

CLINTON COMMUNITY LIBRARY

OPEN MEETINGS POLICY

The public is welcome to attend meetings of the library board. Like all public libraries in New York, the Clinton Community Library is subject to New York's Open Meetings Law pursuant to Article 7 of the Public Officers Law. The law requires that board meetings be properly posted and advertised and open to the public. In addition, working sessions of the board (even if they are not formal meetings) must be advertised and open if a quorum of the board is expected to attend. A copy of New York's Open Meetings Law is available at: <https://opengovernment.ny.gov/open-meetings-law>
<http://www.dos.state.ny.us/coof/openmeetlaw.html>

NOTICE OF MEETINGS

Notice of board meetings is posted on the library bulletin board and is published on the Calendar of the Clinton Community Library website at: www.clinton.lib.ny.us

Regular meetings are held monthly on the second Monday evening in the library at 6:30 p.m. In the event that it is necessary for the Board to change the date of a regularly scheduled meeting or to hold a special or emergency meeting, prior notice will be posted on the library's website and in the library at least 72 hours in advance if possible.

TELECONFERENCING, VIDEOCONFERENCING, AND OTHER FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

Meetings of the board must either take place in person or through videoconferencing as long as the videoconference sites are open to the public and cited in the notice of the meeting. 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 video conference may not vote, they may participate in library board meetings from remote locations by speakerphone--provided that any discussions 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 pursuant to Article 14 of the Civil Service (the Taylor Law);
- 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.

An executive session is convened only as part of a public board meeting. 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. Any actions must be detailed in minutes of the executive session. Executive session minutes are considered confidential and distributed to only those who were present in the session. If no action is taken, no minutes are necessary. (Open Meetings Law §106. Minutes)

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETINGS

Members of the public are welcome to attend Clinton Community Library board meetings where they are invited to address the Board of Trustees during the Public Forum at the start of each meeting. Observers may not participate in any way that might impede the work of the board. New York's Open Meetings Law confers upon the public the right to observe the performance of public officials, and attend and listen to the deliberations that go into the making of public policy. 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. The president of the board or chair of the meeting reserves the right to set a time limit on any public comments. Each statement made by a participant shall be limited to three (3) minutes unless extended by the Board President. This time may be limited further depending on the number of participants.

AGENDA

The agenda will be developed by the Library Director and Board President and distributed to Board members no less than one week before the scheduled meeting. Changes to the agenda may be adopted at the beginning of the meeting by a vote of the Board.

POSTING OF DOCUMENTS

Any document that will be the subject of discussion at a board meeting will be posted on the library's website at least twenty-four hours before the meeting at which it will be discussed. A draft version of the meeting minutes will be posted within two weeks of the meeting and a draft of minutes from an executive session be posted within one week from the date of the executive session.

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 or summary 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 are required by law to be posted on the library's website, as well. Minutes must be on hand for public inspection after they have been approved by the Board of Trustees. Approved minutes must be kept on file in perpetuity.

Minutes of executive sessions are required only if the board took formal action in the executive session. If no vote or other action is taken, no minutes are required. Otherwise, the minutes of an executive session must provide "a record or summary of the final determination" or action the board took in the session.

HANDICAPPED ACCESS

Because board meetings are held after hours, members of the public with a physical disability who wish to attend a board meeting should notify the library director in advance to ensure that barrier-free physical access is made available at the time of the meeting.

Accepted July 19, 2010

Amended by the Clinton Community Library on June 10, 2019