

Requesting Input from the Board

Last verified by Antlers Library Main on 07-31-2025

Yes, the **executive director** *can request input* from board members — **but only within certain limits** under the **Oklahoma Open Meetings Act (OMA)**.

Here's how to do it **legally and effectively**:

✓ What the Executive Director *Can* Do

1. REQUEST INDIVIDUAL INPUT (ONE-ON-ONE)

The director may **contact board members individually** to:

- Ask for **factual clarifications**
- Request **feedback** on a document she is drafting
- Discuss **non-decisional** matters

◊ *However: She cannot **share what other members think**, nor can members be used as a “go-between” to indirectly discuss an issue.*

2. GATHER FEEDBACK FOR USE IN A PUBLIC MEETING

She may:

- Send a **draft policy, budget, or report** to all board members and ask them to **review it** ahead of the meeting
 - Request that board members **bring suggestions** to the meeting for discussion
 - Ask them to **submit feedback to her privately** (but again, no group deliberation)
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⊘ WHAT SHE *CANNOT* DO

Under the Open Meetings Act, she must **not**:

- Ask for **group input via email or shared documents** if it leads to discussion among a quorum
- **Facilitate or encourage** any form of deliberation among a majority of board members outside a public meeting
- Summarize or relay **other board members' comments** to the group outside a meeting

⚠ *If a quorum discusses the issue (even indirectly), it's a violation of the OMA — regardless of whether a vote is taken.*

✓ Best Practice for Directors

"Please review the attached draft policy. If you have any edits or suggestions, feel free to send them to me directly by [date]. All final discussion and decision-making will happen at the [meeting date] board meeting."

- Do **not** CC or reply-all
- Make clear that all **decisions** and **deliberation** will occur at a public meeting
- If substantial or controversial input arises, it's best to put it on a **posted agenda** for discussion

SUMMARY

| Action | Allowed? | Notes |
|---|----------|---------------------------------|
| Director sends document for review | ✓ | No reply-all |
| Individual feedback to director | ✓ | Must not be shared with others |
| Group email inviting discussion | ✗ | Violates OMA if quorum involved |
| Group editing/commenting on a shared doc (e.g. Google Docs) | ✗ | Considered deliberation |

Here is a **template email** the executive director can use to **request input** from board members while remaining compliant with the **Oklahoma Open Meetings Act**:

✉ SUBJECT: DRAFT [POLICY/BUDGET/DOCUMENT NAME] – FOR INDIVIDUAL REVIEW ONLY

Dear [Board Member Name],

I hope this message finds you well. I'm currently working on a draft of [brief description – e.g., the proposed Collection Development Policy / the upcoming budget adjustments] and would appreciate any feedback you may have.

Attached is the current draft for your **individual review**. If you have suggestions, corrections, or concerns, please feel free to send them directly to me at your convenience, ideally by [insert deadline].

To ensure we remain in compliance with the **Oklahoma Open Meetings Act**, please do **not** reply to other board members or forward this message to them. All discussion and any decisions on this topic will occur during the next regular board meeting on [meeting date], where it will be included on the posted agenda.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful review. Let me know if you have any questions.

Best regards,

[Your Name]

[Executive Director, Antlers Public Library]