



Policy Name:	Purpose and Duties of the Board
Policy Type:	Governance
Policy Number:	GOV-01
Original Adoption Date:	February 2021
Current Approval:	May 2024
Review:	May 2027
Motion:	2024:29

Purpose and Duties of the Board

1. Purpose

The Library Board expects its members to understand the extent of their authority both as members of a whole and individually, and to use it appropriately. Outside of a Board meeting, individual Board members have no authority to make decisions. Decisions are made by the majority of the Board and once that happens the Board speaks with one voice regardless of their individual opinion.

2. Policy

This policy sets out the obligations of the Board as a whole and individual Board members. This policy also sets out the work of the Library Board and the ways in which the Board achieves its purpose.

3. Procedure

Section 1 – Purpose of the Board

The purpose of the Library Board is to govern the affairs of the public library in service to the community and not the operations of the Library.

The Board oversees the development of a comprehensive and efficient public library service by:

- a. developing and expressing the Library Board’s values.



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- b. articulating the mission, service priorities and long-term strategy.
- c. setting policies on governance and service.
- d. planning for further library development.
- e. delegating authority to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for management of Library operations.
- f. providing direction to the CEO through Board motions, policies, and plans.
- g. providing feedback to the CEO through a performance appraisal process.
- h. securing the financial resources to achieve the intended results.
- i. exercising financial control.
- j. advocating for library service.
- k. evaluating results and assessing outcomes and impact.

Section 2 – Duties of the Entire Board

The Library Board governs effectively by:

- a. setting an annual Library Board agenda that reflects current goals and strategic issues.
- b. working proactively and making decisions that focus on the Library's future and place in the community while representing the interests of the community.
- c. providing opportunities for Board development and training.
- d. working effectively as a team.
- e. working collaboratively with the Library CEO and the Council.
- f. evaluating the Board's performance.
- g. engaging the community in determining responsive and dynamic library service.
- h. behaving with integrity.
- i. holding all meetings in public unless closed for a special purpose within the



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framework of Section 16.1 of the ***Public Libraries Act***.

Section 3 – Duties of Individual Board Members

Each Board member is expected to become a productive participant in exercising the duties of the Board as a whole.

- a. Individual members of the Library Board are responsible for exercising a **Duty of Diligence** as follows:
 - i. Be informed of legislation under which the Library exists, Board bylaws, mission, vision, and value;
 - ii. Be informed about the activities of the Library and the community and issues that affect the Library;
 - iii. Be prepared for all Board meetings, and
 - iv. Attend Board meetings regularly, contribute from personal and professional experience, and use meeting time productively.
- b. Individual members of the Board are responsible for exercising a **Duty of Loyalty**, as follows:
 - i. Adhere to the regulations of the ***Municipal Conflict of Interest Act***, *R.S.O. 1990, c. M50*.
 - ii. Act in the interest of the Library members and community over and above other interest group involvement, membership on other Boards, Council, or personal interest.
 - iii. Speak with “one voice” once a decision is reached and a resolution is passed by the Library Board.
 - iv. Represent the Library positively to the community.



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- c. Individual members of the Library Board are responsible for exercising a **Duty of Care**, as follows:
- i. Promote a high level of library service.
 - ii. Consider information gathered in preparation for decision making.
 - iii. Offer personal perspectives and opinions on issues that are subject to Library Board discussion and decisions.
 - iv. Show respect for the opinions of others.
 - v. Assume no authority to make decisions outside of Board meetings.
 - vi. Know and respect the distinction in the roles of the Board regarding governance and the employees, management, and operations.
 - vii. Refrain from individually directing the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the employees.
 - viii. Respect the confidential nature of library service to users while being aware of, and in compliance with, applicable laws governing freedom of information.
 - ix. Resist censorship of Library materials by groups or individuals in accordance with Orillia Public Library Collection Policies.
- d. Board members will review and follow the Orillia Public Library Board Code of Conduct (Appendix A).

Section 4 – Duties of Board Committees

The Library Board may use committees to further its work. These committees may be a standing committee or an ad hoc committee that is set for a specific time frame.



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- a. The Library Board shall establish written terms of reference and specific duties for each Board committee so that each committee member understands the work of said committee.
- b. Committees report directly to the Board and have no authority other than to research a topic, draft recommendations or prepare alternatives for the Board’s consideration and possible adoption. Board Committees may not speak or act for the Board.
- c. Under the ***Public Libraries Act, section 16.1***, all meetings including regular, special, committee or other meetings of the Board must be open to the public. By definition, a committee means any advisory or other committee, sub-committee, or similar entity of which at least 50 percent of the members are also members of the Board. This point applies to both standing and ad hoc committees.
- d. The Chair of the Board shall be a member of all Committees *ex officio*.
- e. The CEO (or designate) is a non-voting member and Secretary of all committees.
- f. A Committee that is established by the Board may include non-Board members.
- g. Meetings of committees may be called by the chair of the committee or by a majority of the members of a committee.
- h. Committees shall not supervise or direct employees. However, committees may request, through the CEO, staff assistance in research and information retrieval, or with other in-house tasks of the Board.

Related Documents:

- Appendix A: Orillia Public Library Board Code of Conduct
- Appendix B: Terms of Reference, Board Standing and Ad-Hoc Committees
- [***Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, R.S.O. 1990***](#)



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- Orillia Public Library: Board By-laws (BL-01)
- Orillia Public Library: Collection Development (OP-04)
- [*Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990*](#)