

The Nyack Library

Policy on Communication between Board and Public

(Adopted by the Board of Trustees February 11, 2013)

1. Via email to the Trustees' Nyack Library mailbox:

A. If a patron sends a specific question concerning library operations, that email should be forwarded to the appropriate staff member for response (for example: "How do I book a room for a meeting at the Library?" would go to the Events & Hospitality Coordinator), with a copy to the Director.

B. If a patron sends a comment to the Board on any matter, it should simply be acknowledged. ("Thank you for your recent comment.")

C. If a patron sends an email expressing general concerns about any aspect of the Library and invites discussion or a response, the reply should indicate that the message has been received and that a response will be made once the Board has had an opportunity to discuss the matter(s) raised. The reply should explain that the Board cannot engage in email discussions.

In ALL cases, emails received at the Board's email address via the Nyack Library website should generate an automated response confirming receipt.

If any Board member responds individually to an email from a patron on a Library matter, it should be made clear in the message that the Trustee is not speaking on behalf of the Board or Library.

2. At a board meeting:

When patrons speak to the Board during a meeting, they should only be responded to immediately on matters of fact and/or information. Such response can come from the President, with brief consultation with other Trustees as necessary. On other matters (e.g. a complaint or criticism of some aspect of Library functioning), the speaker should be thanked for his/her comment and assured that the Board will discuss the issue(s) raised and will prepare a response that can either be emailed, should the patron so desire (& provide an address), or delivered orally at the next scheduled meeting of the Board.

3. Recommendation:

At least twice a year, an open forum should be held at which Board and members of the public can engage in a roundtable style discussion on any Library-related matter that is not confidential. This would not require attendance by all members of the Board, but the Board would agree that such discussion may take place in the absence of anyone who was unable or chose not to attend. Such open forums would be scheduled between regularly scheduled Board meeting dates. Minutes would not be taken at such meetings, nor would they be podcast (should such a policy have been adopted for regular meetings). If a quorum of the Board is present, the meeting would be called to order and adjourned formally, but with the understanding that no actions are to be taken.