

Open Meetings Policy

Compliance with Open Meetings Law:

The Belmont Literary and Historical Society Free Library adheres to New York's Open Meetings Law, as outlined in Article 7 of the Public Officers Law. This law mandates that board meetings be properly posted, advertised, and open to the public. Additionally, any working sessions of the board where a quorum is expected must be advertised and open. A full copy of New York's Open Meetings Law is available online.

Notice of Meetings:

Notice of regular board meetings will be published in the local newspaper at the beginning of the library's fiscal year, posted in the library, and published on the library's website. If a regular meeting date is changed or if a special or emergency meeting is called, the library will provide notice on its website, in the library, and to local media at least 72 hours in advance whenever possible.

Meeting Locations and Remote Participation:

Board meetings must be conducted in person or via videoconferencing, provided that all videoconference locations are open to the public and listed in the meeting notice. Meetings may not be held by telephone, email, or mail communication. While trustees who are not physically present in person or through videoconference cannot vote, they may participate in discussions via speakerphone, provided that the public can hear their contributions.

Executive Sessions:

During an open board meeting, the board may enter an executive session in which the public is excluded. An executive session can only be convened as part of a public meeting, and the board must vote to enter into executive session while stating the general nature of the discussion for the record. The board may take formal action in executive sessions, except for the appropriation of public funds.

Public Participation:

New York's Open Meetings Law grants the public the right to attend and observe board meetings. However, it does not provide an automatic right for the public to speak or participate in discussions. The board will designate a public comment period, during which members of the public may address the board. The board president or meeting chair has the discretion to set time limits for public comments. Written comments addressed to the

Library Board President are also welcomed for those unable to attend in person. Please view the Public Comment Policy for rules and procedures.

Minutes:

Minutes will be taken at all board meetings as required by the Open Meetings Law. Regular session minutes will summarize motions, proposals, resolutions, and votes. While not required, additional discussion summaries may be included. Minutes will be made available to the public within two weeks of a meeting, regardless of approval status. Minutes for executive sessions are only required if formal action is taken and it will summarize the final determination or action of the session.

Accessibility:

Members of the public with disabilities who wish to attend a board meeting should contact the library director in advance to request reasonable accommodation.

By adhering to this policy, the library ensures transparency, accountability, and compliance with New York's Open Meetings Law.

Approved: March 20th 2025