



LIBRARY BOARD MEETINGS

[Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State](#)

Post-Session Tool Kit for Boardroom Discussions

Book Club Reading:

Handbook for Library Trustees of NYS, Library Board Meetings (Page 27 - 35)

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Additional Resources:

- Chait, Richard P., William P. Ryan and Barbara E. Taylor. *Governance as Leadership: Reframing the Work of Nonprofit Boards*, Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons, 2005
- [Local Management Government Guide](#) [Office of the State Comptroller]
- [Open Meetings Law Advisory Opinions](#) [Committee on Open Government, NYS Department of State]
- [Robert's Rules of Order Cheat Sheet](#) [BoardEffect.com, A DILIGENT BRAND]
- *Webinars*
 - [What Every Trustee Should Know](#)
 - [Open Meetings Law](#) (Helping All Trustees Succeed Mini-Webinar)

Recording from Live Handbook Discussion: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 – Library Board Meetings

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2T_N3sQv3k

Post-Session Questions & Activities for the Boardroom

The questions in this section are intended for trustees and their directors to discuss before or after a board meeting once they have read Library Board Meetings of the Handbook, or watched the Live Event Recording.

1. All library board meetings fall under the provisions of the Open Meetings Law. As a board, can you list some of the specific things you must do leading up to a meeting as well as during or after a meeting that are required under the law?

2. Consistent trustee attendance is imperative to the effectiveness of board meetings. It also falls under [Education Law 226\(4\)](#) and [Duty of Care](#). Please take time as a board to discuss what defines an excused absence, and the proper ways a trustee should communicate such absences. Also, review your bylaws to confirm how *satisfactory excuse for absence* is defined.
3. [Education Law 226\(1\)](#) is specific about what constitutes a quorum, “majority of the whole number [of trustees regardless of vacancies] shall be a quorum.” Take time as a board to identify the number of trustee seats listed on your current charter, and calculate how many trustees are required at each meeting to legally pass a motion. If you have a range of trustees, check your bylaws to determine the exact and current number of trustee seats listed.
4. What are some specific reasons for a board to enter an Executive Session? Identify these reasons, and discuss some past instances where the board may not have used Executive Session properly. What can you do in the future to avoid such instances?
5. Let the minutes reflect. Not only are minutes a permanent record of the library, but they are also a great way of exercising transparency and maintaining community trust. What items must be recorded in the minutes that take place at a board meeting? And, how does the library make minutes available to the community?
6. Similar to meeting minutes, board meeting documents are public records of the library. Community members have a right to inspect any documents that are reviewed by the board during a meeting. Who within the organization or on the board is responsible for making these available to the community before the meeting? Where are they made available?
7. It is important for library trustees to conduct all library “business” within formal library meetings (i.e. regular meetings, committee meetings and sub-committee meetings). As trustees, can you think of instances where you may have conducted “business” outside of such formal spaces? How can trustees avoid such conversations? And, what policy might be good to review or edit to prevent this practice from occurring?
8. Agendas are the best tool for keeping a board organized. Review your board’s current agenda and compare it to the [Sample Agenda on Page 32 of the Trustee Handbook](#). What are some similarities and differences? Is there anything your board can add to its agenda to maintain the effectiveness and integrity of meetings?
9. Board meetings are a great place to designate time for learning about library services and celebrating accomplishments. How does the board accommodate reports from the Library Director, and what items are most useful to the board within that report? Discuss with your director. What are some other ways board meetings can be utilized to connect trustees with library services or community?

10. Internal controls are essential for exercising *fiduciary responsibility*. What documents does your board review during a board meeting that assist with internal controls? Additionally, what are you required to approve at your meetings as prescribed in [Education Law 259\[1\]\[a\]](#)?