

April 7, 2025

Mount Vernon Public Library Board of Trustees
28 South First Avenue
Mount Vernon, New York 10550

RE: Compliance with the Open Meetings Law and Election Procedures

Dear Trustees:

I write to you to share my concerns about reports I have received regarding some actions by the Mount Vernon Public Library (MVPL). It has been alleged that required notices to receive election petitions to become a potential candidate for the MVPL board of trustees have provided incorrect information. For example, apparently, MVPL is advising the public that election petitions have been picked up by March 14, 2025, and they must be returned to the school district's office on or before April 30. However, in fact such petitions may be picked up right until due on April 30. By creating the impression of this early deadline, MVPL is potentially limiting the pool of candidates and thereby possibly undermining the integrity of elections to the board of trustees.

Next, it has been alleged that MVPL has been engaging in efforts to violate the New York Open Meetings Law (*see* Public Officers Law, Article 7). Specifically, in order to speak during the "Period of Public Expression" at the March 19, 2025 MVPL board meeting, there was a requirement for the public to email MVPL's Director beforehand and indicate the subject about which they wanted to speak. Moreover, it has been brought to my attention that MVPL will host a public budget presentation on May 7, 2025, and again attendees are required to pre-register (*see* <https://mountvernonpubliclibrary.org/public-budget-presentation-mvpl/>).

I note that at a meeting where the Open Meetings Law applies, a library may request that attendees register, even prior to the meeting, but a failure to do so does not permit the library to exclude those who do not register from attending or to lawfully participate in the meeting. For more information on this issue and other Open Meeting Law matters, you may wish to contact the Committee on Open Government (*see* <https://opengovernment.ny.gov/form/contact-us>).

I trust this information will be of use to you.

Very truly yours,



Lauren Moore
State Librarian