

Trustee Job Description & Responsibilities

GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES

Assumes responsibility to ensure the Library is managed consistent with the law through policies that serve the public's library service needs.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE POSITION

A trustee is an unpaid, elected official interested in public libraries and understands their importance in the community. Trustees must be willing to devote both time and effort to carry out their duties. Candidates for election to the Library Board should understand and represent the entire community.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Demanded of every trustee is the willingness to work cooperatively with other members of the Library Board. The variety of jobs and decisions requires unique skills and expertise. Needed especially are:

- Skills in management and long-range planning
- Sound understanding of budgets, financing, and fundraising
- Familiarity with personnel and labor matters
- The ability to develop public relations programs
- Knowledge of real estate and building problems
- Appreciation of the educational and cultural needs of the community
- Political awareness and the ability to work with local, regional, and state agencies and bodies for the improvement of library resources and services

EXAMPLES OF THE WORK OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Hires the library director and develops personnel policies.
- Develops a set of clear-cut policies under which the Library will operate.
- Adopts a responsible library budget for presentation to the voters, works to secure funding from public and other sources, and carefully monitors the expenditures of those funds.
- Provides liaison between the general public and the Library, sets goals for the Library that are appropriate for the community, and evaluates the public's awareness of library services and the need for public support.
- Plans for immediate and long-range library operations and constantly evaluates management, services, operation methods, and budget adherence.

ELIGIBILITY

Candidates for election to the Board of Trustees are nominated by petition and elected at large. Qualified voters (registered voters) residing in the Town of Ballston outside of the Village of Ballston Spa are eligible unless affiliation with the Library represents a conflict of interest.

TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the Library trustees to see that the Library is managed in a manner consistent with the law and the policies they have established. Trustees must be able to select a qualified library director, develop sound policies, assure adequate financing and money management, be good public relations representatives-strong library advocates, and plan and evaluate against established goals. Demanded of every trustee is the willingness to work cooperatively with other members of the library board. Trustees can only speak for and act for the board if specifically empowered to do so.

Five Categories of Trustee Duties

PERSONNEL

It is the responsibility of the Library trustees to hire the library director and ensure that the Library is managed consistently with the policies they have established. The library director hires library staff. The trustees are responsible for developing personnel policies governing terms of employment, salary schedules, and employee benefits.

POLICIES

Trustees must develop clear-cut policies to operate the Library. Such policies should be amended and updated routinely to accommodate changing library operations and service conditions.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

The trustees provide a liaison between the public and the Library. It is their responsibility to see that the library director and staff fully comprehend the community's attitude toward the Library and understand the community's needs and resources to meet those needs. They must also see that the community understands the services provided by the Library and the need for public support.

FINANCING & SECURING SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

Budgets for the Library should be drafted by the library director and staff and reviewed carefully by the trustees. They should only be presented to the voters once the library board approves.

Trustees must secure adequate funds through voting or appropriation to fulfill budget demands after submitting a budget. This requires the trustees to approve a budget that places a reasonable burden on local finances and use their resources to secure funding. Once funds have been secured, trustees carefully monitor the expenditures of those funds.

PLANNING AND EVALUATING

Library trustees are responsible for general planning for both immediate and long-range library operations accompanied by constant evaluation of library management, services, operation methods, and budget adherence.