

KANSAS Trustee Education Program  
Director's Template

**Topic: EFFECTIVE BOARD MEETINGS**

**Discussion Starter:** [Director, start off with this scenario and get board comments.] Today is the regularly scheduled Board meeting, and two people come in who are not Board members. The two visitors demand time to speak to the Library Board. How should these visitors be handled?

[Short discussion – track comments and reactions for recap at the end of the presentation.]

The way to handle this situation, and others, is to have an effective board meeting format in place. In order to establish such a format, some definitions are in order.

**Definitions:**

- Agenda – the sequence of topics to be covered
- Consent Agenda – repetitive items, such as minutes of the last meeting. These items are handled as a group and sent out in the board packet. However, any board member may pull one out for further discussion.
- Quorum – the minimum legal number of trustees who must be present to hold a vote.

**Points to cover:**

Effective Board meetings require three things:

1. **Commitment** [Trustees must commit to attend regularly, come prepared, and to work productively as a team.]
2. **Organization** [A consistent framework for each meeting, a good set of monthly minutes, a consistent schedule of meeting dates and times, updated bylaws, a policy on absentees and monthly mailing of Board materials.]
3. **Understand the responsibilities of the Library Board** [Discuss roles of the Board Chair, Board Treasurer, Board Secretary and the Board in general.]

The Library Board officers and the Library Director must commit to getting most materials to the Library Board in a timely fashion, prior to the meeting (board packet). A list of bills to be paid is often not available until the day of the meeting.

By following the steps of commitment, organization and understanding above, all trustees will have a clear understanding of the meeting process and the time to study materials in order to develop clear policies and decisions for the library.

[Referring to the beginning discussion, ask how the Library Board response is now different. Whatever they say, finish up with these points:]

1. This is a public meeting, even if the public is absent more often than not.
2. Meeting materials are available for the public attendees.
3. Public attendees sign an attendance record, if they so desire.
4. Attendees wishing to speak are allotted time in the agenda.
5. Most boards put public comments at the beginning of the agenda so people don't get frustrated by waiting.

See the resource list at the end of the Trustee Handout for additional information.

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