

Reading Public Library
Public Comment Policy
Revised and Approved 12/16/2024

The Reading Public Library (RPL) Board of Trustees, which meets monthly from September to June, will allow time at each of its meetings for Public Comment from community members who live, work, or attend school in the City of Reading.

This policy is intended to provide for public participation in RPL Board meetings and establish public comment procedures whether the meeting is held in-person, online, or in a hybrid format.

ACTIONS/PROCEDURES

Authorized individuals will be allowed to comment one (1) time on agenda topics or matters pertaining to library business. The following guidelines are established for this portion of an in-person, on-line, or hybrid public meeting:

- Community members who live, work, or attend school in the City of Reading who wish to make or submit public comment must pre-register utilizing one (1) of the following options:
 - By calling (610-655-6365) or emailing (vicky.fuller@readingpubliclibrary.org) the RPL Administration Office by 2:00 pm the day of the meeting with your name, address, and the subject matter or topic to be discussed. If individuals do not live in the City of Reading, the name and address of their school or place of employment must be provided.
 - If individuals are not able to attend in person, they may submit written public comment to be read into the record at the meeting by submitting an email to vicky.fuller@readingpubliclibrary.org by 2:00 pm on the day of the meeting. The email message must clearly be marked as Public Comment.
- Public comment will occur only during the Public Comment period listed on the meeting agenda at which time the Presiding Officer will read the Public Comment Statement and then recognize speakers and written comments that properly registered in the order received. Comments from speakers attending in-person shall be accepted first and once all in-person comments are received, written comments shall be read aloud by the Board.
- The speaker shall proceed to the front of the room and announce their name prior to addressing the Board.
- Those individuals registered to speak will be allotted no more than three (3) minutes. The Presiding Officer or Secretary will monitor this time. When the alarm rings, speakers must immediately end their comment. The Presiding Officer will instruct speakers to conclude their comments if they go beyond the time allotted, and then give the floor to the next speaker, or move ahead to the next agenda topic. These time periods also apply to written comments that are being read into the record such that any written comment may only be read into the record for no more than three (3) minutes. By majority, the Board may grant additional time at their discretion.
- If anyone is present in a group or association, each such group should designate a spokesperson to address the Board on the group's collective behalf in order to avoid repetitive public comments.
- All Public Comment must be directed to the Board as a body and not to any individual Board member or any individual member of the staff, public, or elected official in attendance. Public comment is an opportunity to make a statement only. It is not designed for questioning or discussion, and the Board is not required to answer, respond to, or ask questions during Public Comment.
- A speaker shall not comment in a manner that is disruptive, scandalous, impertinent, redundant, rude, unruly, personally offensive, irrelevant to the registered topic, done for the purpose of preventing the

conduct of the business of the meeting, or otherwise in disregard to the rules of order or decorum. Any such comment will not be accepted or included in the record.

- In the event that a speaker or written comment violates any of these rules, that speaker or author of the written comment will be deemed to have forfeited their right to public comment.
- The Presiding Officer may call a recess or adjournment to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting.
- The meeting comment period is limited to a total of thirty (30) minutes, including both in-person, written, and virtual comments.

Prior to any Public Comments, the following Public Comment Statement will be read.

PUBLIC COMMENT STATEMENT

Individuals registered to speak will be allotted no more than three (3) minutes. The Presiding Officer or Board Secretary will monitor this time. When the alarm rings, a speaker must immediately end their comment. The Presiding Officer will respectfully request speakers to conclude their comments if the speaker goes beyond the time allotted, and then give the floor to the next speaker, or move ahead to the next agenda topic.

If anyone is present in a group or association, each such group should designate a spokesperson to address the Board on the group's collective behalf in order to avoid repetitive public comments.

All public comment must be directed to the Board as a body and not to any individual Board member or any individual member of the staff, public, or elected official in attendance. Public comment is an opportunity to make a statement only. It is not designed for questioning or discussion and the Board is not required to answer, respond to, or ask questions during public comment.

Any speaker who becomes unruly or who makes personally offensive or impertinent remarks may be called to order by the Presiding Officer and may be barred from speaking before the Board.

The Board thanks the speakers in advance for their comments. The Board will look into the matters presented and, if appropriate, provide a formal response.

Policy History:

Adopted March 25, 2002

Reviewed and Approved 12/15/2008

Reviewed and Accepted 12/21/2009

Reviewed and Accepted 12/20/2010

Reviewed and Accepted 12/19/2011

Reviewed and Accepted 12/17/2012

Reviewed and Accepted 12/15/2014

Reviewed and Accepted 12/21/2015

Reviewed and Accepted 12/19/2016

Reviewed and Accepted 11/20/2017

Reviewed and Accepted 12/17/2018

Reviewed and Approved 12/16/2019

Reviewed and Approved 11/16/2020

Reviewed and Approved 11/15/2021

Reviewed and Approved 10/17/2022

Reviewed and Approved 11/20/2023