a time designated on the agenda for public comment. The public comment period is limited to twenty (20) minutes, so that all agenda items can be covered during the meeting, unless otherwise determined by the Board President.

The public comment time is set aside for listening to feedback from the community, without discussion or debate with the speakers. Suggestions and concerns will be taken under advisement and may be considered for action at a future meeting.

- G. **Public Hearing.** The Board may choose to hold a separate Public Hearing scheduled for an alternate date and/or time to provide for an extended period of public comment.
- H. **Excluded Public Comments.** Comments pertaining to personnel issues, anonymous comments, emails that are a forward of others' remarks (even with proper attribution), and written comments sent to individual members of the Board and not to the Board as a whole are not accepted as public comment. Additionally, comments that don't align to the [*Standards for Patron Conduct Library Policy*](#) will be excluded.
- I. **Attribution of Public Comments.** Public comments shall include the submitter's full name, organization affiliation (if they are speaking as a representative of a group), and topic they wish to address. Mailing address and/or other contact information such as Email and phone number are optional, but encouraged in the event the Board wishes to contact you.

- J. **Public Record of Public Comments.** All individuals submitting public comments, either orally or in writing, will be included by name in the meeting minutes as having provided comments. Individual oral public comments will be summarized in the Board meeting minutes consistent with the established style for the Board minutes. Written public comments are not read into the record at the meeting; rather, they are retained in their entirety as a public record. External sources intended to provide additional information to the written public comment (such as, links within an email and/or accompanying attached material) will not be included.
- K. **Meeting Code of Conduct.** The Board seeks to maintain a positive, productive atmosphere at Board meetings. Community members participating in a Board meeting are encouraged to presume that all parties, while potentially presenting different perspectives, have the highest good of the Library in mind. Everyone in attendance is expected to be considerate of others, respect the rights and privacy of others, and not engage in loud, disruptive or harassing speech, as outlined in the [Standards for Patron Conduct Library Policy](#) which applies to all physical and virtual meeting spaces utilized by the Library.
- L. **Collective Bargaining.** The Board, leadership and staff, inclusive of its bargaining representatives, are a team. In support, the Board encourages a collective bargaining process that is transparent and collaborative, and includes: interest-based bargaining practices; mutual accountability to factual information and to clear, fair, concise bargaining rules; and, regular communication to all stakeholders regarding progress of the negotiations.

Managing the collective bargaining process and its related activities fall under the purview of the Library Director. During periods of collective bargaining, the role of the Board is to keep the totality of the circumstance in mind, including its commitment to support staff, as well as its fiduciary responsibility to approve a budget that is comprehensive and realistic, based on the Library's funding, and the need to plan for both current and future needs of the Library. The Board has great respect for the individuals at the bargaining table and trust in the process which we understand to include an ebb and flow in constructive discourse. In support, Trustees are to avoid any individual conversations with Library staff or members of the community about issues in negotiations. However, the Trustees encourage concerned parties to make their comments to the full Board during the public comment portion of a Board meeting.

- M. **Other Board Meetings.** Special and/or emergency meetings, public hearings, committee meetings and Board education/study sessions are also held as needed. While community engagement via public comment is encouraged and included as a standard agenda item for all regular monthly Board meetings, it may not be included in other Board meetings per ESHB 1329. Please check www.krl.org/trustees for current meeting information, including: schedule, locations, and opportunities for input by public comment at upcoming Board meetings.

- N. **Other Library Gatherings.** Members of the Board may also gather on occasion for purposes other than conducting official Board business. Other gatherings may include, but are not limited to, activities and events such as: special public or private events of the Library; fundraising or stewardship events of the Library's Foundation and/or Friends of the Library (FOL); Staff Day; community input sessions, etc.; or, library-related conferences or other educational offerings that include multiple entities, etc.

A quorum (three or more Trustees) attending a gathering not called as a meeting by the Board, is not a meeting of the entity and therefore not subject to the OPMA, so long as Trustees avoid discussing "actionable" Library business. Actions are defined broadly to include: "deliberations, discussions, considerations, reviews, and evaluations."

- O. **Additional Information.** Additional information pertaining to the Board is available at www.krl.org/trustees, including: access to the current meeting schedule, bylaws, video recordings and documents of previous Board meetings, issued public statements, etc. Meeting minutes are posted after formal adoption by the Board (at the next subsequent regular meeting).

- P. **How to Contact the Board:**

Regular Mail:

KRL Board of Trustees
Attention: Executive Assistant
Kitsap Regional Library
1301 Sylvan Way, Bremerton, WA 98310

Email: Board@krl.org

KRL Web Page: www.krl.org/trustees

For more information: Executive Assistant, Tammy Jeffries, tjeffries@krl.org or (360) 405-9158.

To request an access accommodation: ADA Coordinator, Lucretia Robertson, lrobertson@krl.org or (360) 475-9166.