



Electronic Communication among Trustees – Policy

Adopted Board of Trustees on 7/18/2018. Reviewed 6/16/2021.

The Constitution of the State of Montana establishes the people's right to know and the people's right to participate in the public process.

To ensure the public's right to access all North Valley Board of Trustees deliberations, the Board will abide by the following rules regarding electronic communication.

Electronic Communication

The Director and/or the Board Chair may provide information relating to NVPL business to Trustees using email. It is recommended that individual board members not use the "reply to all" option when responding in order to ensure that all deliberations as a body are reserved for the public meeting. Trustees may respond to the Director and/or the Board Chair.

Non-Substantive Electronic Communications

Generally, Trustees shall not use electronic communications such as email or text messaging to communicate with each other regarding any NVPL business. Electronic communication between Trustees is permitted on a limited basis for non-substantive matters such as:

- Reminders regarding meeting times, dates and places.
- Notices of absence in order to determine a quorum at meetings.

Electronic Bulletin Boards

The Board finds that electronic "chat rooms" and "bulletin boards" are inherently detrimental to the open meetings process and will not use such methods to conduct NVPL business or deliberations.

There is no expectation of privacy for any messages sent or received electronically.

Constitution of Montana -- Article II -- DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

Section 8. Right of participation. The public has the right to expect governmental agencies to afford such reasonable opportunity for citizen participation in the operation of the agencies prior to the final decision as may be provided by law.

Section 9. Right to know. No person shall be deprived of the right to examine documents or to observe the deliberations of all public bodies or agencies of state government and its subdivisions, except in cases in which the demand of individual privacy clearly exceeds the merits of public disclosure.