

## **Effective Library Board Meetings (excerpt from the COSLA Public Library Trustee Manual: A Template)**

Managing an effective meeting is the duty of the Board President. Effective board meetings can begin with a quick review of the agenda to make sure there is adequate time to cover all items and to modify the order of business if necessary.

Effective board meetings move at an appropriate pace. Time for questions and full discussion is allowed, but the president makes sure discussion remains focused and decisions are reached. The president also needs to ensure that a few members do not dominate discussions, that all members have a chance to be heard, and that accountability for follow through is assigned as needed.

Meetings are managed more effectively with ground rules. Every board should develop/review a list of ground rules at the beginning of each year. The list below provides sample ground rules that various committees have used. Your board may wish to incorporate some of these or develop new ones.

- Start and end meetings on time
- Stay on task; no sidebar conversations
- Come prepared and ready to contribute
- Listen to others and don't interrupt
- Be open to hearing other people's perspectives
- Question assumptions
- Make decisions based on clear information
- Identify actions that result from decisions
- Bring closure to decisions
- Be respectful
- Board members will support committee recommendations
- Confidentiality
- Give specific examples
- Attack the problem, not the person
- Minutes are approved by the group
- Capture decisions and action items

Board meetings generally should be completed within two hours. If meetings consistently last longer, issues can be referred to committees or the director for further study or tabled for action at subsequent board meetings. Establish an ending time for the meeting and stick to it.