Sandwich Public Library Board Meeting Basics

The Sandwich Public Library District (SPLD) Board of Trustees holds its regular meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm.

Board Packet

The Director emails the board meeting packet the week before the meeting.
The board packet includes:

- *meeting agenda*
- *monthly reports*
- *supporting documents*

Board meetings are most effective and efficient when trustees come prepared. Please read the packet before the meeting. Many questions can be answered in advance of the meeting.

> **What's a Consent Agenda?**
> A consent agenda is a list of noncontroversial items of business that can be adopted all at once, saving the time that would be consumed if each item were voted on separately. The SPLD Board of Trustees uses a consent agenda to approve the Treasurer's Report, Minutes of the previous meeting, Department Reports, and Monthly Statistics.
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> Any trustee can request to have an item in the consent agenda removed for discussion and individual approval.

Board Meetings

All meetings – whether of the entire board or of its committees – must be posted to the public at least **48 hours** before the meeting occurs. Only emergency meetings may be called less than 48 hours before the meeting time.

As defined in our bylaws, the SPLD board follows the general principles of **parliamentary procedure** for decision making. Since our board is small (fewer than 12 people), parliamentary rules allow for less formal discussion, though our process may become more formal if deemed necessary.

Voting

Votes of the board are taken either by voice vote (viva voce) or roll call vote.

Voice Vote (Viva Voce)
A voice vote is one in which the presiding officer asks for a vote by stating, "All those in favor say Aye" and "All opposed, say Nay."

Roll Call Vote
A roll-call vote is one in which each Trustee is called out by name and asked to respond Aye or Nay to the vote at hand. Roll call vote is required for:

- *financial decisions*
- *consent agenda votes*
- *any vote during online/virtual meeting*

Executive Session

Most meetings of the Board of Trustees are conducted in a public forum. However, certain topics and discussions are closed to the public. Executive session is a time during which only trustees and invitees are permitted to attend, and in which all discussion is to be held in confidence by those in attendance. When needed, executive session usually occurs at the end of a regular board meeting.

No voting occurs in executive session; recommendations are returned to an open board meeting for a vote.

Executive session meetings are recorded and attendance is taken with attendees stating their name and role.

The Open Meetings Act (OMA) defines the occasions for executive session. Typical reasons for executive session in our context include but are not limited to:

- *Employment Matters Regarding Specific Employees*
  (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1))
- *Collective Negotiating Matters*
  (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2))
- *Selection of a Person to Fill a Public Office (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(3))*
- *Acquisition of Real Estate*
  (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(6))
- *Pending Possible Litigation*
  (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11))

> **What is OMA and FOIA?**
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> OMA is the **Open Meetings Act** which governs meetings of public bodies.
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> FOIA is the **Freedom of Information Act** which guarantees pubic access to records from any public agency.
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> All SPLD Trustees are required to take both the OMA and FOIA training online at least once during their term although an annual review is recommended.

Committee Meetings

Committees are sub-groups of the board assigned to particular tasks under the authority of the board as a whole. Committees are intended to streamline the decision-making process. Committees work with the Director to develop and research ideas, then make recommendations to the board as a whole. Committees must meet at least once a year and are scheduled at the discretion and convenience of the committee members. All trustees will serve on two standing committees. Special or ad hoc committees may also be formed to address temporary tasks or needs.

Trustee Communications

Correspondence among more than three board members constitutes a quorum and is therefore considered a meeting. For email correspondence, consider either emailing each board member individually or using the blind carbon copy (BCC) field for addressing group emails.

General Parliamentary Procedure Practices

Although a portion of our meetings is spent hearing reports and updates, the board is responsible for making decisions related to policy, resource allocation, and culture. Our meetings follow basic principles of parliamentary procedure, using motions to propose ideas for group decisions. The following provides an overview of the parliamentary process used in our meetings.

Every motion has six steps:

1. **Motion:**
   - A motion is proposal formally offered by a member in a meeting, requesting that the board take a specific action.
   - Ideas are not discussed first and then a motion is made; instead, a motion is made then the idea is discussed.
   - It may be helpful to write your motion down before making it.
   - Use words like "I move that…" or "I propose that…" for making a motion.

2. **Second: Another member seconds the motion.**
   - The motion must be seconded by another member. A second simply means that another member thinks the motion should be discussed; it does not necessarily mean that the seconding member is in favor of it.
   - If the motion does not get a second, it cannot be discussed.
   - If discussion ensues without a second being obtained, the motion is presumed to have a second.

3. **Restate motion: The president restates the motion.**

4. **Debate: The members debate the motion.**
   - Until a motion is made, seconded, and stated by the chair, no discussion is in order. The rule of *"motion before discussion"* saves valuable meeting time.
   - Time limits for debate may be imposed if necessary.

5. **Vote: The president restates the motion, and then first asks for affirmative votes, and then negative votes OR asks for a roll call vote if applicable.**

6. **Announce the vote: The president announces the result of the vote and any instructions.**

The business meeting is the time to address items on the agenda,
not for brainstorming, scheduling committee meetings, or casual conversation.
Under the direction of the board president, all members are to keep
the business meeting focused on the business at hand.

Commonly Used Parliamentary Actions

Action	Example
AMENDING A MOTION	You want to change some of the wording that is being discussed. *"I move to amend the motion by…"*
REFER TO A COMMITTEE	You feel that an idea or proposal being discussed needs more study and investigation. *"I move that we refer the matter to committee."*
POSTPONE DEFINITELY	You want the membership to have more time to consider the question under discussion and you want to postpone it to a definite time or day, and have it come up for further consideration. *"I move to postpone the matter until…"*
PREVIOUS QUESTION	You think discussion has gone on for too long and you want to stop discussion and vote *"I move the previous question."*
LIMIT DEBATE	You think discussion is getting long, but you want to give a reasonable length of time for consideration of the question. *"I move to limit discussion to two minutes per speaker."*
RECESS	You want to take a break for a while. *"I move to recess for ten minutes."*
ADJOURNMENT	You want the meeting to end. *"I move to adjourn."*
PERMISSION TO WITHDRAW A MOTION	You have made a motion and after discussion, are sorry you made it. *"I ask permission to withdraw my motion."* Note: WITHDRAWING a motion does not require a second or a vote – RESCIND requires a second and a vote
CALL FOR ORDERS OF THE DAY	At the beginning of the meeting, the agenda was adopted. The chairman is not following the order of the approved agenda. *"Call for orders of the day."*
POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE	The noise outside the meeting has become so great that you are having trouble hearing. *"Point of privilege."*
POINT OF ORDER	It is obvious that the meeting is not following proper rules. *"Point of order."*
POINT OF INFORMATION	You are wondering about some of the facts under discussion, such as the balance in the treasury when expenditures are being discussed. *"Point of information."*
POINT OF PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY	You are confused about some of the parliamentary rules. *"Point of parliamentary inquiry."*
TABLE A MOTION	Temporarily lay aside, or "table," a pending question for the sole purpose of taking up more urgent business that requires the assembly's immediate attention. *"I move that we table the matter."*