

SECTION B

WHAT TRUSTEES “NEED TO KNOW”

A.K.A.

“Getting the Job Done”

Chapter 1 –Effective Board meetings

Effective Board Meetings

Despite it's sometimes questionable reputation, "The Meeting" remains the primary means through which people get things accomplished, and libraries are no exception.

1. Board Meetings

The Public Libraries Act requires that library Boards meet at least 6 times each year, with one to two months elapsing between regular meetings. The individual Library Constitution determines the manner in which a meeting may be called. As only the entire Board that has the authority to act, as opposed to individual members, the Board meeting is the major opportunity for the Board to do its work, such as:

- making decisions
- solving problems
- educating Board members
- planning for the future
- reviewing evaluation material submitted by staff.

2. Agendas

It is important to plan meetings in advance, providing information to members so that they can be prepared and run the meeting in a manner that the work is accomplished efficiently and effectively. In this regard, the agenda is the ideal tool for meeting planning. More than simply a list of business items to be considered, the agenda is an invaluable tool for focussing discussion and using time productively.

Who creates the agenda?

The agenda is essentially the plan for the Board's work. While the Board and staff work together on an effective long-term meeting plan for the Board's term, the Chair and Library Administrator will typically produce the agenda for specific Board meetings. As the Library Administrator is always Ex-Officio to the Board. Their ongoing experience can be a valuable resource for the Board.

How to focus Board meeting agendas on Board work and avoid administrative activities

- Keep in mind the unique function of the Board

The Library Administrator is responsible for the day to day operation of the library. The Board focuses on broader strategies essential to the overall success of the library.

- Correspondence is a MAJOR item.
- All incoming mail addressed to the Board shall be come to the table.

- Agendas should move the Board business forward, as their work is largely strategic and directed towards the future.

For this reason, an annual agenda to move Board work from month to month can be very effective in ensuring the Board has time to accomplish all of the necessary tasks over the course of the year. The Board should be aware, well in advance, when budget discussions, key community events or recruitment plans must take place. The annual agenda leads the Board through its term, enabling it to handle both the expected, and unexpected, business of library governance.

- Ideally, the annual agenda should also reflect the current goals and objectives the Board is seeking to achieve as part of its strategic plan. Relating the annual agenda directly to the results the Board is seeking to achieve, focuses Board work on the future and on moving ahead. Similarly, it provides a means of tracking and evaluating the Board's progress in meeting community needs.

3. Types of Agendas:

a) A basic agenda may include the following items:

- 1) Call to order
 - establish a quorum (the majority of members required for a meeting)
- 2) Reading and approval of minutes
 - Insure that the minutes are correct Chairperson states - "Are there any corrections to be made?"
 - "If there are no further corrections, then the minutes are `approved."
- 3) Correspondence
- 4) Reports of officers and standing committees
 - Only those with information pertinent to the group report
 - Secretaries Report
 - Treasurers Report
 - Other Committees
 - Reports of special committees
- 5) Special orders
 - E.g. elections
- 6) Business arising
 - What was not covered in last meeting
- 7) New business
- 8) Announcements
- 9) Date, time and place of next meeting
- 10) Adjournment

b) An Annual agenda plan:

Developing an annual agenda plan focuses the Board's work over time toward accomplishment of specific results: This covers strategic issues over a 12 to 16 month period.

c) Annotated agenda

Agendas should also give Board members a clear idea of how to prepare for the meeting. An annotated agenda give supporting documentation. An effective agenda may include estimates of how long Board members might expect to spend on particular items. The Board Chairperson and Library Administrator will typically use a more detailed agenda than other members, with notes for facilitating the discussions.

4. Committee Chairs

Committees are one of the means through which Boards organize their members to accomplish specific goals. Committees should have a specific purpose, and limited time-span, although many Boards use "Standing committees", i.e. "Personnel" or "Finance".

Sub committees should report on a regular basis to the main Board.

5. Rules of order

Rules of order help standardize the procedures for running meetings, and are essential in ensuring every trustee has been heard, and has had an opportunity to vote on all issues. The Board may wish to adopt one of the rules of order, such as Roberts, Bourinot, or Kerr and King as specified in the constitution.

All of these Rules of order describe formal meeting process, including how to present motions, conduct debate and vote on issues, as well as nominations and elections.

6. The Board acts only as a unit

The individual Board member does not act alone, or on behalf of the Board, unless specifically given authority by the Board to do so. The Board is the legal authority, not individual members. Similarly, individuals serving as library Board trustees must endorse the mission of the library, and care about the library.

7. Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics is an expression of the Board's agreement to perform business in a particular manner. As such, it is a useful preparation toward handling the many unexpected issues affecting Boards, particularly those where responses are not addressed through specific legislation. Examples of such issues may include Conflict of Interest, confidentiality, or limits on a Board member's actions. Conflict of Interest policy prevents Board members from using their positions to obtain benefit from the organization for themselves or family members. Similarly, the Code may be useful in deterring individual Board members from exercising authority over the organization, unless explicitly set forth in Board policies.

The Code may also address interaction with the public, press or other entities, particularly with regard to individual members speaking on behalf of the Board. This requires a firm commitment from the Board to make their decisions carefully, and to speak with one voice.

Please see Appendices 26 & 27.

8. Meeting Minutes

Minutes are the permanent record of the proceedings of a Board or committee meeting. Minutes do not record every single comment, but rather note the general meaning of the discussion in enough detail to provide an accurate review of what occurred. The agenda itself provides the framework for items to be included in the minutes of the meeting, which constitute a legal record of the proceedings and are considered public documents. Minutes are prepared by the secretary and include the following:

- The date, time, places of meeting, regular or special meeting, name of Board or committee
- The heading, "Minutes"
- A list of the members present and absent
- The name of the chairperson
- The status of previous minutes
- All motions, movers, seconders and results of votes, for example:
 - Moved by (name) that the minutes of the meeting of March 10, 2004
 - Seconded by (name)
 - Be approved.
 - Carried
- Motion numbers for ease of reference, for example:
 - 2003:30 (The year and sequential number for each motion, beginning each year)
- A list of reports and documents discussed at the meeting
- A summary of significant points raised in debate; problems, suggestions and opposing points of view
- Any commitments to undertake tasks made by the Board or the Staff
- -Date, time place of next meeting
- Time of adjournment

9. Preparation for Meetings

Board members are responsible for arriving on time and being prepared for Board meetings. In order for Board members to prepare effectively, meeting information should be distributed well in advance. The Board package should include:

- meeting objectives and agenda
- Location/date/time
- Background information
- Assigned reading or documents for preparation.

Meetings should begin and finish on time. Board members are responsible for what happens at Board meetings, even if they are not in attendance. In this regard attendance at meetings is not only a responsibility, but also a protection for Board members.

10. Evaluation of meetings. See the checklist in the Appendix

- To evaluate your meetings
- Checklist to evaluate your meetings

You may consider reviewing meeting effectiveness at the end of each meeting, with suggested improvements applied to the next meeting. Similarly, it may be useful to focus on different aspects at each meeting. A simple checklist can assist the Board in continual improvement in quality of meetings:

11. Resources for this module

(Selections adapted with permission of Ontario Library Services.)

Bokor, C., "Community Readiness for Economic Development: Chairing and Managing Meetings", Ministry of Agriculture and Food FACTSHEET, June 2001.

Bourinot, Sir John George. Bourinot's Rules of Order. Edited by Geoffrey H. Stanford. 3rd revised edition. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977.

"How to run effective Board meetings", Trustee Tips #13, Southern Ontario Library Service, Ottawa, June, 1996.

Kerr, M.Kaye and King, Hubert W. Procedures for Meetings and Organizations. Second edition. Toronto: Carswell, 1988.

"Library Board Orientation Kit", Ontario Library Association, 2004.

Chapter 2 – Library Finances

The Budget

The budgeting process is a joint effort of the Library Administrator and the Board. Expenses related to supplies, collection development, building maintenance, and salary increases are recommendations presented by the Library Administrator. It is the Board's responsibility to review, revise, and adopt the budget in consultation with the Library Administrator.

Budgeting Step-by-step

1. Preparation

The Board in co-operation with the Library Administrator will prepare the background information for the budgeting process. The following information is necessary.

- Ascertain all sources of revenue: grants, levies, gifts, non-resident fees.
- Determine if funding levels will change.
- Identify all fixed expenditures/uncontrollable costs: building maintenance, postage, rent.
- Identify all semi-controllable expenses: utilities, employee benefits, salaries, long range plans and associated expenses.
- Identify all expenses that are fully controllable: salary increases, books, travel expenses, Furniture and equipment expenses.
- Evaluate last year's actual program costs. Do some programs need to be revised? How can the programs be delivered more cost-effectively? Was the program under budget, over budget, on target?
- Evaluate the budget throughout the year.

2. Presentation

In order to explain the budget to funding agencies, Trustees need to be able to support, defend, and clarify library expenditures. As there are many other worthy and necessary projects and facilities that local governments must fund, the library trustee must be able to defend the budget by:

- Identifying successful programs and services and the community response.
- Offer quality library reference assistance to local government officials and departments to indicate the benefits of library service on an individual level.
- Publicise awards, letters of appreciation, staff accomplishments in the local newspaper.
- Use Friends of the Library and other library supporters to help promote the budget on the library's behalf. Voters count.
- Publicise to the community the library services that their tax dollar funds.

3. Implementation

Library Trustees will review the budget at monthly trustee meetings. By monitoring the fiscal activities of the library, the Board will ensure that funds are being managed efficiently and in accordance with standard accounting procedures, and assets are safeguarded. However, the daily financial transactions of the library will be left to the Library Administrator or Board Treasurer.

4. Reviewing

When reviewing the budget, trustees should:

- Review the monthly financial report:
- Current expenditures
- Year -to-date figures
- Total budget
- Balance of the Budget
- Explanation of major changes

- Present periodic reports to the public and local funding agencies
- File an annual report of expenditures with each funding agency. Public Library Services requires the library budget, audited financial statement, and annual report and grant application to be submitted by April 1st in order to process the grant application.

Please see the Appendix 2 for:
“Budget Checklist”

See Appendix 3 for:
“Sample Audited Statement”

See Appendix 28
How to Calculate your Library's Provincial Grant”.

A Budget Planning Timeline

YEAR _____

MONTH	BUDGET PROCESS	PLANNING PROCESS
January	Final municipal acceptance of current year budget Fourth Quarter Budget Review (October - December)	Begin preparation of Annual Report
February		Final approval by the Board of Long (5 yr.) and Short (1 yr.) Term Planning Objectives for <u>current</u> year.
March		
April	First Quarter - Budget Review (January - March)	Distribute Annual Report
May	apply for the provincial grant. This can be done earlier if the Auditor's report for the previous Year is available.	
June		Implementation of Short Term Planning Objectives for the current year.
July	Second Quarter - Budget Review (April - June)	
August		
September	Finance Committee start preparation Of next year's budget	
October	Third Quarter – Budget Review (July - September)	Begin preliminary planning of Long and Short Term Objectives For the coming year.
November	Second next budget session of Next year's budget	
December	Third budget session of	

Long and/or short term program planning should be done separately from Budget Planning

CHAPTER 3 – Governing Board Personnel Management

Personnel Management

The best resource a library has is its staff. Every public library, even if it's operated entirely by volunteers, should develop clear personnel policies and job descriptions. Staff members need to know what's expected of them and how well they're doing in order to perform their jobs effectively. Reviewing personnel documents regularly helps put library staffing into perspective.

Personnel policies adopted by the Board of Trustees should cover such topics as hours worked, vacation, sick leave, retirement, job classification, salary schedules, performance evaluation, supervision, hiring/ termination, grievance process, employee benefits available, etc. If yours is a municipal library, the city's personnel department will already have a complete set of policies in place. If your staff members are considered city employees, then separate personnel policies are not necessary. However, if they are not part of some other organizational staff structure, the library Board is responsible for seeing that the appropriate policies are in place and that they are monitored regularly.

Whether municipal or incorporated, you should ensure that the library's attorney review all personnel policies prior to their final adoption to be sure it does not contain any illegal provisions.

Job Descriptions

No library is too small to have job descriptions. Even volunteers benefit by having a written list of duties expected of them and by knowing the supervision to be given. Writing a job description leads to mutual understanding between the supervisor and the supervised.

Some libraries start by asking an employee to write down all of the things/he does in a given period. Arrange these tasks under categories; then discuss, as a whole Board whether they are what you think someone in that position should be doing.

Try to separate the position from the personality because a job description is meant to be used by anyone holding a particular job. You are aiming for a common view of a job's responsibilities, requirements, and boundaries in order to avoid confusion and conflict among staff or between trustees and the Library Administrator.

Performance Evaluations

Employees and even volunteers also need to know whether their supervisors feel they are doing their job well or correctly. Good performance should be recognized and nurtured while low productivity or poor performance should be discussed and changed. An evaluation acts as a reminder of how a particular job fits into the whole library operation.

Regular performance evaluations should discuss whether the person is doing what is expected, based on the job description, what improvements are suggested or essential, and what aspects of performance are outstanding. Every Board should develop a procedure for evaluating staff and should evaluate the library director at least once a year. The library director should evaluate the performance of the staff.

The evaluation procedure might begin with filling out a form that is shared and discussed with the employees. An alternative can be a review of a mutually agreed upon work plan of the past year and development of another for the coming year. You can focus on achievement more with this method, but an employee's customer relations and managerial skills also need to be discussed during the evaluation process. The performance evaluation "interview" offers another opportunity to discuss the position in question and staffing in general in addition to the individual's performance.

Hiring a Library Administrator

Having a successful job description and evaluation procedure will make searching for a new library administrator easier when that is necessary. Start by reviewing the existing job description. Are the basic requirements and qualifications listed still valid? The time to revise the job description is prior to advertising the opening, and the new job description may also offer wording for a clear, direct advertisement.

Prepare for the interviews in order to screen candidates fully and fairly. Prior to conducting any interviews, the Board should review the library's priorities to reach consensus about the type of person suitable or desirable for the job. Draw up questions to elicit the information you need to spot the right candidate, and consider asking each candidate few standard situational questions ("what would you do if...") so that you can compare responses objectively.

Encourage the applicant to do most of the talking by asking open-ended questions, not ones that are easily answered by "yes" and "no." Take care not to ask questions that might be construed as discriminatory (e.g. marital status, disability, religion, lifestyle, age, etc.) A tour of the facility will also trigger good discussion.

End each interview with details about the job: hours, wages, sick and vacation leave, benefits, etc., and most of all, when you plan to reach a decision. Allow time for the applicant to ask YOU questions about the library and the job.

Immediately after the interview, write down your impressions and share them as a group. If you have thought a lot about the type of person you are seeking and have crafted questions to get at issues and attitudes important to you, you may find choosing between candidates easier. A second interview may help you choose between two good candidates or realize that you need to re-advertise the position. Don't "settle" for someone who doesn't fit your requirements.

When you have settled on someone to whom you wish to offer the job, phone the person and then follow the call up with a letter in which you include some of the details mentioned above (wages, hours, etc.). Come to an agreement about when the person will begin work and how s/he will receive orientation. Don't forget to notify all of the applicants promptly after the job offer has been accepted.

Problems arise in small public libraries, which pay little yet place professional expectations on their Library Administrators.

See Appendices numbers 5, to 12 inclusive:

- 5. Library Administrator Questionnaire for Performance Appraisal**
- 6. Library Administrator Job Performance Inventory**
- 7. Library Administrator Job Satisfaction Questionnaire**
- 8. Sample Position Description for Library Administrator**
- 9. Sample Job Posting for Library Administrator**
- 10. Sample Job Interview Questions for a Library Administrator**
- 11. Sample Job Contract**
- 12. Interview Candidates Comparative Evaluation Form**
- 14. Personnel Policy Checklist**