

## January 2015 Trustee Tip of the Month

### Improving the Effectiveness of Board Meetings

A new year is a great time to take a fresh look at your library's board meetings to see if there are any areas where they could be improved for better effectiveness. From the agenda to the minutes, here are a few suggestions for board meetings that you'll look forward to attending:

- The board president, board secretary and the library director should work together to ensure that board meeting materials – including minutes, financial reports, committee reports and other necessary documents – are distributed at least one week before the board meeting. Some members may prefer to receive packets via email, which can streamline the process.
- Board members should read board materials, **especially materials that will require action**, prior to the board meeting.
- That a quorum will be present for the meeting should be confirmed at least a day in advance of the board meeting whenever possible. An email or text message to board members verifying their ability to attend the meeting can prevent last-minute meeting reschedules because of an inability to reach a quorum.
- Start board meetings on time and end them within a reasonable time frame. During the meeting, practice mindful time management. Regular board meetings where routine business is on the agenda may last 60-90 minutes.
- Mindful time management during board meetings can be fostered by estimating the time necessary to handle agenda items as the agenda is being prepared. Add the estimated time to the agenda beside the item; the board president can remind members of the time allocated during the meeting. If time runs out during discussion, the board can decide whether to continue discussion or table the item.
- Committee and department head reports should be read by trustees if no action or discussion is needed. Committee chairs or department heads should submit reports in writing, with supporting information, in time for distribution with board packets. After reading the reports, trustees and/or the board president can decide whether discussion during the meeting is necessary.
- Create an annual board meeting calendar that anticipates and schedules recurring activities of the board, such as adopting the budget, setting the tax rate, conducting the director evaluation and reviewing policies. In the month or month(s) prior to the board meeting, distribute any relevant information to the board to streamline the decision-making process.
- Limit “unfinished business” items on the agenda. Unfinished business items are often the result of meetings that run so long that there is simply no time to address all items. New or unfinished business items that need extensive discussion should be addressed in a special called meeting or a committee meeting.

Great board meetings don't just happen – they're the result of a concerted effort on the part of all trustees. If your board meetings need a bit more tuning up, ask your KDLA Regional Consultant for more information about effective board meetings.