QUICK CHECK
LIBRARY GOVERNANCE AT A GLANCE

Library Leadership- Good Governance

- Support the library's mission and purpose.

- Perform an annual review of the mission and vision statements.

- Assist to ensure effective library planning.

- Understand programs and services.

- Support the Director.

- Ensure adequate resources and management of resources are in budget.

- Enhance the Library's public image.

- Serve as a court of appeal.

- Assess the Board's performance.

Avoid Pitfalls:
1. Trying to run the Library or manage staff.
2. Failing to be true to the Library's mission.
3. Using best practices that don't match needs.
4. Not spending enough time on relationships.
5. Allow personal agendas on the Board.
6. Ignoring problems.
7. Permitting unclear roles.
8. Managing conflicts unprofessionally.

Guidelines for Effective Meetings:
- Full attention and participation.
- Work concisely within the agenda.
- Share time with others.
- Stay productive.
- Speak only for yourself.
- Support the Board's decisions.

Additional points on how to be an effective Board Member:

- Articulate and understand the mission.

- Foster community involvement.

- Maintain positive relationships with Friends of the Library and the Foundation.

- Understand community needs, library capacities and need to plan for future Library services.

- Take every opportunity to build goodwill for the Library.

- Focus on policies and practices.

Simple questions to ask yourself before becoming a Board Member:
1. Can I allow the librarian to proceed in selection of materials, staff and administrative management without interference?
2. Do I support the mission and vision of the Library?
3. Can I make a decision based on evidence rather than opinion?
4. Do I consider myself a problem solver?
5. What expertise do I bring to an organization?

ROLES AND KEY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR
COUNCIL, CITY MANAGER, DIRECTOR, LIBRARY BOARD, FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY AND FOUNDATION

COUNCIL	CITY MANAGER	LIBRARY DIRECTOR	LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD	FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY	FOUNDATION
GOVERNANCE/POLICY MAKING					
Appoint a Board under clear criteria established by jurisdiction. Relay identified community issues and needs.	Provide orientation to perspective Board. Assist Board with legal guidance.	Determine mission, purpose and strategic goals. Set annual objectives and evaluate performance against objectives. Determine policies in response to community needs. Provide orientation for new members. Approve appropriate by-laws. Ensure compliance with legislation.	Provide input on purpose and goals. Report progress of goals to Council. Collect and provide community data. Assist in the recommendation of policies.	Support the Library's mission and vision.	Support the Library's mission and vision.
COMMUNITY RELATIONS					
Convey community opportunities. Encourage advisory board activity.	Ensure appropriate standards are in place.	Implement approved programs. Identify community contacts and develop partnerships. Provide information on advisory board activities. Arrange opportunities for Board activity.	Review proposed policies. Seek to extend library services. Participate in advisory board activities. Cooperate with officials.	Participate in community activities. Seek to extend library services.	Participate in community activities. Seek to extend library services.
FINANCE					
Give financial direction. Keep informed of Library requirements. Communicate with the advisory board. Adopt annual budgets and monitor performance.	Approve resource strategies. Communicate with Council. Supply operational support. Provide direction for budgets and expenditures.	Develop resource strategies. Present and implement annual budget and expenditure reports. Provide sound financial operations. Ensure financial management. Communicate with advisory board and provide awareness of budget.	Review budget with Library Director. Be informed of Library budget. Provide support and ideas in planning of budget.	Fundraise through sale of donated materials.	Fundraise through donations, grants and other methods stated in bylaws.

COUNCIL	CITY MANAGER	LIBRARY DIRECTOR	LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD	FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY	FOUNDATION
PERSONNEL					
Enable appropriate compensation. Enable good working conditions.	Provide input on senior staff recruitment and retention. Enable staff development. Evaluate annually Library Director.	Direct all staff. Prepare policies on human resources. Provide data on compensation. Provide workplace amenities. Provide staff training and development plans.	Create awareness of library staffing. Support sound policies, funding needs, workplace needs and training needs.	Create awareness of library staffing. Support funding needs.	Create awareness of library staffing. Support funding needs.
LEGAL					
Awareness of library operations. Maintain a full advisory board.	Provide legal direction. Report on library operations to Council.	Respond to proposed legislative changes. Ensure complete and accurate records are kept. Awareness of library legislation.	Support polices to ensure adherence to legislation. Create and retain complete and accurate records.	Be informed of legislation affecting libraries.	Maintain accurate records. Be informed of legislation affecting libraries.

BEST PRACTICES FOR ALL:

Recruit new Board members effectively   Have a strong Board nominating committee

Interview each Board member yearly   Have and enforce policies on attendance and participation

Gain commitment to both donate money themselves and help to raise money from others

Avoid material conflicts of interest involving Board members   State organization purpose

Specific terms of office   Independent, volunteer membership   Minimum five voting members

Face-to-face meetings   Clear roles   Stick to policy in crisis   Appoint by skill

Provide proper training   Manage conflict professionally   Oversight by Library Director

Scrutinize financial statements   Know the stakeholders

Recommended Reading:

Carver, J.B. & Carver M. (2006). Boards that Make a Difference. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

An innovative approach to effective governance, this proven model offers an empowering and fundamental redesign of the board role. Topics covered are values, vision, empowerment of the board and staff and strategic ability to lead leaders.

Note: Ask for additional resources at your local library on the topic of Effective Governance.

LEGISLATION

One of the most important roles of Board membership is to keep informed on current legislative issues including privacy, intellectual freedom and literacy. Membership on a Library Board may limit liability, although each member must stay informed as failure to do so may risk personal liabilities. The following are brief summaries of issues affecting libraries today defined by the American Library Association:

Intellectual Freedom Intellectual freedom is "the right to seek, receive, hold and disseminate information from all points of view, without restriction, including those ideas that might be highly controversial or offensive to others" as defined on the American Library Association website.

Funding Trends are showing notable coverage of community involvement. Information on funding reflects deep cuts which impacts operating hours, staff, purchase of books and materials, programming, facility improvements or expansion, services and long-term projects.

> Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read. ~Groucho Marx~
>
> Don't be in the dark as a Board Member.

US Patriot Act and Libraries Librarians must balance the responsibility to protect the privacy of customers and respond to legitimate national security issues. The debate continues on this topic. Boards must educate themselves and stayed informed to support the Library.

Privacy Many privacy bills have been introduced by Congress relating to business, health, education and more to include print and electronic transactions. "What people read, research or access remains a fundamental matter of privacy." Libraries and their Boards must support and protect the right to privacy.

Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) Federal bill placing restrictions on the use of funding that is available through the Library Services and Technology Act, Title III of Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and on the Universal Service discount program knows as the E-rate. These restrictions are for Internet safety policies and technology which blocks or filters certain material from being accessed through the Internet.

What makes a good library?

- Dynamic, knowledgeable, library-oriented, working board members.
- Dedicated staff to give excellent customer service.
- Long range plans in line with community needs.
- Adequate budget to support new ideas and building projects.
- Professional development opportunities focused on new trends and best practices.
- Effective working relationships with staff, governmental agencies, civic and community groups and the general public.

Library Acronyms

ALA (American Library Association National): National professional association for librarians. MLIS: Master's in Library and Information Sciences. FOL (Friends of the Library): Organization of volunteers and fundraisers for local library. ILL (InterLibrary Loan): Method of borrowing between libraries. ISBN (International Standard Book Number): Unique number to a title. ISP (Internet service provider). LSTA (Library Services Technology Act) Federal grant funding. NLW (National Library Week). OCLC (On-Line Computer Library Center): International computerized database of over 45,000 libraries' holdings. OPAC (Online Public Access Catalog): Automated online catalog used in libraries. SLIS (School of Library and Information Studies): Master's program for librarians. VLE (Virtual Learning Environment): Software system designed to facilitate the management of educational courses.

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