BELLMORE MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Open Meetings Policy

The public is welcome to attend meetings of the Bellmore Memorial Library Board of Trustees. Like all public libraries in New York State, the Bellmore Memorial Library (BML) is subject to the Open Meetings Law.

Notice of Meetings
Notice of board meetings are published in the library’s newsletter, posted on the Calendar of Events on the library’s website and notices are posted at the Circulation Desk and at both entrances. Regular meetings of the Board of Trustees are held monthly. In the event that it is necessary for the Board of Trustees to change the date of a regularly scheduled meeting or to hold a special or emergency meeting, advance notice will be posted on the library’s website and in the library at least 72 hours in advance if possible.

Quorum
There must be three trustees present to constitute the necessary quorum to vote. A trustee who is not physically present at a meeting or through videoconference cannot vote. Under New York State law, no action can be approved without a "majority of the whole."

Teleconferencing, Videoconferencing and Other Forms of Communication
Meetings of the board must either take place in person or through videoconferencing as long as the videoconferencing sites are open to the public. Meetings may not be conducted by telephone, email or mail. However, it should be noted that nothing in the law precludes the trustees from conferring individually or by telephone, email or other means as long as a series of communications among trustees does not result in a decision or a meeting being held. In addition, although trustees who are not physically present in person or through videoconference may not vote, they may participate in library board meetings from remote locations by speakerphone, provided that any discussion may be heard by the public.

Executive Sessions
During an open meeting of the board, the board may go into executive session during which the public is excluded. However, executive sessions may be convened only for a limited number of purposes specified in the law. These are:

➢ Matters which will imperil the public safety if disclosed;
➢ Any matter which may disclose the identity of a law enforcement agency or informer;
➢ Information relating to current or future investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense which would imperil effective law enforcement if disclosed;
Discussions regarding proposed, pending or current litigation;
Collective bargaining negotiations;
The medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or
corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion,
demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or
corporation;
The preparation, grading or administration of examinations;
The proposed acquisition, sale or lease of real property or the proposed acquisition
of securities, or sale or exchange of securities held by such public body, but only
when publicity would substantially affect the value thereof.

Though several of these situations do not ordinarily affect libraries, the complete list is
included here to emphasize the limited conditions that justify a closed session of the
board under the law. The board must vote to enter executive session and state the general
nature of the session for its minutes. The board may take formal action and vote on any
matter in executive session except the appropriation of public monies.

Public Participation in Meetings
Members of the public are welcome to attend library board meetings. Observers are asked
not to participate in any way that might impede the work of the board. New York State’s
Open Meetings Law confers upon the public the right to observe the performance of
public officials and attend and listen to the deliberations and decisions that go into the
making of public policy. It does not give the public the right to speak or participate in
board meetings. Observers should recognize that the board is under no obligation to brief
observers on matters before the board or to take or respond to questions from observers.
Observes may participate in discussions only if recognized by the board. The president
of the board reserves the right to set a time limit on any public comments.

Minutes
As required by the Open Meetings Law, minutes are taken at all board meetings. Minutes
of a regular session of the board must consist of a record of all motions, proposals,
resolutions, and any other matter formally voted upon and the vote thereon. The minutes,
along with statements and other official records, are kept in a secure but accessible place
and available to the public upon request to the director. Minutes must be on hand for
public inspection two weeks after the meeting, even if they have yet to be approved.
Minutes of executive sessions are required only if the board took formal action in the
executive session. The board may take formal action and vote on any matter in executive
session except the appropriation of public monies. If no vote or other action is taken, no
minutes are required.

ADOPTED: April 20, 2021