Missouri Public Library Trustee Manual

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Missouri Secretary of State
State Library

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Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA)
Public Library Trustee Manual: A Template for Use by State Library Agencies and Public Libraries
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Dear Library Trustee,

Congratulations on your appointment as a trustee of your public library! As you embark on this important role in your community, I would like to express my appreciation for your willingness to work to provide exceptional public library service to all residents. The public library is the heart and soul of every community, and the board of trustees ensures that it remains strong, vibrant and relevant to users with a wide variety of needs, hopes and dreams.

The library is open and welcoming to all, serving the educational, recreational and informational needs of its community. Its roles in educational support, family literacy, economic development and as a community anchor cannot be overstated. With your commitment to advocating for library resources and to advising and supporting the library administration and staff as representatives of your community, our libraries will continue to be strong and successful across Missouri.

Library trustees are special, as they freely contribute their time and energy to a board because they believe in the importance of free and strong public libraries in their communities. This generosity and dedication is vital to our success. You are a wonderful example of the difference one individual can make in the world.

On behalf of my colleagues at the Missouri State Library, I extend my gratitude for your leadership and service. We hope that this trustee handbook will be helpful during your tenure on the board. Please call on us if we can assist you in any way.

Robin Westphal

State Librarian

Introduction

A trustee is part of a decision-making team that includes the rest of the trustees and the library director. For a board to function effectively, all members must bring enthusiasm, preparation and dedication to the task and have a firm understanding of the different roles played by the board, the director and the library staff.

This handbook consists of basic information needed by you, the trustee, to be an effective board member and library advocate. Each chapter includes sources of additional information that may be utilized if you run into an issue or question not addressed.

Since the governance models of Missouri libraries are quite varied, the information supplied in various chapters won't necessarily apply to your type of library. It is the responsibility of each Missouri library to understand its legal status based on its establishment documents. We recommend that you consult your library's attorney if you have any questions about how the laws apply to your library. ***The information presented in this handbook is in no way to be considered as legal advice.***

If you are unsure of the type of library you represent, you can:

- ask your library system director
- contact the Missouri State Library office

How to Use This Handbook

This handbook can be used in a variety of ways. Specific chapters may be referenced for continuing education at board meetings, or to explain the role of a trustee to a potential recruit or new trustee. Your local funding agencies may also appreciate an overview of certain topics.

Each chapter has its own focus and can be used individually as a:

- reference for specific questions
- discussion starter for exploring topics that the board is interested in learning more about
- guide to further resources on specific topics

Don't forget the appendix! There are several templates and forms that you can make your own at the end of the handbook.

You are embarking on important work that will have an impact on your community for years to come. Best wishes for a rewarding and effective term of service!

Advocacy

Webster's dictionary defines advocacy as "the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal; the act or process of advocating something". The number one job of a library trustee is to serve as an advocate for your library. Trustees should be sharing the library story far and wide to all they meet.

Advocating at the local level is vitally important. There are many ways for a library to do this. Providing funding agencies with an annual report that outlines the services you offer is one way. Asking to present a "State of the Library address" at a meeting of the City Council and/or County Board is a wonderful way to let them know what's going on at the library. The Library Director should present the report but trustees should attend the meeting to support the director. Trustees should all support the director when s/he is requesting the annual budget from the funding agency.

As an advocate, you can influence decision-makers by:

- speaking to civic groups about library needs and issues
- talking to friends about the library, its role in the community, and its needs
- writing letters to the editor of the local newspaper
- testifying at local and state budget hearings
- talking and writing to state and federal legislators about the needs of the library
- contributing to a library newsletter that is sent to decision makers.

Trustees should also be part of any statewide advocacy efforts. If the American Library Association or the Missouri Library Association issue a call to action, it is important for trustees to answer the call be it by calling, emailing or otherwise contacting their legislators.

The American Library Association has a whole page devoted to advocacy. There are some great resources available on the page http://www.ala.org/advocacy/home. Take some time to look through the resources that are available there. You can also sign up for District Dispatch so you're up-to-date on library issues. Visit ALA's Legislative Action Center at http://cqrcengage.com/ala/ to sign up for the dispatch or to learn more about current issues and legislation affecting libraries.

Capital Planning: Before You Begin

When embarking on capital planning of any kind, you, your board, and your library director should familiarize yourselves with any state, county, or city ordinances that place requirements on planning, design or implementation. These local ordinances will supersede anything addressed within this section (of the Trustee Manual).

Capital plans for small and large projects vary in scope. Relatively small projects that are not part of a major renovation of an extensive portion of a library or new construction require a plan that at a minimum lists identified supplies / materials, the estimated costs

and an anticipated timeline for completion. Projects qualifying as capital include furnishings and equipment (including computer hardware and software); the replacement of a roof; heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems; and minor renovations of library buildings such as installing an elevator.

Large projects such as new buildings, additions or a major renovation of an extensive portion of the library require a detailed capital plan and account for the second type of capital plan. Large capital projects will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

Planning Library Buildings:

As trustees face the challenges of planning library services for the future, increased space and additional locations may become a major consideration. Boards must decide whether to build a new library, renovate or expand current facilities, or find an existing space to be converted into a library. Construction plans should be considered in the context of the total library plan. Trustees need to study service needs, explore alternatives, estimate funding needs, identify potential funding sources, and establish priorities.

Most planning processes will lead to the identification of a probable date when the new library space should be in operation.

While having a new building may be the best answer, it is not always the most practical and should be measured against other options: purchase of an existing building, lease of an existing building, remodeling of the library, addition to the library, or in some cases, adding branches. Depending on the library and its services, the addition of a bookmobile or other outreach techniques may be considered in expansion plans.

Because a library board and staff will not have the necessary expertise to deal with all aspects of a building planning project, outside consultants may be used to provide specialized guidance. Consultants can suggest procedures, prevent mistakes, introduce new ideas, and sometimes defuse controversy. Some types of consultants whose services may be needed are: library building consultant, automation consultant, attorney, architect, certified public accountant and library services consultant.

Building Program:

After the library has completed its community analysis, defined its long-term goals and objectives, and determined the need for additional space; a library building program is developed. The building program defines the specific needs of the library in both quantitative and qualitative terms. The building program should bring together the thinking of the library board, the library director, the library staff, and the community on the purpose, scope, and function of the library building. It is strongly recommended that a library consultant be hired to assist in writing the building program for any major project. The building program should also stress that the building must be flexible and able to respond to future developments. Library functions and spaces should be able to expand and contract as needs develop or diminish. Existing and future technologies should be anticipated. Computerization, miniaturization, electronics, and other factors are already in

play and will continue to develop. These technologies have implications for the building's structure, its heating, ventilating, and air conditioning systems (HVAC), its power, lighting, electronic, and communications systems (PLEC), as well as ergonomic considerations in planning spaces and equipment.

Architect:

The architect should be hired only after a library has completed the preliminary steps of construction planning. The architect can then use the library's building program to aid in designing the building. In hiring an architect, the library should solicit applications, rank them by preference, and then enter into negotiations with the top choice, conducting personal interviews with the person or firm that interests the library board. The past experience of the architect should be considered, as well as the architect's personal philosophy. Final fees are discussed and an agreement is reached. If an agreement cannot be reached with the first choice, the board then declares that is the case and enters negotiations with the next candidate.

Design of the Building:

Once an architect is hired, the actual design of the building can proceed along with final decisions on location, size, addition or all new construction, etc. The general steps that will follow are:

1. preparation of schematic design
2. preparation of preliminary plans and design development
3. preparation of specifications and working drawings
4. advertising and receipt of bids
5. bonding process
6. award of contracts
7. actual construction
8. acceptance of performance
9. move to new building

State laws may require additional steps or procedures to the processes outlined above. Be sure to research federal, state and local regulations on bidding and awarding contracts, as it's important to make sure you adhere to all governance regarding these issues.

Planning Responsibilities:

An attorney specializing in construction law, should be consulted for building-related state standards, guidelines, and for general information regarding your building program. Trustees, staff, consultants, architects, interior designers, city councils, regional planning departments, and community members all fit into the picture.

Trustees:

- determine that a new building is needed
- provide leadership in the campaign to inform the community and secure necessary support for the project
- appoint a building committee and assign tasks
- select and hire a library building consultant
- select and hire an architect
- obtain financing for the project
- select and purchase the site
- approve the written building program
- approve preliminary and final architectural plans
- solicit and approve bid documents
- approve all contracts and any change orders to the contract

Library Staff:

The library director and staff actively participate in planning for construction projects by compiling information, surveys, and statistics; by helping to prepare a written building program; by preparing construction applications and reports; and by maintaining project records. The library director is an essential member of the building team in ensuring a facility that will successfully support the library program.

Library Building Consultant:

The consultant is usually an experienced librarian who has participated in several successful building projects. The cost of a building consultant can usually be saved many times over in reductions in construction and operating costs. Working with board and staff, the building consultant can provide any or all of the following services:

- survey the library's space needs
- write the library building program
- project future staff and operating costs
- prepare a preliminary project budget
- provide site analysis and recommendations
- provide advice on funding options
- provide assistance in selection of the architect
- review all plans prepared by the architect and provide a written evaluation
- review needs, specifications, and layout for shelving, furniture, and equipment
- provide a final inspection of the facility

We're Set to Go, What's Next:

- The board with its planning completed, money in hand, and architect in the final stage of plans should consider the following: Review every nuance of the building plan. Decide what features can be optional (bid alternatives) so that separate bids can be taken on these items.
- Review estimated costs so that the construction bids do not lead to surprise costs.
- Follow all local, state and federal ordinances and structures. Zoning and building codes should be checked as plans are made, but enlist the help of appropriate officials in the plan review and in recommending contractors to be asked to bid.
- Follow correct bidding procedures, legal and ethical. Allow time for bidders to estimate closely. Invite enough bidders so that there is a range.
- Analyze bids ruthlessly. Be sure you are getting what was specified with no unsuitable substitutes. Accept the bid that most closely meets specifications as well as offers good value.
- All bids too costly? You can call for new bids to an amended set of specifications. You can also rule out the optional features (bid alternatives) that proved to be too expensive OR that lead to cost overruns.
- Create a team comprised of trustees, the library director, architect, and contractor to follow progress and to make regular reports.
- Expect some changes. Discoveries will be made about unexpected problems and opportunities. The contractor may suggest, for example, that a new tile may be less expensive and serve just as well as that specified. If so, that's a credit you can apply to something that will cost more (such as discovering poor soil on the site).
- Expect performance. This building is going to be a fixture in the community for a long time and should be properly and expertly built. Some boards find that the contractor has taken the job as a fill-in. Don't accept excuses!
- Watch the expenditure of funds in a professional manner. Payments should be made upon proper evidence, but promptly. If you need financial advice, seek it from a good mortgage banker or an experienced purchaser of construction related materials.
- Meet frequently during the building process. Meetings keep you in touch with progress, permit decisions on changes, and provide the material for ongoing public relations in the community.
- Plan for orderly occupation of the building when it's ready, with festivities and community involvement. Allow plenty of time for moving in, completing the landscaping and other amenities, and then showing off the newest and best community asset.

Keep in the back of your mind how long it took to achieve this objective. Keep "need for expansion" in your planning process so that the next building will arrive when it is needed. There is nothing more satisfying than a new facility that enhances the ability of the board to bring exciting services to an appreciative community.

Questions about Building / Planning to Keep in Mind Through-out the Process:

1. Should the board use a building consultant?

In recent years, numbers of librarians have specialized as building consultants, most often in determining space needs and layout for the purposes the board has approved. A consultant will look at the community data, consult with the librarian, staff, and board, and apply data to recommendations; right down to location and size of a department in the building. Most consultants are not designers, but they provide guidance to the architect who must visualize the structure. The use of a building consultant can be a requirement when using state and federal funding.

2. How does a board find an architect?

Boards can visit, or review plans and pictures, of other libraries for clues to find suitable architects to interview. Until a few years ago, there were few architects specializing in libraries, but many in the profession have since found these structures challenging.

The board will need to be satisfied that the architect has some understanding of the functions of libraries, will work closely with the board on designs reflecting what the board feels the community will enjoy, and will provide good supervision in regard to the contractor. Legal counsel should be sought on an appropriate contract.

Even architects experienced in library design need the guidance of specifications for use of the library: space for special purposes, the need for floor loads, extra power, and access for people with disabilities. Directors (and the building consultant) will have noted special needs for public and private areas, for loading, for staff use, and for expansion at a later date.

3. How does the board find a contractor?

Specifications created by an architect will be submitted to contractors for bids. It is wise for the board to have the specifications include a number of options so that the board can add or subtract options as cost is known. Library planners who think ahead have often been able to secure inexpensive future expansion space. And the board should be prepared to settle for less luxurious features if costs mount.

The board should interview contractors if it wishes to prequalify them for the bidding. Often the city or town will have a list of those to whom it offers bidding opportunities and regulations governing the bidding process. Multiple bids are needed, but an overly long list may not add to the board's ability to make the decision. Low bid is one factor, probably the most important, but value and evidence of good work elsewhere are considerations.

4. Who supervises the building?

Usually the library director is the link from the board to the architect and contractor, and is the person who checks to be sure the library is meeting local ordinances and codes. The director and architect and sometimes the contractor give the board decisions on changes as well as regular reports on progress. The board observes and asks questions. The project is a team effort, which may also involve local officials. The better the original plans and the more precise the specifications, the more likely that construction will run smoothly.

Most library boards, having weathered a building project, report that vigilance on the part of the board, close supervision by the architect, timely performance by the contractor, and surveillance by the director kept the project on time and in good order. Most boards also report relief when the project is completed; as building can be a trying time for all people involved.

5. How does the library keep the public informed?

As construction on a new building progresses, there will be public interest in what's happening. Regular updates through press releases is recommended, and there are times during the process when special events can be held, such as groundbreaking, cornerstone laying (perhaps with a time capsule), the first brick, and topping off. In the case of additions, the public should be carefully forewarned of disruptions or change in service due to construction.

6. How should the board plan well in advance for use of the new facility?

Plan and announce, when it's safe to do so, an occupancy date when the public can see the building. If the community is to be involved in helping to move, set dates and procedures.

Withhold an open house date until the library is really ready, including completed parking areas and landscaping. Make the ceremonies memorable; the date will be the library's birthday for many years.

7. When does the board begin thinking about future needs?

Ideally, the new space will meet the needs for a long time; but not forever! Keep on the planning agenda some space for thinking about what comes next. Most of these elements apply to planning of new space, whether in a new building, an existing building, or a conversion.

Construction Timetable:

Trustees should understand that the planning process for library construction will require a substantial amount of effort by the board, the library director, and the staff. Planning normally takes approximately twenty-four months and delays must be anticipated.

Sample Timetable for a Building Project

Feb.	Preliminary determination of a space need
Mar.	Selection of a building program consultant if one is to be hired
May	Building program written
June	Site application completed
Nov.	General and financial application (local funding commitment) completed
Mar.	Architect's contract signed / Title to site transferred

Apr. Architect's schematic plans reviewed by trustees and director

May Architect's design development plans reviewed by trustees and director

July Architect's working drawings reviewed by trustees and director

Aug. Advertise for bids after approval of architect's final plans

Oct. Bids are publicly opened and contract awarded to lowest bidder meeting all requirements

Nov. Construction of library begins

Funding for Buildings:

The need for a new library building or renovation of an existing one is usually evident long before funds are available to begin the project. Good planning, along with the commitment of the board, can help shorten the time between these two points.

There are a variety of sources for financing library buildings. In most cases, more than one source is used. The board and the library director should be aware of the different funding possibilities and be thoroughly familiar with the advantages and disadvantages of each one.

Local Government Appropriation:

The local government is a viable source of funding for capital projects. It is not uncommon for a project to be financed over a period of three to five years, scheduled to accommodate the use of current revenues.

Bond Issues:

Another method is to have a library bond referendum on the ballot to finance the project. This method requires the development of a comprehensive needs statement, convincing the local government of the needs, understanding the electorate, and conducting an effective campaign.

Gifts, Bequests, and Foundation Funding:

Gifts and bequests from citizens and corporations, as well as private foundation grants, have traditionally provided funds to supplement other sources of funding. Occasionally, a single benefactor will contribute the full amount or make a substantial contribution to the building fund. As a rule, however, securing funds by this means is a slow process and should not be relied on as the sole funding source.

Professional Fundraising Campaigns:

Fundraising requires a great deal of time and careful planning. Hiring a professional fundraiser may be expensive, but may be a very worthwhile investment toward mounting an effective building campaign.

Resources:

Some additional resources, and examples, of how other states, state agencies, and public libraries manage capital planning and construction. While some examples and resources are specific to particular states, each can provide additional input to the planning process and potentially offer insight to steps and planning.

Rhode Island Public Library Construction Reimbursement

Public Library Association: Facilities

American Library Association: Library Buildings and Space Planning

Bibliography:

Rhode Island Public Library Trustees Handbook

Cultivating Pennsylvania's Growing Libraries: Training Resource Kit for Pennsylvania Public Library Trustees

Effective Library Board Meetings

At Meetings:

Managing an effective meeting is the duty of the Board President. Effective board meetings can begin with a quick review of the agenda to make sure there is adequate time to cover all items and to modify the order of business if necessary. Effective board meetings move at an appropriate pace. Time for questions and full discussion is allowed, but the president makes sure discussion remains focused and decisions are reached. The president also needs to ensure that a few members do not dominate discussions, that all members have a chance to be heard, and that accountability for follow through is assigned as needed. Meetings are managed more effectively with ground rules. Every board should develop/review a list of ground rules at the beginning of each year. The list below provides sample ground rules that various committees have used. Your board may wish to incorporate some of these or develop new ones.

• Start and end meetings on time
• Stay on task; no sidebar conversations
• Come prepared and ready to contribute
• Listen to others and don't interrupt
• Be open to hearing other people's perspectives
• Question assumptions
• Make decisions based on clear information
• Identify actions that result from decisions
• Bring closure to decisions
• Be respectful
• Board members will support committee recommendations
• Confidentiality
• Give specific examples
• Attack the problem, not the person
• Minutes are approved by the group
• Capture decisions and action items

Board meetings generally should be completed within two hours. If meetings consistently last longer, issues can be referred to committees or the director for further study or tabled for action at subsequent board meetings. Establish an ending time for the meeting and stick to it.

Open Meetings:

To protect transparency in government, every state in the United States has some variety of law mandating that all government business be conducted in open meetings to which the public has access. The Missouri Sunshine Law, or Open Meetings and Records Law, is the law that sets out specifics about public meetings.

Closed meetings of the Board of Trustees are justified when discussing disciplinary proceedings against a staff member or personnel evaluations, considerations of the purchase or lease of property until an option is obtained, consultation with counsel regarding settlement strategy in connection with specific pending litigation, or consideration of specific contents of applications for employment or appointment. Check Chapter 610 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri for more information on closed and open meetings or obtain a Missouri Sunshine Law publication from the Missouri Attorney General's office.

Parliamentary Procedure:

Parliamentary procedure is used during meeting and committee deliberations to allow self-governing organizations to debate and reach group decisions, by vote, with the least possible friction. Library boards should include in their bylaws a statement of adherence to parliamentary procedures. Following parliamentary procedures allows for debate and group decisions to be made by majority opinion with respect for the minority opinion.

Meetings and Agendas:

Meetings are conducted under the rules set forth in the library's bylaws. In order for all trustees to be properly prepared for the meeting, a packet should be mailed or emailed to them no less than one week before the meeting date. The packet typically includes the meeting agenda, minutes of the previous meeting, financial reports, the schedule of bills to be paid, proposed personnel actions, committee reports and the director's report. Background information on the issues before the board should be distributed as well. All trustees are expected to come prepared to participate fully in meeting discussions and actions and to be familiar with the activities of the committees to which they are assigned. Using the talents and skills of every board member creates a more cooperative, congenial and productive board.

Regular attendance at board meetings is essential. The Board President and the Library Director should be notified in advance if attendance is not possible. A trustee who misses meetings frequently may not completely understand the issues at hand and valuable meeting time can be lost bringing that trustee back up to speed. An uninformed trustee cannot make the best possible decision when it comes time to vote. Your board may want to implement an attendance policy. It is a good idea to define in the bylaws what constitutes a satisfactory excuse for absence. (Example: "If any trustee shall fail to attend three consecutive meetings without excuse accepted as satisfactory by the trustees, that trustee shall be deemed to have resigned…") Far too often boards tolerate frequent absences by a board member to the detriment of the board and the library. A successful library board needs every trustee at every meeting. A trustee who has difficulty in regularly attending meetings may wish to seek other opportunities to help the library rather than serving on the board.

The most effective boards concentrate their time and energy on a few issues that will have a major impact on the library's future. Activities that can be completed by individual

trustees outside the meeting (such as reading the minutes) should not take up valuable time at a board meeting. Richard Chait of the Harvard School of Education, an authority on nonprofit boards, states the key concepts this way:

• Focus the board's attention only on issues that really matter;
• Use the board's time and structure to pursue those issues;
• Be certain that the board has the information it needs at the right time;
• Ensure that the board works as an effective corporate unit.

Effective Decision-Making:

It is important to keep in mind that legal responsibility for overall library operations rests in the library board, not individual trustees. Therefore, it is important for the board president to use leadership techniques that promote effective group decision-making on the part of the entire library board, not decision-making by a few board members, or the library director, or any other individual.

Board meetings are the place for you to raise questions and make requests of the library director and/or staff. Individual trustees should never make such requests or demands on their own—you are members of a governing body and must act as a body. Yet, as an individual trustee, you should not hesitate to raise concerns or questions at board meetings. By raising questions and/or concerns, you may help the board avoid rushing into an action without appropriate consideration of all of the ramifications or alternatives.

When dealing with the public or the media, trustees need not feel pressured in having to come to an immediate decision or make an immediate statement on an issue. Remember that what is said in an open regular public meeting can be quoted in the media. A good rule of thumb is to remember that individual board members should never speak for the whole board and that questions from the media should be referred to the spokesperson for the library whether it be the Chair of the Board of Trustees or the Library Director.

A “public comment” period during the meeting is not required, but it can be a helpful way for the board to hear about particular public concerns or needs. The board should limit itself to answering basic questions from the public and place any matter on a future meeting agenda if additional discussion or deliberation on the issue is needed.

Bylaws:

Library board bylaws are the rules established by the library board that govern the board’s own activities. Well-crafted bylaws help provide for the smooth and effective functioning of a library board. Library board bylaws must comply with all relevant statutes. In addition, all board meetings and board committee meetings should comply with the Missouri’s Sunshine Law. State and federal laws supersede any local library bylaw provisions.
At a minimum, library board bylaws should spell out:

- The library board officers to be elected, how they are elected, the length of their term and the powers and responsibilities of each officer
- When meetings are held, and how meetings are conducted
- Definition of a quorum and attendance requirements
- What standing committees are appointed, how they are appointed, and what they do (examples: personnel and finance)
- Provision for amending bylaws
- Provision for term limits
- Provisions for calling special meetings
- Provision for removing a board member with reasonable cause
- Provision for reviewing bylaws at least every three years

Crafting the Library Board's Bylaws:

Because bylaws are so fundamental to effective (and legal) library board operations, great care must be taken when developing new bylaws or amending existing bylaws. Bylaw language must be clear and unambiguous. Imprecise language can result in confusion and disorder. For example, confusion can result if it is unclear who has the authority to make decisions for the library. Library board bylaws should make clear that actions by board committees are advisory only. A library board committee cannot act on behalf of the full board—only actions by the full board have legal authority. Likewise, individual board members and board officers can perform official actions on behalf of the board only with specific authorization from the full board.

If the board wants to develop new bylaws or amend existing bylaws, it is recommended that a special committee be appointed to develop drafts for full board review. To change your bylaws, you must follow any procedures required by the current bylaws. Library system staff may be available to review drafts of new or amended bylaws.

An organization that is exempt from federal income tax, as described in Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3), is required to report changes to its bylaws and other governing documents annually to the IRS on the organization's IRS Form 990. Substantial changes to a tax-exempt organization's character, purposes, or method of operation should be reported to the IRS as soon as possible because such changes, if inconsistent with the organization's tax exemption, could affect the organization's tax-exempt status. For minor changes, just report them on the organization's next annual Form 990.

See Appendix for Sample Bylaws and Sample Meeting Agenda:

Sources of Additional Information:

• *Robert's Rules of Order* (chapter on the development and amendment of bylaws) or Alice F. Sturgis' *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*
• Ingram, Richard T. *Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards*. 2nd ed. Washington, D.C.: BoardSource, 2009
• Kissman, Katha. *Taming the Troublesome Board Member*. Washington, D.C.: Boardsource, 2006.
• Moore, Mary Y. *The Successful Library Trustee Handbook, 2nd ed.* Chicago: American Library Association, 2010

Friends and Foundations

Trustees raise funds for the library by making sure that elected officials know how valuable library service is to the community, and by being an ambassador wherever they go to let the community know how important it is to fund the library. Should they decide to raise donations, it is very important that some mechanism be in place to protect the funds such as a dedicated fund that a new administration / trustee board might not decide to spend some other way. A lawyer should be consulted to ensure this protection which is already in place for grants and gifts restricted by a legal document.

Friends work to raise funds for projects and purchases. Their purpose is not to hold large sums of money to produce interest or to fund a major building project. If the Friends are registered as a 501(c) 3 corporation, gifts to the Friends are tax deductible. Bylaws determine who may be a member and serve as an officer. Bylaws establish how funds will be spent and where funds go should the Friends dissolve.

Foundation board of directors are generally selected from the group of people in the community who have the most experience in serving on boards and raising money for projects. They often are and / or know many of the people who might make sizable contributions to the foundation. Their purpose is to raise a large sum of money, often for a building project or perhaps an endowment. As with the Friends, contributions are tax deductible with 501(c) 3 status and bylaws determine membership, officers and the dispersal of funds.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY:

Many libraries in the United States have their origins in volunteer groups – from women's clubs to the creation of public facilities from private collections. The desire to help the library may be supported through volunteerism. The use of volunteers should be carefully planned, beginning with determining the purpose of library volunteers. Some questions that may yield answers:

- Does the library have an adequate staff to provide needed services?
- Are there roles volunteers can fill that make a positive contribution to library services?

Volunteers are not a substitute for the core of paid staff that is necessary to provide good library service. Since volunteers are not paid, the expectation should not be for them to work as substitutes for staff or on a regular schedule. They may or may not be available consistently. Maintaining dependable library service is very important if the community's needs are to be met. A volunteer program should have its own goals and objectives, a plan, and a management system.

It is important that staff be fully involved in developing the concept of a volunteer program. Staff should be involved in the planning process to establish roles and to iron out difficulties, and to work toward the success of the volunteer program. If this is done, staff "resistance" to the program, if any, may be eliminated. Staff should discuss what gaps

might be filled by volunteers. Some examples of staff work, which might be done by volunteers, are:

- shelving books
- checking out and receiving books
- setting up displays and exhibits
- processing and repairing of materials
- greeting visitors and providing basic information
- contacting patrons to inform them of availability of requested materials
- maintaining depository collections in nursing homes and other sites
- delivering books to homebound people

And given talents and ability along appropriate lines:

- creating press releases or radio or TV spots, and delivering them to editors and program staff during friendly visits
- planning and executing programs in the library, including story hours and demonstrations
- speaking to community organizations about the library
- developing major events such as art fairs, book sales and special observances
- helping to organize advisory groups to talk with librarians about special collections
- assisting to convey planned messages to groups and individuals about library events or special interests
- training to be a stand-in for staff members who want to attend a workshop
- undertaking special projects for which the staff does not have time, such as oral history, newspaper clipping, developing mailing lists, showing videos, and arranging for discussion groups

Organization of Volunteers

Ideally, a volunteer program in a library should have a staff member in charge. Often, the program is organized and operated by a volunteer, much in the manner of such groups in hospitals, nursing homes and agencies. Assuming a library of modest size, these are the elements of a volunteer program operation:

- a coordinator of volunteers, preferably hired, but probably a volunteer who likes to manage, has good skills in working with people, is reliable, and can give planned time
- an office or location with desk, file, telephone and computer, as well as access to a private interview area
- a list of jobs which volunteers may be invited to do, along with an estimate of the time requirements and the levels of skill required
- an interview process which results in placing volunteers in the most suitable jobs
- a training program for volunteers covering job requirements, techniques and the library's functions and purposes
- a manual of operations setting policies for volunteers and including job descriptions and regulations

- a reward system coupled with evaluation. Rewards may be as simple as hours-earned mentioned in the library bulletin or local press; they should exist to say thanks to the volunteer
- a recruitment system that makes it possible for new people to join the volunteer corps
- a method for dismissing a volunteer who does not perform
- funds and an accounting system to cover out-of-pocket expenses for volunteers who do more than come to the library

Friends of the Library organizations comprise a special group of volunteers, varying in function from library to library. A library board's perception of the Friends group can vary greatly from community to community. In order to develop a positive relationship between the board and the Friends, each group needs to understand the other's role and mission. The Friends should have bylaws and procedures to guide their activities and to establish their role. Likewise, the library board with a Friends group would do well to define its role through its own policy manual. A memorandum of understanding between the library and Friends is useful for defining roles. Sample MOU's may be found on the United for Libraries website at http://www.ala.org/united/friends/orgtools

The library staff should also understand the Friends roles and any limits pertaining to Friends' requests of library personnel and resources. Successful Friends groups find that having a liaison to the library board is helpful. Boards of trustees often designate a board member to serve as a liaison to the Friends Board. The function of a liaison is to know what is going on, what directions are being pursued, and what aid is needed. Frequent communication between the groups is a key ingredient towards developing trust, a positive relationship, and for both organizations to work to improve the library. The majority of Friends organizations are healthy adjuncts to a library. Most concentrate on raising funds through special projects and on serving as library advocates in the community. They are often involved in lobbying for the library and for library legislation. Some members do aspire to trusteeship. Former board members may gravitate to the Friends to continue their interest in and service to the library. Making Friends successful, however, depends on making the group a real organization. The organization may choose to affiliate with a state or national unit. The group should be structured to include these elements in a set of bylaws:

- purpose of the organization
- legal basis (consult an attorney on meeting state and national requirements as a not-for-profit group, including tax status)
- organizational structure: officers, outlining duties and terms, election of officers and board members, committee structure, meetings schedule and normal agenda, designation of the annual meeting, handling of funds, relationship to the library and the library board
- disposition of funds
- membership requirements and dues

Boards should accept the limitations Friends set for their group. Some groups will put on one fundraiser a year; others are active in seeking donations year-round. The most

successful groups plan ahead and guarantee to do certain tasks during the year. Some groups mix volunteerism with fundraising activities as a way to support the library. Friends supplement the work of the board as well as provide a link to the community. Boards can contribute to harmonious relations by recognizing the Friends, asking for help in planning mutually beneficial activities and giving support to the concept of a community group willing to work to benefit the library.

FOUNDATIONS:

Any size library may create a Public Library Foundation, even though the common perception is that they are only for "big" libraries. A foundation is different from the traditional Friends of the Library efforts by involving non-library users, as well as, library patrons to increase awareness of library services and resources throughout the entire community. The non-profit status of a foundation provides a platform for raising money and support for current library services as well as securing a financial future for the library. There is virtually no difference in the legal structure of foundations and Friends groups. Both are established as 501(c) (3) non-profits. Check Chapter 355 of the Missouri Revised Statutes for non-profit status requirements. There are two main reasons for a Foundation:

- Advocacy: The foundation will become some of the library's strongest advocates, and can form new partnerships with schools, businesses, organizations, and agencies to offer new programs and services in addition to expanding local resources

- Financial support: Local funding for a public library may vary when local governmental officials commit much of the local tax base to "essential services" infrastructure, such as fire and police. The public library may then be relegated to using state and local funds for "basic operations" with little money allotted for special materials and services to carry out its goals and objectives

Much of the money raised by the library foundation will be local money which is tax deductible due to the public library foundation's 501(c)(3) tax status. The 501(c)(3) status also opens up grant opportunities for the public library foundation to help collect money outside of the local area to benefit the library services and the community it serves.

Friends or Foundation

A public library foundation is a non-profit organization with a 501(c)(3) status recognized by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Since most grant funding agencies are also classified as foundations, the administration of the founding agency knows that the non-profit organization requesting a grant is regulated by the same IRS guidelines as the granting agency follows. Therefore, it is easier to apply for and accept grant funding, bequests, and corporate donations.

Friends of the Library organizations may have been around a long time and have proven to be a major support to libraries, however, individuals looking to make large bequests, corporate donors, and grant funding agencies may not recognize the role of a Friends

group. Therefore, the opportunity to bring in funding from outside of the local community may be limited when requested through a Friends group.

Both public library foundations and Friends of the Library organizations should apply for 501(c)(3) status. This means that:

- the organization has been recognized by the IRS and meets the criteria of a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
- annual reports are filed with the IRS declaring money received is within the mission and objectives of the non-profit organization.
- the non-profit organization is maintaining its status as a 501(c)(3) by keeping donations and the outside financial assistance within the IRS guidelines.
- See also Chapter 355 of the Missouri Revised Statutes for state regulations regarding nonprofit corporations.

For more information on Friends of the Library and foundations see:

Working Together Roles and Responsibilities Chart:
http://www.ala.org/united/sites/ala.org.united/files/content/trustees/orgtools/role.pdf

United for Libraries Home Page:
http://www.ala.org/united/

Trustees Resources from United for Libraries:
http://www.ala.org/united/friends/orgtools

Friends and Foundations Fact Sheets:
http://www.ala.org/united/friends/factsheets

Resources on Foundations:
http://www.ala.org/united/foundations/orgtools

Intellectual Freedom and Censorship

What is Intellectual Freedom?

The American Library Association (ALA) Office of Intellectual Freedom frames intellectual freedom as "the rights of library users to read, seek information, and speak freely as guaranteed by the First Amendment. Intellectual freedom is a core value of the library profession, and a basic right in a democratic society. A publicly supported library provides free, equitable, and confidential access to information for all people of its community."

What Is Censorship?

The ALA's Office of Intellectual Freedom describes censorship as "the suppression of ideas and information that certain persons—individuals, groups or government officials—find objectionable or dangerous. . . . Censors pressure public institutions, like libraries, to suppress and remove from public access information they judge inappropriate or dangerous, so that no one else has the chance to read or view the material and make up their own minds about it. The censor wants to prejudge materials for everyone."

Challenges to Materials and Policies

Trustees must be committed to the principles of freedom of expression and inquiry that are fundamental to the role of public libraries in a democratic society. The community benefits collectively when democratic institutions uphold the right of access to information.

Public libraries are for everyone. There are those who want to limit what others may read, see, or listen to, but libraries provide the right of unrestricted access to the expressions and beliefs of others. In the event that someone wants materials restricted or eliminated from a public library, it must be addressed thoughtfully and carefully by those ultimately responsible for all library operations, i.e., the library board of trustees.

It is crucial that there are written policies in place that specifically address how challenges to library materials will be handled in a respectful and consistent manner by the board. Libraries should have procedures for citizens to follow when registering a complaint or challenge. Library staff need to be knowledgeable about the procedure for receiving the complaint if it should come to their attention first.

Trustees must recognize the right of citizens to question board actions and be willing to listen and explain the policies of the library. The board should offer an open, concerned image without accommodating censorship demands. Have a simple procedure for the board to use when dealing with material challenges. The library director should be the first person that meets with the patron and receives the complaint. If the matter is not satisfactorily addressed by the director, then the library board is next in line to receive the complaint.

Keep these key points in mind when responding to a challenge:

- Libraries are democratic institutions and are obligated to provide free choice of materials to all.
- Libraries provide materials and information resources across the spectrum of political and social points of view and on a wide range of subjects.
- Parents and guardians are responsible for supervising library use by minors.

The library's materials selection policy should include these concepts so the public is clear about how materials are selected for the collection:

- Library directors and their delegated staff, who are qualified by education and training, are responsible for the selection of library materials. Materials selected by them are considered to be selected by the board.
- No library material should be excluded based on political or social views.
- Patrons are free to reject for themselves materials that they disapprove of, but they must not use self-censorship to restrict the freedom of others.

Sources of Additional Information:

Banned and Challenged Books, American Library Association

Challenges to Library Materials, American Library Association

Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)

Freedom to Read Foundation

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Toolkit, American Library Association

Intellectual Freedom Manual, American Library Association

Intellectual Freedom and Censorship Q and A, American Library Association

Protecting Your Library's Collection, United for Libraries

Legal Issues

When dealing with legal issues, the board should consult with an attorney for interpretation of the law. The lawyer should be familiar with library law as well as other legal issues. It is recommended as a best practice that the board retain its own attorney, and that a line item be retained in the budget to pay for legal services.

Library trustees generally will not be subject to personal loss or liability for the performance of their official duties and exercise of powers granted by law. In many states, court cases generally provide that public officials are immune from individual liability for actions performed within the scope of their office. But personal liability is still possible for intentional or careless injuries or damages, illegal use of public funds or authority, ethics and conflict-of-interest law violations, public records law violations, and open meetings law violations. In the case of open meetings law violations, an individual board member who is found to be in violation of the law may be fined and must pay the fine personally, without reimbursement from the library or municipality.

Liability insurance for the board should be a part of the liability insurance paid for by the library. A library board should also establish a Code of Ethics to prohibit conflict between public duty and private interest. For a sample Conflict of Interest Statement in a library's bylaws, see Appendix I.

Library boards must also avoid taking actions that violate rights guaranteed by the federal constitution or federal law. Special care must be exercised in actions that concern discrimination laws, employment laws, and First Amendment rights. Before taking any actions that may jeopardize these rights, it is strongly recommended that the board seek the advice of an attorney.

Protections from Liability:

Boards can greatly lessen the possibility of liability by doing the following:

- Become knowledgeable about the various laws that apply to library board actions and library operations (such as Missouri's Sunshine Law and public records laws, state and local ethics laws and state and federal employment laws).
- Exercise care and diligence in board consideration of actions or policies. Review each action in light of these determinations:
    - Vote against any proposed board action that you believe is illegal or improper. Vote to table an issue if you believe insufficient information has been provided on which to base an informed opinion. Make sure the minutes reflect your vote.
    - Act and speak for the library only when authorized to do so by the full board.
    - Avoid even the appearance of conflict of interest.
    - Consult with library system or state staff or an attorney if you have concerns about the legality of any action or failure to take an action. If you suspect conflict of interest on the board, record a written protest to the board president.

Federal Laws:

Numerous federal laws affect public libraries. A small selection of important federal laws is included here:

- American with Disabilities Act (ADA) – Civil rights legislation that makes it illegal to discriminate against people with physical, mental, or emotional disabilities.
- Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) – Libraries that receive E-Rate discounts or LSTA grants for internet connectivity or computers must filter all computers for defined categories of images.
- Employment Laws – Libraries must abide by federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination in relation to hiring, promotion, and all other working conditions of employment.
- E-Rate - **E**-**Rate** is the commonly used name for the Schools and Libraries Program of the Universal Service Fund, which is administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) under the direction of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The program provides discounts to assist schools and libraries in the United States to obtain affordable Internet access.
- Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) - FLSA establishes minimum wage, overtime pay, recordkeeping, and youth employment standards affecting employees in the private sector and in Federal, State, and local governments
- Intellectual Freedom - The First and Fourth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution are integral to American librarianship. They are the basis of the concept librarians call intellectual freedom. Intellectual freedom accords to all library users the right to seek and receive information on all subjects from all points of view without restriction and without having the subject of one's interest examined or scrutinized by others.
- Library Services and Technology Act - A means of national funding for public library development and other related programs administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The Grants to States program, awarded by IMLS to state library administrative agencies, is the largest source of federal funding support for library services in the U.S.
- US Patriot Act - A set of federal anti-terrorism measures that lowers the standards of probable cause for obtaining intelligence warrants against suspected spies, terrorists, and other enemies of the United States.

State statutes:

The formation and operation of libraries are usually governed by state laws and regulations. Trustees should be aware of the state laws that pertain to their library, such as Chapter 182 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri. Types of laws can include the following:

- establishment and governance of types of public libraries
- funding types, limitations and methods
- records retention requirements
- audit and annual report requirements
- open meetings act requirements

- freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requirements
- procurement and purchasing requirements
- state labor laws and prevailing wage laws
- library records confidentiality requirements
- state ethics requirements
- network and resource-sharing requirements

Local statutes:

There can also be local laws and regulations that apply to libraries. Trustees should be aware of these local requirements. Types of local laws can include the following:

- municipal or city code requirements
- local taxing limitations or requirements
- home rule limitations
- county or township requirements

Library Budget and Finance

Trustees and the library's budget

Public library trustees are legally responsible for overseeing library finances. Accountability and awareness are keys to meeting fiscal responsibilities. Accountability is imperative because public funds are being expended. Awareness is crucial because the board cannot make wise budgeting decisions unless members are aware of how the library is funded, what it costs to run the library, what the library needs, and what those needs will cost.

To understand the budgeting process and approve an annual budget for the library, board members must know where the money comes from and how much revenue they can expect to build into the budget each year. A good understanding of revenue sources is important as board members must encourage continued funding from those sources and find new sources when needed.

Each board member should:

- know the library's financial base and background
- know the governmental unit(s) allocating the local appropriation
- know the grants available from the state and federal government
- understand the basics of legal regulations and reporting required for library funding
- understand the financial needs of library operation and plan for funds needed for growth and expansion
- investigate other possible sources of funding: a bond issue, endowments, trusts, memorials, dedicated tax revenue, foundation grants, donations, gifts and fines

<u>Tips for Successful Budget Planning</u>:

First, know who does what.

A necessary first step in successful budget planning is knowing who has authority and who does what in the budget planning process. Written policies and procedures should outline responsibilities and roles clearly. Developing the budget should not be up to the library director alone. Developing a budget is a team process. Trustees can play a vital role in creating the budget and getting it approved because they are the library's link to the community and its government.

Understand the budget's planning context.

The planning process is central to developing the budget since the budget must reflect the purpose and priorities of the library. Decide your priorities, make a plan that reflects those priorities, and then tie your budget to the plan. Be able to tell your funding agency what you are doing for your community, what you want to do, and what the expected results are. Requests, in other words, should be made within the context of a planning process. It's not enough to ask for X percentage in increased funding. Tie requests to clearly stated purposes and priorities.

Give yourself and others time.

It takes time to make a budget. Boards should develop planning calendars. Since budgeting, like planning, is a cooperative process, the director and staff must be given adequate time to make requests and recommendations. Local funding authorities must be given enough time to consider the budget too. Think long range, so funding resources for future growth can be identified or developed.

Question everything.

Don't simply manipulate a pre-existing pattern by adding and subtracting percentages or figures from programs and columns that were set up before. Again, the budget is the tool for accomplishing specific goals. When a goal has been accomplished, phase out the program or project that was designed to meet it and make a case that funding should be moved to the next priority or purpose.

Be realistic.

Tune in to what is happening in your community. Understand the community's ability to pay so you know what can and can't be expected. Understand the competing demands of other agencies on your funding agency so you know your fair share in relation to others. Use Missouri's Public Library Survey and other statistical reports to compare your situation with other similar libraries and to understand your town government's level of effort.

Don't restrict your budget to available funding.

Remember that funds may increase or become unexpectedly available. Be ready to make use of those funds. Be in a position to find and use other sources of income such as federal and state grants and contributions. Not all money has to come from local government sources. Grants, donations, and sponsors can often be used for one-time projects. Look for community support for alternative funding when appropriate. When you find and use other funds, be sure your funding agency knows and publicize it within the community.

The library is a business.

A shoe store doesn't sell computers. It sells shoes. That is its mission or purpose. If it doesn't sell shoes, those in charge will be held accountable. Understand what your library is supposed to accomplish. For example, if your mission says that the library's role is to supply popular reading materials to the community, be sure it is playing that role and that the budget makes it possible. Remember that those who are responsible for the budget must be accountable.

Keep it simple and tell the truth.

Make the library and its needs understandable and accessible. When talking to the public or officials, avoid acronyms and professional vocabulary that may be misunderstood. Do

not exaggerate or underestimate. If you say something will happen if the budget is cut, you should be sure that those effects will happen. Be mindful of the importance of credibility.

There is nothing secret about the budget.

People have a right to know how their money is spent. Make the budget understandable. Learn how to use simple and familiar comparisons to illustrate the value people are getting for their tax dollars. For example, instead of using large figures, use per capita figures for expenditures and then compare these to the average cost of a meal in a restaurant, the cost of one hardback book, or the price of a ticket to a movie.

Read, listen, and learn.

Learn from other agencies about how they develop and present their budgets. Pay attention to success and learn from the examples of others. Above all, listen to your funding agency and know what they are looking for and what impresses them.

When presenting the budget, tell your story and make your case.

Don't justify only budget increases, but justify the base as well. Tell them why the community needs the service and what is unique about what you do. Describe your contributions and tell how taxpayers benefit. Tell who uses the service and provide stories about people whose lives have been improved or made richer because of the services the library provides. Outline your goals and plans. Be sure they know you are accountable. The use of graphs and / or charts is always effective in illustrating your case and should be used whenever possible.

Sources of Library Funding:

Important note: When reviewing budgets, special consideration should be shown where it concerns governing or funding bodies. Communication should be a top priority with state, county, or city agencies governing budgets, to make sure all information about funding is current and thorough.

Public libraries are structured in a variety of ways. It is incumbent upon each trustee to familiarize themselves with the structure of the library they serve. County and city libraries might be departments of county or city government and, therefore, must compete with other departments of local government, i.e. police, fire, etc., for funds. Many libraries are library districts that, as separate political entities, have separate taxing authority from that of the counties in which they are located. Districts may be required to follow state budget calendar and deadlines, so district library trustees must be aware of these time lines.

Libraries may receive additional funds by providing services to other jurisdictions on contract. For instance, one county library contracts with two other counties for administration of library services and some public libraries contract to provide cooperative services to school districts.

State / Federal Grants

State grant programs are an additional source of funding for local libraries. Your State Librarian, who is the administrator of federal funding, regarding Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) money, is a valuable resource to determine goals, strategies, and priorities identified with the disbursement of funding. Each State Library is required to have a current 5-Year Plan outlining the distribution and usage of LSTA funds.

The Missouri State Library also administers grant programs involving state appropriations, such as State Aid Per Capita, Equalization, and Athletes and Entertainers Tax Funds.

Both state and federal grants have very specific requirements and regulations. Familiarizing yourself and your board with these requirements and regulations will formulate a better understanding of the use of funds, reporting, evaluation, and procedures. It's important to understand your duties here, whether an advisory board or governing board.

Private Grants

Private foundations, businesses and corporations may award grants to assist local libraries with programs, services or building projects. Many times the grants are from local or regional organizations or businesses that wish to give something back to their communities.

Gift Funds

A board of trustees has the authority to establish with the county or city treasurer a gift fund for the library. The fund must be separate and continuing and cannot revert to the general fund. Additional regulations on gift funds can be found in state specific statutes, such as Chapters 67 and 182 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri, and should be consulted in advance of taking funds.

Library Foundations and Friends of the Library

See chapter with specific information on Library Foundations and Friends groups.

Budget and Finance Maintenance

In order to make good decisions, library board members need a basic understanding of library finances. The board has a clear responsibility to ensure that public funds are used in the best interest of the community and that the library has adequate financing to continue its programs and services.

The Budget Calendar:

1. The budget process for the next fiscal/calendar year begins shortly after the beginning of the current fiscal/calendar year; in the course of doing the library annual report, the library director should gather information for the trustees to review in developing the budget. Some questions trustees might ask are:

   - Did more people use the library this year?
   - Were the prior year's line item costs accurate?
   - Is there a need for more programming?
   - Have there been requests for new services or technology?
   - Are there better ways to serve the community through the library?

2. The library director is responsible for the preparation of the budget request and the board of trustees is responsible for the final approval and adoption of the budget request before it is submitted. Items to consider when setting the budget request include:

   - reviewing the master plan for the library
   - projecting anticipated expenditures
   - determining library priorities
   - projecting anticipated revenues

   Part of the anticipated revenue includes the amount of funding the library will receive. Trustees are responsible for requesting funds for the library.

3. Budgets of city-budget libraries are prepared under the same guidelines as their city departments, under the direction of a city manager. Library trustees present the budget request to the appropriate body.

   By contrast, in the case of library districts in Missouri that are independent political subdivisions, the board of trustees sets the final budgets as authorized in Chapter 182 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri.

Revenues:

If your library receives additional funding from federal, state or private grants and gifts or donations, it is important to meet the reporting and auditing requirements of funding sources. These funds may not be co-mingled in the same budget categories as general fund revenues budgeted by cities, counties and districts. As mentioned elsewhere, gift funds must be deposited in a separate fund. While some private grants may be eligible for deposit in the gift fund, many will have reporting requirements similar to those for federal and state funds.

The board of trustees must set a policy on the collecting of fines and fees. State statutes must be observed in setting fees for copying public records; including board minutes,

agendas and exhibits presented at board meetings. The board should also set a fee for all other printing and copying. It is recommended that all of these policies be posted along with the notice on copying public records.

All revenues, including fines and fees, must be budgeted as a part of the regular budgeting process and amended in the same way. Cash for fines and fees collected in the library must be acknowledged by receipt and deposited as often as recommended by your auditor, but not less than weekly. Fines and fees must never be deposited in the gift fund. Some cities and counties may attempt to revert fines and fees to the general fund. This can be avoided by appropriately budgeting them as revenue and expenditures. (For protection of the library staff, cash collected for fines and fees must never be treated as petty cash. If petty cash is needed, a separate fund should be established and used as necessary. Receipts must back up all withdrawals.)

Auditing:

The board of trustees has the fiduciary responsibility for all funds in the public library budget. Cities and counties usually include public libraries in their annual audit. In the case of library districts, or other public libraries not covered by their local governments, the board should budget for an annual audit and review and implement all relevant recommendations annually.

Budget Management:

Financial Reports:

The library director should provide trustees with monthly financial reports that review:

- current list of bills
- year-to-date figures
- total budget
- balance of budget
- explanation of major changes

Library trustees should carefully review financial reports and be prepared to question them at board meetings, if necessary.

Budget Process:

The budget process serves three basic purposes:

1. Accountability, which is related to the stewardship role of the library; the trustees have a responsibility to safeguard public funds. However, the stewardship role also includes spending the funds needed to provide library services to the community.

2. Financial information, which relates to the management role of trustees and the need for accurate, timely, and reliable information as a basis for effective decisions and library policies.

3. Information from which the public can assess the financial conditions and operations of the library.

Amending the Budget:

When the library's budget is adopted, it gives the board the authority to spend all funds budgeted. If the library receives additional income from any source, it cannot be spent unless the budget is amended to include this additional income. No library can spend more than has been budgeted unless the budget is formally amended. This does not apply to library funds maintained in gift funds, by foundations, or by Friends of the Library.

Bibliography:

Rhode Island Public Library Trustees' Handbook

Cultivating Pennsylvania's Growing Libraries: Training Resource Kit for Pennsylvania Public Library Trustees

South Dakota State Library Trustee Wiki

Library Associations

The American Library Association (ALA) supports libraries of all types, librarians and library staff. The association advocates for librarians and staff and for libraries at the national level, serving as the voice for libraries. ALA is made up of many divisions and interest groups. ALA has an annual conference as well as divisional conferences. United for Libraries is the division that supports library trustees, as well as advocates, Friends groups and Library Foundations. Some libraries pay for ALA dues for their professional staff if the budget allows for that level of support. Trustees should support their library director and staff's participation in ALA activities including attending conferences and serving on committees or in leadership roles. Trustees can also join ALA.

Regional Associations - Similar to ALA but on a regional level, a group of states comes together to provide professional development for librarians and library staff. Trustees should support their library director and staff's participation in regional association activities including attending conferences and serving on committees or in leadership roles. Trustees can also join the regional association.

State Associations - Similar to ALA but on a smaller scale, each state has a library association that serves as the local voice for libraries and advocates for libraries and librarians. Trustees should support their library director and staff's participation in the Missouri Library Association's activities including attending conferences and serving on committees or in leadership roles. Trustees can also join MLA.

Specialized Associations - there are a number of associations that serve a particular type or size of library such as the Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL) or Urban Libraries Council (ULC). These associations serve a similar function to ALA but advocate for a particular library or set of library issues.

For libraries that are combined public / school or other types of libraries, there may be additional state or national divisions or associations appropriate for your library.

Library Organizations and Associations

Library trustees are the citizens responsible for providing the best possible library service to the community. Both rural and urban trustees are responsible for governance, policy, community and public relations, budgeting, and leadership. The following compilation of researched organizations and associations will continue to enhance and improve the local library board. It is very important that the board stay current and continue to gain knowledge of what is going on at their library.

The organizations below will help with this continued success at the library.

American Library Association (ALA) http://www.ala.org/

The ALA represents librarians, trustees and interested citizens in the United States and Canada. Below in this list are specific organizations affiliated with ALA annual National Forum.

Public Library Association (PLA) http://www.ala.org/pla/

PLA is a member-driven organization that exists to provide a diverse program of communication, publication, advocacy, continuing education, and programming for its members and others interested in the advancement of public library service.

United for Libraries: http://www.ala.org/united/

United for Libraries supports citizens who govern, promote, advocate, and fundraise for all types of libraries. Included in your membership are products, services, training for trustees and other library professionals.

Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL) http://arsl.info/

ARSL is a network of persons throughout the country dedicated to growth and development of libraries. ARSL believes in the value of rural and small libraries and strives to create resources and services that address national, state, and local priorities for libraries situated in rural communities.

Missouri Library Association (MLA) http://molib.org

MLA offer resources and information important to librarians ranging from professional development, advocacy information, laws or regulations impacting the profession. The links below will take you to your state's site.

Missouri Public Library Directors (MPLD) https://mopublibdir.blogspot.com

MPLD is an opportunity for public library directors to meet and share information and network with colleagues. This group traditionally holds meetings on a semi-annual basis. MPLD engages the services of an attorney to provide advice to its members and to attend the two MPLD meetings each year. Members are not charged for a consultation with the attorney if an issue can be quickly resolved. If a member has a matter that involves lengthy research or requires the representation of legal counsel, the library involved may contract for those services at their own expense.

Library Policies

One of the most difficult parts of a trustee's job is the preparation, approval and review of policies. However, well-written, reasonable and current policies are central to a library's legal protection and essential operations. It is the board's responsibility to adopt and periodically review written policies governing library services. If a library is part of a municipality, the town or city council or select board may also review and approve policies.

With policies to guide operations and provide a basis on which the director and the staff can make decisions, a library can appropriately respond to challenges, emergencies and scrutiny. Sound policies are written in the best interest of the community at-large and maximize the delivery of library services and access for the greatest number of users.

The director is responsible for making sure that all library staff know about and understand the policies that affect their work. Regular reviews of library policies should be incorporated into training for all staff. Front-line staff need to be able to clearly explain policies to library patrons. Policies should be accessible to staff online, on an intranet or in a manual. Library service policies should be online so that patrons can readily access them.

Policies should be legally defensible. A legally defensible policy:

- complies with current local, state and federal laws
- is reasonable
- is clearly written and understandable
- is publically available for review and reference
- is applied without discrimination
- is consistent with the library's charter, mission and goals.

The most frequent public challenges to policies are aimed at collections policies and internet use policies but making sure that every policy is legally defensible will protect the library, and municipality, against liability.

Every policy should:

- include the date of original adoption and then dates of any subsequent revisions
- be recorded and compiled with other policies into a readily accessible manual

Developing, Revising and Reviewing Policies

The legal authority to make policies lies with the board, however the process works best when the library director and key staff are involved. The director can provide a foundation for the issue so the board can have a knowledgeable discussion. Staff can be given the responsibility to provide options, draft recommendations, and present them to the board for discussion and approval. Referring to the policies of other libraries in Missouri for examples can be useful for creating your library's particular policy. Library development staff at the Missouri State Library can assist with the policy development and revisions.

Developing and revising policies requires substantial time and thought, along with collective discussion and reflection during which it is important to consider all the ramifications of any given policy. Before beginning the process have ready, or prepare, the following:

- a description of the issue to be addressed
- a statement describing how a policy would contribute to the accomplishment of the library's goals and objectives
- a list of existing policies related to, or affected by, the policy under consideration
- a list of the policy options available, with appropriate analysis (including effects of enforcing the policy, legal ramifications, and costs to resources, facilities, and staff)

During the process, the board should ask if the policy is:

- in compliance with all laws and regulations
- consistent with the library's charter, mission, goals, and plans
- complete, clearly written, and easily understandable
- in the best interest of the community at large, devoid of politics, prejudice, or favoritism
- easily enforceable without undue burden on the library staff
- designed to maximize library services and access for the greatest number of users

The approval of new policies or changes in policies should be on the board's meeting agenda and discussions of the same should be conducted in open meetings.

Schedule regular reviews of all library policies and make the reviews a part of the board's ongoing responsibilities. Every policy should be reviewed within three years of its creation or previous review. Incorporating reviews into the board's calendar is the best way to keep the review cycle on track.

Challenges to Policies

Once policies are formally approved, board members need to put aside any differences that may have surfaced during discussions and unanimously support the policy and its implementation. The time for airing disagreements is during the development or revision process. However, policy challenges can come from the public or municipal officials at any time and the board should be prepared with a policy and corresponding procedure for handling challenges. Many challenges or complaints can and should be handled by staff. Having procedures for staff to follow when addressing a challenge will make the process flow smoothly.

If the complaint comes directly to a board member, refer the person with the complaint to the library director. Inform the person with the complaint that there is a process for handling complaints and that no single board member is responsible for deciding further action. Explain that the director will share the process, including any forms for registering the complaint. As a board member, you should also contact the director about it as soon

as possible after you receive the complaint so the director will not be blind-sided. If the director is unable to resolve the matter with the person registering the complaint, it then becomes a matter for the board. The matter should be addressed at an open meeting and the complaint should be on the public agenda.

The role of the board is to listen to the complaint and defer a decision to a subsequent meeting, after the board has had sufficient time to consider the issues raised. After the board comes to a decision, the matter is closed. However, the person or persons who made the complaint have the right to pursue it through the courts.

The Distinction between Policies and Procedures

A policy makes clear how your library will conduct itself in relation to providing a service or responding to requests. Policies are the managing principles that guide decisions.

A procedure makes clear the steps that library performs to provide a service and respond to requests. Procedures are similar to instructions and include: who will do what; which steps need to be taken and in what order, so that the procedure will be correctly completed; and which forms or documents to use in the procedure. Procedure manuals are recommended but are distinct from policy manuals.

Collections Policies

The purpose of collection policies is to guide the growth of the collection in a manner that is consistent with the library's mission and goals. A policy about disposal of damaged or outdated materials ("weeding") is as essential as one guiding the growth of the collection. Collection development policies should be consistent with the Core Intellectual Freedom Documents of ALA. The chapter in this manual on Intellectual Freedom and Confidentiality has additional resources to help manage challenges to library collection policies.

Personnel Policies

Personnel policies are critical to any successful operation and assure that all staff will be treated fairly. A municipal library uses or adopts personnel policies of the municipality. Every library staff member should receive a copy of the personnel policies at the time of employment. A written acknowledgement of receipt is important. Posting and updating of personnel and other internal policies and procedures on a staff intranet is a common best practice.

Recommended Library Policies

These are suggested policies; not all libraries will adopt all policies listed and some may be combined.

Library Operations

- ADA Compliance
- Circulation
- Collection Development (including gifts and donations, special collections, and patron requests)
- Complaints
- Computer, Wi-Fi, and Internet Use
- Copyright Compliance
- Customer Service
- Emergencies and Safety
- Exhibits and Displays
- Filtering
- Fines and Fees
- Gifts and Appraisal
- Holds on Library Materials
- Interlibrary Loan and Cooperation
- Lending
- Library Cards
- Lost or Damaged Library Materials
- Meeting Room Use
- Patron Conduct
- Public Relations
- Public Service Hours
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Personnel
- Records Retention (refer to state records schedules)
- Reference and Information Services
- Unattended Children

Personnel Policies

- Absenteeism and Tardiness
- Bereavement Leave
- Breaks Including Meal Periods
- Conferences and Meetings
- Conflict of Interest
- Disabilities or ADA
- Dress Code
- Drug Free Workplace
- Educational Assistance / Tuition Reimbursement
- Emergency Closing

- Employee Privacy
- Employment of Relatives
- Equal Opportunity
- Employment
- Equipment Use
- Evaluations / Performance Appraisal
- Expense Reimbursement
- Family Medical Leave Act
- Grievance
- Health / Other Insurance
- Hiring/Recruitment
- Holidays
- Inclement Weather
- Internet / Email Use
- Job Descriptions
- Jury Leave
- Mileage Reimbursement
- Military Leave
- Non-Discrimination
- Personal / Other Paid Leave
- Overtime
- Payroll Deductions
- Performance Improvement
- Professional Memberships
- Retirement
- Salary Payment
- Salary Increases
- Sexual Harassment
- Sick or Personal Leave
- Termination of Employment
- Unpaid Leave
- Vacation Leave
- Workplace Violence
- Workweek

<u>Board of Trustees Policies</u>

- Accounting
- Audit
- Bylaws
- Code of Ethics
- Conflict of Interest
- Expenses and Oversight
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Library Funds, Expenses, and Oversight
- Investment
- Open Records

- Open Meetings
- Procurement and Purchasing
- Public Relations
- Whistle Blower

Sources of Additional Information:

American Library Association Policy Manual

Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State

Library Trustees of New York Policy Database

Sample Library Policies for Kentucky Public Libraries

Sample Library Policies for the Small Public Library

Sample Library Policies, United for Libraries

Wisconsin Public Library Policy Resources

Library Trustees and Personnel Practices

Understand how the board's role and the library director's role differ

The board of trustees and the library director are both involved in library governance and policy development, financial management, and personnel administration. However, the type and level of involvement must be clearly differentiated in order to avoid conflict and for the library to operate professionally and effectively.

Typically the board establishes overall personnel policies such as guidelines for salary and benefits, hiring practices, and other personnel actions unless the library is part of a town/city and must follow municipal policy. If the library is part of a municipal system that maintains authority to hire the director, the board hires the library director and sets salary and benefits.
Your public library director is the department head of a city service and is responsible for the day-to-day management of the library. The director acts as the professional/technical adviser to the library board on policy, finances, planning, library performance and more.

Some of the ways the roles of the library director and the board differ are:

- The library director may suggest or draft policies. It is the board that actually adopts the policies. Once a policy is adopted, the director and staff carry it out as they operate the library.
- The board hires and evaluates the library director while the director hires and evaluates other staff.
- The library director may draft a budget request; the board officially adopts the budget.

Use the chart below to openly discuss the board's role and the director's role. Most conflicts can be avoided if the board and director understand and respect each other's roles.

Duties and Responsibilities of the Board and Library Director

Library Board	Library Director
Staff: Employ a competent and qualified librarian. Includes recruiting, hiring and annually evaluating the director based upon a well-defined job description and expectations. Adopt personnel policy and set adequate salary and benefits for all staff.	**Staff:** Recruit, hire and annually evaluate library staff based upon well-defined job descriptions and expectations. Suggest improvements needed in salaries, working conditions and personnel policy.
Policy: Determine and adopt written policies to govern the operation of the library.	**Policy:** Carry out the policies of the library as adopted by the board. Recommend policies to library board.

Planning: Determine the direction of the library by studying community needs. See that a plan is developed for meeting needs and that the plan is carried out.	**Planning/Management:** Suggest and carry out plans for library services. Manage day-to-day operation of library. Design library services to meet community needs/interests. Report library's progress and future needs to the board.
Budget: Examine budget proposed by the director; make revisions as needed; officially adopt the budget; present library budget to mayor/city council. Review expenditures in accord with budget, amending line items within the budget if needed.	**Budget:** Prepare and submit to library board a budget request based on present and anticipated needs. Maintain complete and accurate records of finances. Expend funds based on approved budget.
Advocacy: Advocate for library through contacts with general public, civic organizations and public officials. Attend city council meetings to keep council informed on library activities. Work to secure adequate funds to carry out the library's services.	**Advocacy:** Advocate for library through contacts with general public, civic organizations and public officials. Attend city council and/or county supervisor meetings. Work to secure adequate funds to carry out the library's services.
Legal Issues: Be familiar with library ordinance as well as state and federal laws affecting the library.	**Legal Issues:** Be familiar with library ordinance and keep board informed on laws affecting library.
Continuing Education: Participate in continuing education activities and encourages library director to do the same. Provide and/or see that new trustees receive an orientation to the library.	**Continuing Education:** Participate in continuing education activities and professional organizations; encourage continuing education for library staff. Participate in orientation of new trustees.
Communicate with the library director	**Communicate with the library board**
Collection Development: Adopt collection development policy.	**Collection Development:** Select and order all books and other library materials and resources.
Board Meetings: Regularly attend board meetings; conduct affairs of board at regularly scheduled meetings.	**Board Meetings:** Attend board meetings; prepare written progress report; provide information as needed/requested by board.
Board Member Recruitment: Recommend qualifications and candidates for board to mayor/city council or county commissioners. Notify city council/mayor or county commission of board vacancies.	**Board Member Recruitment:** Assist in developing qualifications for new trustees.

Working with the Library Director

Human relationships determine the inner climate of the library. Every effort should be made to maintain cordially cooperative and mutually productive relationships. Chief among these relationships, because of its effect on the overall library administration, is that between the library board and the library director. The working relationships that prevail within the library determine the attitudes of librarians and staff, which in turn determine the quality of service offered to the public.

The board delegates all library management responsibility to the director. The board's job is monitoring the director's effectiveness in providing library service to the community. This system is effective because it has a board of trustees who represent the interests of the community and a qualified director who has the skills to make the library run efficiently within the parameters set by the board. How much does the board do and what are the responsibilities of the library director? There are several ways to clarify responsibilities:

- Look at the relationship with the director as a partnership between the board and the director in providing the best library service to the community.
- The board members' duties can be defined loosely as dealing with issues that affect the whole library and its position in the community. The board sets parameters of how the library will operate. Then the director's duty is to carry out the day-to-day functions (procedures) of running the library within the parameters (policies) set by the board.
- Open communication prevents confusion and conflict. Board members and the director must feel free to discuss their respective roles.

The director is a valuable resource to the board on all issues and often the leader on many issues that come before the board. The director should attend all board meetings and be encouraged and expected to make well-supported recommendations on all issues that come before the board. The director should be expected to take part in deliberations to help the board make decisions in the best interests of the library service to the community.

Although the director is responsible for the management of the library, the board retains ultimate responsibility. It is the right and responsibility of the board to request from the director all information necessary to fulfill the board's governing responsibility. It is the director's obligation to report to the board accurately and completely about how the library is being managed including problems, plans, progress.

The director is responsible to the board as a whole, but not responsible to each board member individually. Individual board members, including the board president, have no power to make demands or give orders to the director. This does not rule out individual board members asking the director for clarification about issues facing the board or discussing with the director concerns that individual board members may have. The board

must speak with one voice when delegating to the director, when giving direction to the director, when requesting information. The director must serve the board as a whole in order to manage the library efficiently.

Evaluating the Library Director

Just as the library director regularly evaluates the staff, it is the responsibility of the board to regularly evaluate the library director. Trustees evaluate the director all of the time–by what they see in the library, what they hear from the public and what they perceive as the library's reputation in the community. That informal consideration does not take the place of a formal review of the director's performance. The best way to evaluate and monitor director effectiveness is by providing a good job description for the director and then doing a formal, annual evaluation to determine how well the director is meeting the job description and accomplishing library goals.

An annual evaluation:

- provides the director with a clear understanding of the board's expectations
- ensures the director is aware of how well the expectations are being met
- serves as a formal vehicle of communication between the board and director
- identifies the board's actual concerns so that appropriate action can be taken
- creates an opportunity to review and acknowledge the director's accomplishments
- documents annual accomplishments of the library
- demonstrates sound management practices and accountability to municipal officials and the community.

The format and procedure for director evaluation must be worked out by each board, but it is important for each board member to understand what is appropriate and inappropriate for the evaluation. The method used should be agreed upon by the board and director at the beginning of the evaluation period so it is clear to both the board and director what the basis for the evaluation will be.

Acknowledge and reward good performance; work with the director to correct inadequate areas of performance. If problems arise with the director's performance during the year, the board should discuss these problems with the director at that time, along with possible solutions. *At the time of the annual evaluation, there should be no surprises.*

Make the evaluation a positive effort to communicate better with the director. A written evaluation allows the board and the director a system to communicate about how to make the library better. Look as much for what the director does well as for areas that need improvement. Then, the cycle starts again by deciding the basis of the evaluation for the coming year's performance.

Evaluation Criteria

Your community, the library and the board's priorities will determine what factors to consider when evaluating the performance of the director. The following list gives you some points to consider.

Preparing and managing the budget

- Is the preparation work completed in a timely manner for the Board?
- Does the budget cover all necessary expenses?
- Are funds allocated or reserved for unanticipated contingencies?
- Are the funds allocated effectively?
- Are major corrections to the budget during the fiscal year avoided?

Managing the staff

- Are positive management/staff relations maintained?
- Are fair and equitable policies proposed for Board adoption and then fairly administered?
- Have grievances been filed? If so, what is their nature?

Keeping current

- Are innovations in service delivery and technology studied thoroughly and implemented if they fit the needs of the library and are proven to be cost effective?
- Does the director maintain current knowledge of best library practice?
- Is the staff encouraged and assisted in learning about best library practice?

Collection management

- How adequately does the library identify needs and interests in the community and translate these into the library's collection and services?
- Have priorities been established to enable the library to respond to a potential budget cut?

Implementation of board decisions

- Are board decisions implemented on a timely basis?
- Once board decisions have been made, does the director support and not undermine them?

Use of the library

- How effectively are the current and new services of the library communicated to the public?
- Are circulation trends, program attendance, reference questions, Internet use and other uses of the library analyzed with appropriate action taken?

Staff selection

- Is the selection process designed to ensure that the best person is hired?
- Is the selection process consistent with legal requirements?

Development of staff

- Does staff receive training adequate to perform their jobs?
- Is staff encouraged to develop career goals and/or goals for learning new skills?
- Does the director promote staff development and support it with funding?

Use of staff

- Have peak service hours been identified and staff assigned accordingly?
- Are staff functions analyzed periodically with the objective of combining or eliminating tasks or creating new assignments?
- Are staff workloads equitable?
- Are job descriptions current?
- Does the director conduct regular performance evaluations?

Planning

- Does the library have a current plan and does the plan reflect board priorities?
- Is the plan updated to reflect changing circumstances?
- Are the director's activities and accomplishments consistent with the plan?
- Is the plan flexible enough to allow for changing circumstances?
- Does the director provide enough information to the board about implementing the plan?

Miscellaneous rating factors

- Are "hard decisions" made and implemented or are they deferred or ignored?
- Does the director display initiative?
- Does the director make decisions objectively or do personal biases intrude?
- Is the director open with the board about both accomplishments and problems?

- Does the director set an example for other staff through professional conduct, high principles, good work habits, etc.?

As stated earlier, the format and procedure for director evaluation must be worked out by each board and should be agreed upon by the board and director at the beginning of the evaluation period.

Dismissing the Library Director

Probably the most painful situation a public library board can face is the dismissal of the library director. Boards that hire carefully, communicate well, nurture positive working relationships, and evaluate effectively should not have to experience this unpleasant task. When all potential solutions have been tried and the problems still cannot be resolved, dismissal is a last resort.

Directors are usually dismissed only after serious infractions of board policy, violation of the law, or very poor performance coupled with unwillingness or inability to improve. <u>It is important that reasons for dismissal are carefully documented</u>. The board has a responsibility to ensure that personalities and biases are not factors in any dismissal decision. The dismissal and/or appeals procedure should be described explicitly in board policy and allow the director a full hearing to discuss specific charges. A board should not begin a dismissal process unless it understands the implications, has consulted with the appropriate local government officials, believe its position is defensible, and has obtained appropriate legal advice from an attorney. Working with the community's HR staff is very helpful in this process to ensure all procedures are followed correctly.
The following factors should be considered prior to making a final decision to dismiss a library director:

- Was there notice given to the employee?
- Was the reason for termination reasonably related to library employment?
- Was there an investigation and documentation?
- Was the investigation fair and objective?
- Was there proof of a violation?
- Is there equal treatment of other library employees in similar situations?
- Is termination of the library director an appropriate disciplinary action? Even if the library director has done something wrong, has been given notice, and has not ceased the activity, is termination too harsh a penalty? Or would some other consequence be more reasonable?

The Board's Relationship with Library Staff

<u>The only employee who reports directly to the board is the library director.</u>

Understanding the nature of the relationship between the board and other staff members will prevent organizational problems and contribute to a smooth running library. While the board should strive to create a climate of cordiality and friendly interest with staff, members should not personally intervene in matters between the staff and supervisors. Decisions by the board affect working conditions, salaries and benefits and other personnel matters.

The director is responsible for hiring, supervising, evaluating, and, if necessary, disciplining and dismissing staff. The director is accountable to the board for the performance of all staff. Employees need to clearly understand the authority of the library director, who is accountable to whom and who has responsibility for what.

The board hires the director to be the expert in management of the library, including the management of all other personnel.

- The board has no direct responsibility for day-to-day supervision of staff other than overseeing the director.
- Board members have no authority to issue orders to staff or make demands of staff except through the director.
- The board has no direct responsibility for assessing staff performance other than the director's.

Staff members may sometimes go around the director and take concerns and complaints directly to the board or to individual board members. It is the board member's responsibility to remind the staff member about the proper procedure for concerns or complaints. The board does not act on complaints from the staff, except through a grievance procedure outlined in board policy. Concerns or complaints that come directly to board members should be reported to the director for resolution.

As a board member, you should show concern for the well-being of staff. Encourage retention of good staff by budgeting for competitive pay and benefits and for training and continuing education. Work with the director to recognize and acknowledge good staff performance and say thanks to staff through specific board action.

Examples of when board members may interact with staff include:

- in committee settings
- in the planning process
- when staff are asked by the director to make reports at the board meeting
- if board members volunteer at the library
- during library social events

Hiring a Library Director

One of the most important functions of a board of trustees is the hiring of a competent library director. It may, in fact, be the most important single act undertaken by the board. Not only does it directly affect the future of the library, it also forces the board to step back and take a look at itself and the library. This informal evaluation process can result in new perspectives regarding the library's role in the community. Trustees should be aware of current practices in the profession, guidance from the Missouri Public Library Standards, the current needs and direction of the library, and competitive professional salaries and benefits.

What Do Public Library Directors Do?

Before hiring a library director, the entire board should have a good grasp of what a public library director does. The library director is the department head of a city service whose responsibilities include:

- Acts as professional/technical advisor to the library board of trustees on policy, finances, planning, library performance, laws effecting libraries
- Hires and supervises personnel
- Implements board policy, interprets library policy for the public
- Administers the library budget
- Develops the library collection ("collection" is everything the library has on hand for its customers: books, DVDs, CDs, magazines, newspapers, subscriptions to electronic resources, puppets and more)
- Manages library services and programs
- Directs and provides outreach services to the community
- Manages and maintains the library facility/building, computer technology, the library's automation system and other library equipment
- Represents the library in the community and promotes the library and its services
- Teaches the community how to access, evaluate and use information resources

As you can see by the list of responsibilities, hiring a library director is one of the most important duties of the library board.

In small cities with few or no other library staff, the library director serves customers directly and may also:

- Provide pre-school story time to build early literacy skills in young children
- Help students find resources to complete school assignments
- Help readers find a good book
- Find answers to questions from customers
- And yes, check out books

To ensure that the most qualified candidate is hired, it is critical that the library board follow standard hiring procedures as outlined below.

Preliminary Assessment

The board must reach consensus on what they want a new director to accomplish and what qualifications are needed in a director for the library at this point in time. They should also consider what the library has to offer the director. Offer the best salary possible to secure the services of a qualified person. Consider any added incentives or challenges offered by the job opportunity.

In order to do this, the board needs to discuss the following questions:

- What is the role of the library in the community?
- Have community needs changed? Has the library kept pace?
- What direction does the library need to go?
- What qualifications are needed in the next director?
- What is the reason for the job opening?
- Was the previous director dissatisfied? Why?
- Was the board dissatisfied with the previous director? Why?

Develop a Timeline

A timeline should be established which would include:

- appointment of the search committee
- review of the job description and writing the job announcement
- date that the job announcement will appear on websites and/or in newspapers, journals
- deadline for applications
- time to review applications and decide on persons to interview
- when to interview
- time for the board to make a decision and offer the job to the candidate
- time for the candidate to respond
- anticipated starting date for the new director

Search Committee

The board as a whole can function as the search committee. An alternative is to form a committee of board members, staff and community members to review the applications and recommend candidates for the board to interview. If a search committee is appointed, be sure the duties of the committee and the deadlines are clear.

Job Description

The job description should indicate the minimum requirements for education and work experience. The job description should also include any desirable areas of expertise and work experience. All minimum requirements and desirable qualifications must be job related. The board should not hire a person with less than the minimum requirements.

Obtain a copy of the current job description from the current library director, the acting director or the city. (If no written job description exists, the board will need to write one before continuing with the hiring process.) Review it to ensure that it meets current requirements including:

- areas of responsibility
- specific duties
- minimum requirements for education and work experience
- desirable areas of expertise and work experience
- salary and benefits
- whether there is a period of probation
- expectations for successful job performance
- physical / environmental requirements of the job
- certification requirements

Salary

The first step in achieving pay commensurate with the work performed, referred to as "pay equity," is to understand the job duties and responsibilities. It will help to re-read the previous section, What Do Public Library Directors Do?

Too often the work of library directors and staff is not understood, is undervalued and is not compensated fairly. In other words, many library directors (and staff) receive lower pay than other employees who do comparable work. In some libraries, the director's position might be comparable to the city clerk; in another city, it might compare to another city department head. In any case, pay for the library director should be comparable to city/school district positions with similar education requirements and responsibilities.

A caution…library boards and directors often ask about salaries of directors of nearby libraries of like size. While that can be useful information it should not be the sole basis for decisions on salary for the library director. Because low pay is a common concern among libraries, comparing to other libraries' salary schedules is often comparing to equally low salaries that don't adequately compensate for the work performed.

Advertising the Position

The job description should be used to write the job announcement. The job announcement should be as comprehensive as possible. Provide a description of the position, required education and experience, and desirable areas of expertise and work experience. Include the salary range and benefits, a brief description of the library and community, where to send applications, and application deadline. Request a resume and professional references.

Many cities have policies regarding what types of advertising must be done, and they may also have a budget for it. If your city has a Human Resources department, check the department before placing ads.

The job opening should be publicized widely. Contact the Missouri Library Association, the Mid-America Library Alliance and other statewide library job banks. If the library board is considering hiring a director with a master's degree in Library Science, consider purchasing an online ad through the American Library Association. If you decide to place print ads in professional journals such as *American Libraries* and *Library Journal*, check publication deadlines and how they fit with your time line.

Reviewing Applicants

As applications arrive, each should be marked with the date of arrival to determine whether it falls within the deadline. Applications should also be acknowledged (such as via e-mail) by the search committee. Before applications are reviewed, criteria should be developed and used to rank them. It is helpful if a form is developed to screen and compare each applicant's qualifications to the requirements of the position. Some qualifications to consider are:

- education
- public library experience
- management or supervisory experience

Candidates who satisfy the requirements for the position become part of an official pool of applicants for further consideration. The search committee should be able to agree on three to five candidates to be called for interviews. A phone interview with preliminary candidates may be helpful to determine final interviewees.

Information for candidates who will be interviewed

Prior to the interviews, provide candidates with the library mission statement; planning document; budgets for the last several years; size and description of community; information about employers, shopping, schools, churches, recreation, higher education, and any other information that will inform candidates about the library and community.

Interview

Determine the team from the Board, usually three to five trustees, who will conduct the interviews. Designate one person to handle the planning and scheduling of the interviews. Identify what expenses will be paid or reimbursed for each candidate.
Develop a list of questions to be asked of every candidate interviewed. Topics to cover in the interview include management and fiscal philosophy, intellectual freedom, technology, trends, the library's role in the community. It is illegal to ask certain questions of candidates, such as marital status, age, family plans, etc. If your community has a Human Resource employee, it is helpful to include them in the process. Another resource is A Library Board's Practical Guide to Finding the Right Library Director, by the Outagamie Waupaca Library System in Wisconsin.
See http://will.state.wy.us/ldo/boards/GuideToFindingTheRightLibraryDirector.pdf
As part of the interview, arrange a tour of the library, a meeting with staff, and an opportunity for the candidate to learn about the community.

Evaluating candidates who were interviewed

Use an evaluation form to record candidate responses and board member impressions.

Once all of the finalists have been interviewed, the search committee should discuss and rank the finalists. Some qualifications to consider in ranking candidates are:

- attitude of service to the community and enthusiasm for librarianship
- philosophy of library service attuned with that of the library's mission statement
- ability to explain how his or her experience and talent can be used as library director
- understanding of the role of trustees
- successful record of working with board and community leaders, and supervising staff
- willingness to become involved in the community and ability to be comfortable in relations with the public
- knowledge of basic principles such as intellectual freedom
- a reasonable grasp of the library's situation, budget and plans based on information supplied to the candidate in advance
- commitment to continuing education for the director and staff

Check references before offering the position to a candidate. When calling references, agreed-upon questions should be asked with space on the form for search committee members to write down responses. A search committee may want to seek out references other than those listed. Be aware, some employers will only verify such things as dates of employment and last salary earned.

Hiring Decision

Finally, decide if one or more of the candidates should be offered the job or if the search is to be reopened. The top candidate should be offered the position by telephone. When a candidate accepts the position, follow up with a letter of agreement indicating date employment begins, salary, benefits, etc. The board may want to consider a formal contract. Notify other candidates that they have not been selected immediately after the job offer has been accepted.

After the New Director Arrives

Orient the new director and assist him/her with relocation. Provide help with school and housing information and additional information on the library and community.

Welcome the new director. News releases and photographic coverage should be arranged. Personal introductions to staff members, trustees, community representatives, and local government officials should be scheduled promptly. An open house or reception hosted by the board, and assisted by other groups such as the Friends of the Library, is a standard courtesy.

Resources:

State Library of Iowa Trustee's Handbook, 2014.
http://www.statelibraryofiowa.org/ld/t-z/Trustees/trusthandbook14

Cultivating Pennsylvania's Growing Libraries, 2005,
http://www-wsl.state.wy.us/ldo/boards/Board_HandbookPA.pdf

Maine Trustee Manual,
http://digitalmaine.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1010&context=ld_docs

A Library Board's Practical Guide to Finding the Right Library Director, by the Outagamie Waupaca Library System in Wisconsin.
http://will.state.wy.us/ldo/boards/GuideToFindingTheRightLibraryDirector.pdf

Rhode Island Public Library Trustee Handbook.
http://www.olis.ri.gov/pubs/trustees/trustee3rev.pdf

Privacy and Confidentiality

A citizen's right to privacy and confidentiality are First Amendment rights and as such go hand in hand with intellectual freedom.

The American Library Association frames privacy and confidentiality as follows: "The right to privacy is the right to open inquiry without having the subject of one's interest examined or scrutinized by others. Confidentiality relates to the possession of personally identifiable information, including such library-created records as closed-stack call slips, computer sign-up sheets, registration for equipment or facilities, circulation records, websites visited, reserve notices, or research notes."

The confidentiality of library records is a fundamental value of librarianship. Library directors, staff and trustees are ethically bound to uphold patron privacy. The Library Bill of Rights addresses privacy as does Code of Ethics of the American Library Association. In addition, every state has laws regarding the privacy of library records. Trustees should familiarize themselves with Missouri's law.

Sources of Additional Information:

Guidelines for Developing a Library Privacy Policy, American Library Association

Privacy Toolkit, American Library Association

State Privacy Laws Regarding Library Records (refer to your state's resources for legislation to be sure you have the most recent version)

Library Privacy Guidelines for Public Access Computers and Networks
Library Privacy Guidelines for Library Websites, OPACs, and Discovery Services
Library Privacy Guidelines for Library Management Systems
Library Privacy Guidelines for Data Exchange Between Networked Devices and Services

The Role of the Library Board of Trustees

Public libraries are vital community centers dedicated to lifelong learning. The success and achievements of public libraries depend upon the leadership, commitment and dedication of its trustees. Library trustees have legal and fiduciary obligations to ensure that all public libraries provide the highest quality of library service. These core competencies enumerate skills, qualities and abilities essential for trustees to undertake their duties. Being a library trustee means that you have been entrusted with the welfare of an important community institution capable of serving everyone in your community. As guardians of the public trust, a trustee's first loyalty is to the library and the community it serves, and not to the municipality or county government.

A library trustee maintains core knowledge about his or her position, including the:

- organization of the board
- mission and bylaws of the library
- library services and available resources
- information needs and interests of the community
- how to work effectively in a group
- services and resources available from their State Library and state and national library trustee associations
- national library trends, standards and developments
- library terminology
- library law
- legislation affecting libraries and pending legislative developments

The Library Board's Role

It is the role of the board to:

- support growth of library services to the community, remembering that the goal is not to save the community money but to spend funding wisely for efficient and effective library service
- advocate for excellence and adequate funding
- obey all library laws, state and federal laws
- devise a strategic plan for library services and update it every 3-5 years
- conduct analyses of the community and its needs, and implement responses to those needs

- build board policies and procedures to work together effectively on behalf of the community for needed library services
- hire a competent, professional library director and conduct a formal evaluation of that director every year
- provide a model of exemplary performance of a public body functioning as a part of government

The operation of a library board works because of the leadership abilities and commitments of each member. The most important work of the board is conducted at board meetings. Most importantly, individual trustees have no legal authority over the library. Any change in policy or other governing act must be brought before the entire board. The board only has authority when it makes a group decision in a legally constituted meeting (See Open Public Meetings Act).

Generally, boards meet monthly at a time convenient for the members. Every board should have a set of policies and procedures for its own governance and operation just as it does for the operation of the library. These are called bylaws, and they give the board its framework for operation. Bylaws may not supersede state library law and should be reviewed and updated annually. Bylaws are defined as regulations made by a public association for the regulation of its own local or internal affairs and its dealings with others or for the governance of its members. Among the keys to success for a board are:

- a board composed of trustees giving as equally as possible of time and talent
- officers following procedures and accepting the leadership role
- a presiding officer who knows the appropriate use of parliamentary procedure to move meetings and to allow and encourage full participation of every trustee
- bylaws and procedures which cover typical situations and assign functions
- meetings held frequently enough to do the work without rush but planned to move along
- agendas that quickly cover the routine, then proceed to plans, reports and issues
- minutes that offer a fair and truthful written record of formal actions and decisions
- a director willing to work with the board to make meetings productive and a board that considers the director integral to its actions and achievements
- a board that welcomes public interest and the media and encourages public attendance at its meetings
- a board that sees itself as representing and reflecting the community

Board Committees

Many boards find their operations run much more smoothly by creating a structure of subcommittees, consisting of several members (but not enough to constitute a quorum, since, in that case, subcommittee meetings would be subject to the Open Public Meetings Act). Subcommittees can discuss and investigate matters, then bring them before the

entire board for discussion and approval. Board committees are advisory bodies that make recommendations to the entire board for consideration and action. Some common subcommittees are Finance, Personnel, Building and Grounds, Community Relations, and Policy. These committees are established in the bylaws for such specific purposes as the business of the board requires, and have no other power than advisory. It is a best practice for committee reports to be written and submitted to the secretary for filing. Generally, boards meet monthly at a time convenient for members. Special meetings or committee meetings may be called as necessary at times that are convenient to members and that comply with the open public meeting law.

Policies and Procedures for the Operation of a Board

A board should accept, adopt and follow orderly means of doing business and carrying out functions and responsibilities. It is often difficult to distinguish policies from procedures. Generally, policies are those statements, which establish firm and usually long-term positions to which the board adheres. Procedures are the details or steps that carry out the policies. If the board does not have a policy manual for its operation, begin by going through the board minutes for motions, which established policies in the past. There may also be a file of policies in the library or in the board files, which can be reviewed and expanded. In any case, determine what policies are needed for your particular library. Thereafter, the board should use the manual as reference, and review its provisions, revising as necessary. Boards have multiple members in order to tap the thinking of more than one person. Allow for many opinions but arrive at one conclusion in a concerted action. The checklist below includes most of the procedures a board should adopt for its own efficient operation.

- establish regular times, days, dates and places for the meetings and the methods for temporary or permanent changes
- the agenda: who prepares it and when, how much detail and distributed to whom
- the minutes: who records minutes, the format, approval procedures and filing as public documents
- the officers: titles and basic responsibilities, method of naming, terms of office - One way to do this is to create a committee within the board once a year, which will recommend candidates for each office needed that year to the entire board for their vote.
- the director: relationship to the board, role in board meetings, expectation for reporting
- legal responsibilities: a listing of those items which the board must handle, use of legal counsel
- records: records to be kept and access to them
- reports: required or expected reports from the director according to law and board wishes, reports from committees, reports by trustees on continuing education
- budget: an outline of the process with a timetable, role of the board in the sequence

- financial: figures the board expects to see - It's not necessary for every board member to review every bill. Rely on staff, the treasurer or a committee.
- who speaks for the board? It is important to assign the president the responsibility for representing the board, especially to the media.
- committee job descriptions: for standing and ad hoc committees to establish assignment

Recommending New Trustees

Some trustees serve for many years on a board, however it is important for a board to think about succession planning. New trustees can provide a fresh perspective and create an infusion of energy and interest, along with an updated technical skillset to the board and library. When bylaws or community procedures expect limited rather than limitless service, trustees should be prepared to help find their successors. Trustees should help to build the library board with replacements carefully trained and selected. Boards and librarians usually exercise influence on the selection process even though the decision is that of an appointing body. If trustees have carefully cultivated relations with appointing officials, they will be able to make suggestions when appointments are made. Boards would do well to talk about the next round of trustees – to think of good people to recommend for appointment – and how to recommend the best possible new board members. In each community, the specifications will vary depending on the role and status of the library.

Boards can help appointing officials make good trustee selections by describing the kind of person or skillset needed, and boards may even recommend specific persons with proven interest. It is helpful to talk to appointing officials about the qualifications of board members. What does a trustee do? How much time does it take to be an involved trustee? What are the skills and characteristics most vital in a candidate? Consider giving your appointing authorities a checklist of desirable skills and characteristics along with a cover letter outlining the importance of effective trustees. Your influence and that of the director depends on how trustees are seen by the officials. If your library is running well, serving well, well-regarded by the people with whom officials talk, then the trustees should have a voice in new appointments.

Sample Library Trustee Job Description

Even though serving as a trustee or county library commissioner is a volunteer position, it requires the same hard work and willingness to learn as does a paid job. A written job description may help potential trustees to understand the roles and responsibilities of the position. The following sample job description for a public library trustee shows what should be included. Summary: provides governance for the Public Library; establishes policy; sets goals and objectives; hires and evaluates the director; establishes and monitors the annual budget; signs necessary contracts; exercises such other powers, consistent with the law to foster the effective use and management of the library.

Responsibilities include:

- hires, sets salary, evaluates and supervises a qualified library director to implement board decisions and directions and to carry out day-to-day operation of the library and its programs and services
- participates in the ongoing responsibilities of the board, including establishment of library policies and planning for current and future library services and programs
- determines and adopts written policies to govern the operation and services of the library. Works with director to establish short and long range goals for the library
- attends all regular and special meetings of the board, and participates in committees and activities as necessary; attends appropriate library functions
- sets an annual budget and approves expenditure of funds; monitors budget and expenses throughout the year
- understands pertinent local, state, and federal laws; actively supports library legislation in the state and nation
- advocates for the interests and needs of the library
- represents the interests and needs of the community
- acts as liaison with the public, interpreting and informing local government, media and public of library services and needs
- lends expertise and experience to the organization. Maintains knowledge of library issues, laws, and trends, and their implications for library use
- reviews and signs necessary contracts
- reports activities to local officials
- is interested in the library and its services
- has the ability and time to participate effectively in board activities and decision making
- is able to represent varied needs and interests of the community and of the library
- has strong interpersonal and communication skills
- has the ability to work with governing bodies, agencies and other libraries
- has the ability to handle opposition and make decisions in the interest of library service

If you have stressed the importance of the library, and thus the role of trustees in a community's success, hopefully you will be asked to make recommendations. If you use your influence to stress the importance of a hard-working, knowledgeable trustee of whom the community can be proud – you'll cause officials to think about appointments. And when the appointment is made, you will have the chance to foster a capable trustee by the example of a working board doing its job on behalf of the community.

The Trustee's Job

It is the job of the trustee as an individual to:

- serve as part of a board on which every trustee participates
- give the time and attention the job requires
- study problems and issues, and contribute to discussions to resolve them
- retain an individual perspective in order to represent the many groups and individuals in the community

- contribute to making decisions and accept compromise when valid
- complete continuing education annually
- relay news about the library to the community and generate support and enthusiasm among the public
- reinforce the important role trustees play in governing the library
- work within the board structure to achieve goals the board has selected
- insist that the board and staff behave professionally

Trustee Expectations

A trustee is expected to:

- obey library law, state, and federal laws
- support the library and library director
- attend all regular and special meetings of the board. Plan to avoid conflicts with other activities
- give time outside of meetings for the work of the board
- participate in discussions, having read the agenda and material supplied in advance
- be a member of the board rather than operate individually, but contribute individual opinion and knowledge to decision making
- stand by decisions of the board, or seek to change them with reason
- know your library: its mission, goals and objectives, its services and programs, the director and staff members, and budget details
- promote and represent the library in the community. Be an advocate for library service. Work to make needed services possible
- know the community – its many groups and elements. Represent the entire community's interests
  accept assignments for committee work, lobbying, public relations activities

Personal Characteristics Important in a Trustee

- willingness to give time – and having the time to give
- ability to work with others
- understanding of the library's place in government; knowing or learning about budgets, sources of funding, concepts of current library service
- ability to make speeches, be persuasive, talk to people
- participation in community groups to represent community needs
- willingness to share skills (but not to serve in any professional services capacity that might create a conflict of interest, e.g., as the board's attorney)
- willingness to compromise, but not on ethical questions or legal points. Ability to organize facts and discuss problems calmly
- willingness to take on assignments
- having a record of community effectiveness and of achievement in other groups
- respect for the work of others and the recognition and rewards which good work should bring

Personal Characteristics NOT Important in a Trustee

While there are many skills and characteristics, which you might WANT in a trustee, some are not necessary. Specific skills such as legal or financial skills, for example. While these backgrounds may be useful in discussions, it is not a best practice for trustees to be the board's practicing attorney or accountant. Conflicts of interests are all too easy when trustees try to play two roles.

- Being a reader or a library user. Although being an avid reader and a frequent library user is very desirable, it is not required. What is important is that trustees understand the importance of a library to a community, and know how the community wants to use the library.
- Having money. Boards often look for someone who is wealthy. It is far more important to have roots in the community and try to represent that total community than to be able to buy it!
- Being a college graduate. Many library trustees have a good educational background, but some of the best are those who recognize the value of education obtained from many sources, especially the library. Hire a professional librarian as the director and let the trustees come from varied backgrounds.
- Having special interests. It may sound helpful to put a trustee on a board for a special purpose, but this may not be the case. A trustee who is the resident expert on children's services or vitally interested in resources for business or hooked on computers is valuable only if not deferred to in decisions. Broad interests and representative trustees provide a better base.

A successful trustee board starts with engaged and informed trustees. A strong board is then built one trustee at a time, keeping in mind all of the skill sets discussed above.

Strategic Planning: Planning for the Library's Future

The Importance of Planning: Why Plan?

Your library needs a strategic plan to guide actions toward your community's goals.

Information technology, publishing and the book industry, and society itself are in the middle of the greatest series of changes since the invention of the printing press. In 1990, few libraries had computers. Now they are everywhere. Library services need to reflect changes in our communities. They cannot exist in a vacuum. The library board or director who refuses to plan is like the shopper going to the store without a shopping list. The library may well be offering dozens of services that are not really needed by the community, while failing to offer the one or two services that might provide great benefit.

Planning for libraries is a process of envisioning the future of both the community and the library and setting a direction for library movement toward that chosen vision. Planning helps the staff and board understand the situation of their community, set priorities, and establish methods for achieving those priorities. The planning document provides a record of the decisions made during that process. The document also becomes a guide for decision-making and action by staff and the board.

Planning Essentials—Getting Started

Size doesn't matter. Every library needs a plan, no matter how small or how large the library and community may be. However, just as a shopping list will be different for the single person and the family of 10, the process followed to create a plan will depend on the size of library and community involved in the project. Large and even many medium-sized libraries, or those libraries accustomed to planning, may have the resources and experience to undertake a full-blown process.

There are several strategic planning programs specifically for libraries, including Planning for Results and Rapid Results Planning. The process is less important than the fact that the planning is carried out. First-time planners often want to follow a simplified process that is less time-intensive. Even a simplified process will help the board and staff gain vital information about the library and community, as well as the experience and confidence needed to expand the process during the next planning cycle.

Who Should Be Involved?

The minimum number needed to draft a strategic plan is one. However, just as the grocery shopper benefits from consulting household members before leaving for the store, the strategic plan for the library benefits from input from multiple individuals. The library director, with the help of staff, can be relied on to gather statistics about a community. Important statistics include:

- population size of community broken down by age, gender, racial heritage, etc.
- the expected changes to the community's demographics in the future
- economic factors regarding the community; such as household incomes and major employers
- educational profile of the community

At the same time, the director and staff can gather facts about the library, including:

- what services are currently being offered
- how usage patterns have changed in the past few years
- composition of the collection. How many books does the library own? How many audiobooks, DVDs, E-books, children's books, etc.?
- age of the collection. What is the average publication date for each section of the collection?

By discussing these and similar facts about the library and the community, the staff and board can come to some basic conclusions about the library on which to plan future services. A library with a small large-print collection in a community with a stable, aging population may want to buy more large-print books, for example. A science collection with relatively few titles less than one or two years old needs updating.

By talking to other stakeholders, library planners can add to the strength and reliability of their plan as well as obtain buy-in from the public. There is an endless list of individuals and groups that might be consulted as part of a basic planning process. Which ones you choose will depend on your particular situation. Suggested players include:

- the mayor, town manager or county commissioner (or equivalent)
- municipal employees such as an economic development director, senior center director, or recreation department director
- local teachers or PTA
- civic groups such as Rotary, Kiwanis or Lions
- other social/service organizations that represent growing minority populations
- representatives of the religious community
- current library users
- those not currently using the library

You get the picture. The more people you talk to about the community, the more information you will have to create your strategic plan.

How Do You Gather Information?

Probably the most common mistake library planners make when consulting the community in preparation for a strategic plan is to ask people about the library. The real purpose of consulting all of these community representatives is to find out about them—what they are doing and what is important in their lives and work. The library staff and board are the experts in the broad array of possible library services. It is up to these experts to be

creative in proposing new services or changes in services to meet emerging needs. The mayor and city council may be interested in developing tourism in a community, but they may never think of the library as a vehicle for collecting and disseminating local information of interest to tourists. If you ask someone what the library should be like, they will answer based on their preconceptions about what a library is. Instead, ask about community needs and then apply library resources to fashion the services to help the community fill those needs.

There are a variety of ways to ask this large array of players about community needs. One of the simplest but most effective is simply to invite them to the library or a neutral site and talk to them. Find someone who is experienced in facilitating conversations. Construct one or more groups built around particular interests, such as the needs of children in the community or the needs of immigrants. Assist the interviewer in eliciting the opinions of interested parties regarding what is important to them.

Library planners probably most often gather information by means of surveys. If you decide to use a survey, consider the following:

- What is the specific question you are trying to answer? What hypothesis are you testing?
- Don't ask questions simply for the sake of asking. If you ask whether the respondent went to college, for example, how will having the information affect your investigation? How will you use the information?
- Will your survey reach the target audience? Surveys done in the library are useless for learning the needs and opinions of non-users. Current library users do not necessarily represent a cross section of the community.
- How will your survey be distributed?
- How will your survey be tabulated?
- Do a pretest. Make sure that your respondents have the same understanding of the questions you do.

Again, consider enlisting the help of someone experienced in writing and conducting surveys before you get started. This doesn't have to cost anything. You may find a volunteer at a local chamber of commerce or a nearby university, or a local resident who has conducted surveys as part of their business may be willing to help. If you write your own survey, at the very least have someone critique it for you. A poorly executed survey can have less value than no survey at all. It may even lead you to opposite conclusions from those you might have reached otherwise.

A Plan Outline

OK, you've gathered all your information. What do you do with it? A simple plan might be organized like this:

- Introduction:

Discuss the planning process: Who are you? What are your library and community like? How did you find this out? Who did you consult? How did you consult them? What did you find?

- Mission Statement:

What vision of the community are you are trying to support? What is the library's role in supporting that vision? What is the reason the library exists?

Service Responses:

What are the specific services you will offer and why? Service responses are services typically offered by libraries such as basic literacy or lifelong learning.

- Goals:

Once you've identified 4-5 service responses to concentrate on, the next step is to identify the goal. This is the outcome your target group will receive as a result of your program or service. Remember the focus is on the community NOT the library. If the service response is "Basic Literacy," then a goal might be "Foster love of reading in children."

- Strategies/Objectives:

These outline the ways that the library will implement the goal, like summer reading programs, preschool story times, or lap-sit programs.

- Activities:

Activities are the specific actions taken to achieve the strategies / objectives, e.g. contact schools, get SRP manual, get craft supplies, find speakers, find sponsors for prizes, etc.

- Valuation:

How will you measure the impact these services are having on the target population? How do you know if you are doing it right? What are your alternatives if you are not?

The specific time frame your plan should cover will depend on how ambitious your plan is, or how many activities you hope to carry out. There is no magic formula that dictates that your plan should last five years, three years, or even one year. Do what makes sense for your library and your community. The most important thing you can do is to be adaptive. Follow your plan and revisit it along the way. Make sure it is taking you where you want to go, and revise it as necessary. At the end of the planning cycle, when all evaluations are in, start over. Create a new plan and perhaps go a little further in your information-gathering process.

- Special Types of Planning

In addition to general strategic planning for the entire library, you may also want to consider planning projects focusing on special issues such as emergency or disaster preparedness.

Most libraries will rarely experience a severe emergency or natural disaster, but it is best to be prepared, just in case. Fires, floods, extreme weather, and hazardous material accidents can endanger lives, and it is important for libraries to have plans and / or policies in place for dealing with these types of emergencies. It is also important for staff to be trained to handle emergencies properly, including medical emergencies.

Plans and / or policies can also be established to prepare for recovery of library materials after an accident or disaster. See below for resources to help with accident and disaster preparedness planning.

Sources of Additional Information:

- Strategic Planning Tips from the New Jersey Trustee Association
- *Disaster Preparedness and Recovery*. American Library Association
- *Western New York Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Manual for Libraries and Archives*, Western New York Library Resources Council, 2003.
- Conservation OnLine (CoOL), Disaster Preparedness and Response

Appendix I

Sample Board Bylaws for Governing Boards

Included is a sample library board bylaws that can be adapted to local library use. (Note: Material in brackets is for purposes of explanation and should be removed from the final bylaws approved by the board.)

Article I. Identification
This organization is the Board of Trustees of the _____ Library, located in _____.

Article II. Membership
Section 1. Appointments and Terms of Office. The board shall consist of . . . members who shall be elected/appointed by . . . and shall serve for a term of . . . years.
Section 2. Meeting Attendance. Members shall be expected to attend all meetings unless prevented by a valid reason.

Article III. Officers
Section 1. The officers shall be a president, a vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer, elected from among the appointed trustees at the annual meeting of the Board. No member shall hold more than one office at a time. No member shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office. Vacancies in office shall be filled by vote at the next regular meeting of the Board after the vacancy occurs.
Section 2. A nominating committee shall be appointed by the president three months prior to the annual meeting and shall present a slate of officers at the annual meeting. Additional nominations may be made from the floor at that time.
Section 3. Officers shall serve a term of one year from the annual meeting at which they are elected and until their successors are duly elected.
Section 4. The president shall preside at meetings of the Board, authorize calls for special meetings, appoint all committees, execute all documents authorized by the Board, serve as an ex-officio voting member of all committees except the nominating committee, co-sign all checks drawn on funds held in custody of the library (independently of the municipality), and generally perform all duties associated with the office of president.
Section 5. The vice president, in the event of the absence or disability of the president, or of a vacancy in that office, shall assume and perform the duties and functions of the president.
Section 6. The secretary shall keep true and accurate minutes of all meetings of the Board, shall issue notice of all regular and special meetings, and shall perform such other duties as are generally associated with the office of secretary. The

library director or a member of the staff may be designated by the Board to perform any or all of the above duties.
Section 7. The treasurer shall co-sign all checks drawn on funds held by the library, sign all bills/invoices for disbursements from the library fund, and perform such duties as generally devolve upon the office. The treasurer shall be bonded in an amount as may be required by a resolution of the Board, and not less than the value of any property held by him or her. The treasurer shall make monthly reports to the Board showing in detail the amount and investment of, and income and disbursements from, the funds in his or her charge.

Article IV. Meetings
Section 1. Regular Meetings. The regular meetings shall be held each month, the date and hour to be set by the Board at its annual meeting.
Section 2. Annual Meeting. The annual meeting, which shall be for the purpose of the election of officers, shall be held at the time of the regular meeting in _____ (month) of each year.
Section 3. Agendas and Notices. Meeting agendas and notices shall indicate the time, date, and place of the meeting and indicate all subject matters intended for consideration at the meeting.
Section 4. Minutes. Minutes of all meetings shall, at a minimum, indicate board members present, all items of business, all motions (except those that were withdrawn), and the result of all votes taken. Current board minutes shall be posted on a bulletin board in the library.
Section 5. Special Meetings. Special meetings may be called at the direction of the president, and shall be called at the written request of _____ members, for the transaction of business as stated in the call for the meeting. Except in cases of emergency, at least 48 hours notice shall be given. In no case may less than two hours notice be given.
Section 6. Quorum. A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting shall consist of _____ members of the Board attending the meeting.
Section 7. Open Meetings Law Compliance. All Board meetings and all committee meetings shall be held in compliance with Missouri's Sunshine Law (Chapter 610 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri) as it applies to your type of library. (Consult your attorney for clarification).
Section 8. Parliamentary Authority. The rules contained in *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest revised edition [or *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure* by Alice F. Sturgis], shall govern the parliamentary procedure of the meetings, in all cases in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any statutes applicable to this Board.

Article V. Committees
Section 1. Standing Committees. The following committees:_____, shall be appointed by the president promptly after the annual meeting and shall make recommendations to the Board as pertinent to Board meeting agenda items. [Examples of possible standing committees are Personnel, Budget, Building, and Policy.]

Section 2. Nominating Committee. (See Article III, Section 2.)
Section 3. Ad Hoc Committees. Ad hoc committees for the study of special problems shall be appointed by the president, with the approval of the Board, to serve until the final report of the work for which they were appointed has been filed. These committees may also include staff and public representatives, as well as outside experts. [Examples of possible ad hoc committees are Planning and Automation.]
Section 4. No committee shall have other than advisory powers.

Article VI. Duties of the Board of Trustees
Section 1. Legal responsibility for the operation of the_____ Public Library is vested in the Board of Trustees. Subject to state and federal law, the Board has the power and duty to determine rules and regulations governing library operations and services.
Section 2. The Board shall select, appoint and supervise a properly certified and competent library director, and determine the duties and compensation of all library employees.
Section 3. The Board shall approve the budget and make sure that adequate funds are provided to finance the approved budget.
Section 4. The Board shall have exclusive control of the expenditure of all moneys collected, donated or appropriated for the library fund and shall audit and approve all library expenditures.
Section 5. The Board shall supervise and maintain buildings and grounds, as well as regularly review various physical and building needs to see that they meet the requirements of the total library program.
Section 6. The Board shall study and support legislation that will bring about the greatest good to the greatest number of library users.
Section 7. The Board shall cooperate with other public officials and boards and maintain vital public relations.
Section 8. The Board shall approve and submit the required annual report to the State Library, and/or the [city council, village board, town board, county board, and/or any other governing body].

Article VII. Library Director
The library director shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees and shall be responsible to the Board. The library director shall be considered the executive officer of the library under the direction and review of the Board, and subject to the policies established by the Board. The director shall act as technical advisor to the Board. The director shall be invited to attend all Board meetings (but may be excused from closed sessions) and shall have no vote.

Article VIII. Conflict of Interest
Section 1. Board members may not in their private capacity negotiate, bid for, or enter into a contract with the _____Public Library in which they have a direct or indirect financial interest.

Section 2. A board member shall withdraw from Board discussion, deliberation, and vote on any matter in which the Board member, an immediate family member, or an organization with which the Board member is associated has a substantial financial interest.

Section 3. A board member may not receive anything of value that could reasonably be expected to influence his or her vote or other official action.

Appendix II

Sample board meeting agenda.

State open meetings laws usually require that the meeting notice include the time, date, place, and subjects to be discussed and/or acted upon at the meeting. Check the Chapter 610 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri for guidance.

Hometown Public Library Board Meeting
Date, Time, Place
AGENDA

• Call to Order-**Board President**
• Roll call and introduction of guests**- Board President**
• Consideration of Agenda
• Approval of minutes of previous meeting [Provide copy of minutes to board members in advance of the meeting.]
• Director's report and statistical report- **Library Director** [Provide copy of reports to board members in advance of the meeting.]
• Financial report - **Library Director and/or Board Treasurer or Financial Secretary** [Provide copy of report to board members in advance of the meeting.]
• Audit and approval of monthly expenditures [Provide list of bills to board members in advance of the meeting.]
• Committee reports or other reports [such as a report on legislative or other statewide issues] [Optional—include on agenda only if there is actually something to report]
• Subject matter of issue to be considered by board [for example, "Consideration of revised library collection development policy"]
• Additional issues to be considered by board [Be reasonably specific about all subject matters to be considered by board.]
• Public comment period [This is not required, but it can be helpful for the board to hear about particular public concerns or needs. To avoid open meetings law violations, the board should limit itself to answering basic questions from the public and place the matter on a future meeting agenda if additional discussion or deliberation on the issue is needed.]
• Board continuing education session to be held to review and discuss [for example] library advocacy
• Roll call vote to hold closed session for board consideration of the performance evaluation and compensation of the library director as authorized by _____
• Reconvene in open session
• Approval of the performance evaluation and compensation of the library director.
• Next meeting scheduled
• Adjournment

Appendix III

Sample Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

If you are requesting reconsideration of more than one item, then complete a separate sheet for each item.

Date:

Your Full Name:

Address (Street, City, Zip Code):

Author/Artist of Library Material:

Title of Library Material:

1. From which library did you obtain the material?
2. How did you learn of this item?
3. What are your objections to this item?
4. What harm do you feel might result from reading, listening to, or viewing this work?

5. Did you read, listen to or view the work in its entirety? If not, what parts did you read, listen to or view?

6. Have you read any professional reviews of the work? Circle one: Yes No
   If yes, please list the names of reviewers and the sources in which it/they were published.

7. What do you think are the main ideas of the work or what was the author's/artist's purpose in creating the work?

8. What suggestion do you have for a work with a similar purpose to replace this item?