

The Role of the Board and the Library Director

As a public library director, you are 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.

A library director's duties include:

- Oversight of the library budget and preparing reports as required by the board
- Managing library collections, including selecting all library material according to policies approved by the board, oversight of cataloging and automated library systems
- Hiring, training, supervising, and scheduling library staff
- Supervising circulation of library material
- Cooperating with the board, community officials, and groups in planning library services and publicizing library programs
- Supervising the maintenance of all library facilities and equipment.

The library board has five primary roles:

- Advocate for the library in the community and advocate for the community. To be a library advocate is to work to make sure the community has the best possible library service including working to obtain adequate funding for the library.
- Plan for the future of the library. Planning is deciding what is going to happen with library services over the next few years. It is taking charge of the library's future and creating it to be responsive to what the community needs.
- Monitor and evaluate the overall effectiveness of the library. The community puts its trust in the library board to make sure the library is operating the way it should. The board monitors monthly financial reports. The board also helps determine whether the community is satisfied with library service.
- Adopt library policies. Policy is a carefully designed, broadly stated, written guideline for actions and decision of the library. The library board spends much of its time on policy issues - developing policies and monitoring the effectiveness of those policies. Once adopted by the board, library staff carries out the policies on a day-to-day basis.
- Hire and evaluate the library director. The board hires a qualified director to manage the day-to-day operations of the library. The board also regularly evaluates the director to make sure the library operates well and in the best interest of those the library serves.

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.

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. 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. 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. 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 keeps 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.

Library Board	Library Director
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 Commissioner. Notify Commissioner of board vacancies.	Board Member Recruitment: Assist in developing qualifications for new trustees.

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