

# DIVISION OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

## Public Comment and Conduct of Meetings Policy and Procedures

### **Policy Statement**

It is the intent of this policy that the deliberations and actions of the committees, councils, work groups, etc. of the Division of Library and Information Services (Division) be conducted in order that the public and relevant stakeholders may be fully informed and intelligently advised as to the conduct of public business.

### **Meetings**

1. *Location*: All meetings shall be held in a suitable location, and shall be open to the public as required by law.
2. *Public Notice*: The Division shall give public notice of the schedule of meetings, and shall state the dates, times and places of such meetings by posting the date and time of the meetings on the Division's website. Notice will also be published in the *Florida Administrative Register* as required by Section 286.011 of the *Florida Statutes*.

### **Conduct of Meetings**

1. The Chair, or meeting leader, shall preserve order and decorum at all meetings.
2. When considering matters upon which the group members will take action, the Chair, or meeting leader, shall receive comments from the public.
3. Division staff and citizens must be recognized by the Chair, or meeting leader, before speaking or asking questions. The purpose of this requirement is to maintain order.
4. Individuals that appear before the group are required to state their legal name for the public record. The purpose of this requirement is to properly reflect the speaker's name in any minutes in order to have the speaker's name available for future reference.
5. The Chair, or meeting leader, may, at their discretion, or at the discretion of the majority of the group, accept comments from those in attendance as the group considers: consent agenda items, emergency items, items involving official acts that require no more than a ministerial act, approval of minutes, ceremonial proclamations and other similar items.

### **Public Participation and Comment**

In order to comply with Section 286.0114 of the *Florida Statutes*, the Division hereby establishes a *Public Comment Policy* applicable to all committees, councils, work groups, etc. to allow members of the public an opportunity to address the group. In addition to public hearings, a special time is hereby set aside at all meetings for the purpose of receiving comments and suggestions from members of the public. All comments made during any public comment period shall be subject to the following procedures:

1. Public comments about items listed on the agenda will occur just prior to the group's discussion and action of the agenda item. A citizen may speak no longer than three minutes.
2. In addition, the Division allocates up to 30 minutes as a public comment period at the end of each meeting for citizens who wish to appear before that group to make a request, voice a complaint or concern, express an opinion or for some other type of recognition. The Chair, or meeting leader, will divide the time equally between all who have signed up to speak; however, in no case may a citizen speak longer than three minutes.
3. Public comments on items not listed on the agenda will occur at the end of the meeting agenda, during the public comment period (see #2 above).
4. When a group considers matters during a public meeting upon which it will take action, no action shall be taken until the Chair, or meeting leader, requests and receives comments from the public (if applicable).

5. Persons who are present at a meeting (physically or virtually) who wish to make a statement during the meeting, or during the public comment period, will register on the *Meeting Appearance Record Form*. The form can be delivered or emailed to the meeting Coordinator (the person named on the agenda). Information included on the *Meeting Appearance Record Form* will be included in the meeting minutes and thus becomes public record. The form can be delivered or emailed at any time prior to the call for public comment.
6. Persons who wish to make a written statement to be read by a Division staff member during the meeting, or during the public comment period, must deliver or email the written statement to the meeting Coordinator (the person named on the agenda). The written statement must include the submitter's name. In addition, the submitter must indicate which specific agenda item their statement addresses, or if the statement is for the public comment portion of the meeting. The written statement can be delivered or emailed at any time prior to the call for public comment.
7. Each person who signs up to speak will have up to three minutes to make their statement. Speakers will be acknowledged by the Chair, or meeting leader, in the order which the *Meeting Appearance Record Forms* were received. Speakers shall address the group, and will begin their statement by first stating their legal name.
8. Statements are to be directed to the group as a whole and not to individuals. Public comment is not intended to require a group member to provide an answer to the speaker. Discussions between speakers and members of the audience will not be allowed.
9. Speakers will be courteous in their language and presentation.
10. Only one speaker will be acknowledged at a time. In the event a group of persons supporting or opposing the same position desires to be heard, the group should designate a spokesperson to express the group's concerns. Likewise, in the event the number of persons wishing to attend the hearing exceeds the capacity of the meeting place, groups should designate a delegate to attend the meeting. If the meeting has exceeded its scheduled time, or the 30 minutes set aside for public comment at the end of the meeting has expired before all persons who have signed up get to speak, the Chair, or meeting leader, may elect to extend the meeting in order to hear public comments.
11. Any action on items brought up during the public comment period will be at the discretion of the members of the group. No group will take any action on subject matter for which it has not had the opportunity to fully investigate and gather complete information.
12. These same rules shall apply to all committees, councils, work groups, etc. of the Division.