

## Purpose and Duties of the Board

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### 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. This policy sets out the work of the library board and the ways in which the board achieves its purpose.

1. The library board oversees the development of a comprehensive and efficient public library service by:
  - a) developing and expressing the library board's values
  - b) articulating 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) securing the **financial** resources to achieve the intended results
  - h) exercising financial control
  - i) advocating for library service
  - j) evaluating results and assessing outcomes and impact

### Section 2: Duties of the Entire Board

1. The library board governs effectively by:
  - a) setting an annual 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 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 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 framework of section 16.1 of the Public Libraries Act

## Section 3: Duties of Individual Board Members

The Board expects its members to understand the extent of their authority and to use it appropriately. This policy sets out the obligations of individual board members. While individual board members have several responsibilities, outside of a meeting of the board, they have no authority to make decisions.

1. Each board member is expected to become a productive participant in exercising the duties of the board as a whole.
2. Individual members of the board are responsible for exercising a **Duty of Diligence** as follows:
  - a) be informed of legislation under which the library exists, board by-laws, mission, vision, and values
  - b) be informed about the activities of the library and the community and issues that affect the library
  - c) be prepared for all board meetings, and
  - d) attend board meetings regularly, contribute from personal and professional experience, and use meeting time productively
3. Individual members of the library board are responsible for exercising a **Duty of Loyalty**, as follows:
  - a) adhere to the regulations of the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act. R.S.O. 1990, c. M50
  - b) 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
  - c) speak with “one voice” once a decision is reached and a resolution is passed by the library board
  - d) represent the Library positively to the community
4. Individual members of the library board are responsible for exercising a **Duty of Care**, as follows:

- a) promote a high level of library service
  - b) consider information gathered in preparation for decision making
  - c) offer personal perspective and opinions on issues that are subject to library board discussion and decisions
  - e) show respect for the opinions of others
  - f) assume no authority to make decisions outside of board meetings
  - g) know and respect the distinction in the roles of the board with regard to governance and the employees, management, and operations
  - h) refrain from individually directing the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and other employees
  - i) respect the confidential nature of library service to users while being aware of, and in compliance with, applicable laws governing freedom of information
  - j) resist censorship of library materials by groups or individuals
5. Board members will review and follow the Port Colborne Public Library Board Code of Conduct. See Appendix A.

## **Section 4: Duties of Committees**

The library 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.

1. 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.
2. Committees report directly to the library board and have no authority other than to research a topic, draft recommendations or prepare alternatives for the library board's consideration and possible adoption.
3. Under the Public Libraries Act (Section 16.1), all meetings including regular, special, committee or other meetings of the library 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 per cent of the members are also members of the library board. This point applies to both standing or ad hoc committees.
4. Meetings of committees may be called by the chair of the committee or by a majority of the members of a committee.



## Port Colborne Public Library

5. Committees shall not supervise or direct employees.

**Board Code of Conduct: See attached Appendix A**

**Related Documents:**

- Port Colborne Public Library. BL-01: Statement of Authority and Powers of the Board
- Port Colborne Public Library. GOV-04: Policy Development
- Port Colborne Public Library. GOV-05: Planning
- Port Colborne Public Library. GOV-06: Financial Control and Oversight
- Port Colborne Public Library. GOV-07: Board Advocacy
- Port Colborne Public Library. GOV-08: Board-CEO Partnership
- Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M50

## **Appendix A: Board Code of Conduct**

The Port Colborne Public Library (the Library) exists to develop, promote, and monitor library services as a public trust. Within the framework of GOV-01: Purpose and Duties of the Board, it is the duty of library board members to maintain high ethical standards. This commitment includes the proper use of authority, appropriate decorum in group and individual behaviour, and respect for others and their contributions to the Library.

### **1) Code of Ethics**

The library exists to develop, promote, and monitor library services as a public trust. To this end, library board members should be committed to the library's code of ethics:

- a) The primary goal of library board members is to ensure that the public has access to the highest quality library services possible.
- b) Library board members should distinguish between their personal views and those of the institution by respecting the position of the board, even though they may disagree. Once the board speaks, it speaks with one voice.
- c) Library board members should respect the established structure of the library.
- d) Library board members should limit their trusteeship role to policy governance and advocacy.
- e) Library board members should attempt to work harmoniously with the board and ultimately accept its will.
- f) Library board members should support intellectual freedom in the selection of library materials.
- g) Library board members should respect the confidential nature of library records within the framework which allows monitoring of material usage and the need for public accounting.
- h) The board acts only as a unit. The individual board member does not act alone or on behalf of the board unless specifically given the authority by the whole board to do so.

### **2) Respect**

Within the framework of the legislative and policy requirements of the Ontario Human Rights Code, and the Workplace Harassment and Discrimination and the Prevention of Workplace Violence Policies, library board members will fulfill their responsibilities in ensuring that the library is free from discrimination and harassment. No board member shall:

- a) speak disrespectfully of any member of the board, staff, or volunteers
- b) use offensive words in meetings of the board or against any member
- c) speak in a manner that is discriminatory in nature based on an individual's age, colour, ancestry, race, citizenship, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, disability, family status, marital status, gender identity/expression, sex, or sexual orientation

### **3) Board Meetings**

With the understanding that Board meetings are public and that their behaviour affects the image of the library, library board members shall not:

- a) speak on any subject other than the subject in debate
- b) disobey the decision of the chair or of the board on questions of order or procedure or upon the interpretation of the rules of the board

### **4) Relationship to Staff**

The board and staff shall work cooperatively to carry out the objectives of the library. The board relies upon the ability, training, expertise, and experience of staff to plan for and provide services within the library's mandate. Board and committee meetings are the generally recognized avenues for board and staff to think and plan together.

The attendance of the CEO at all board and committee meetings as a resource and staff support is essential to the effective work of the board. The Board does not exercise authority over staff, and will ordinarily have no direct dealing with staff operations.

Communications between board and (unionized) staff, outside of meetings shall be through the CEO with regard to:

- a) any assignments or directives
- b) requests for organizational resources or staff time
- c) staff performance, concerns, or policy infractions
- d) concerns regarding any aspect of administration or of library services and programs

### **5) Use of Library Property and Resources**

Library board members will only use library facilities, equipment, supplies, services, or other resources for the business of the library.

## **6) Privacy and Confidential Information**

Library board members owe positive loyalty to the board which is responsible for governing the library. Board members will respect the privacy of others and will not disclose or release by any means to any member of the public, any confidential information acquired by virtue of their position within the library. Board members will maintain this obligation even after leaving the board.

Decisions are made on a majority basis after due deliberation and it is the obligation of board members to abide by and support, rather than undermine them. Equally, board members may not publicly criticize other board members or library staff.

## **7) Conflict of Interest**

Within the legislative framework of the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, board members will act in the public interest and not engage in conflicts of interest, either apparent or real. The duties and responsibilities to the library should not compete with private interests, financial or otherwise, and the interests of family, friends, or associated organizations.

Where any member of the board has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in any contract, staff position, or other matter, or whose spouse, son, daughter, or any relative who has the same home as the member has such interest, the member shall disclose his/her interest and shall not take part in the consideration or discussion of, or vote on, any question with respect to the contract, proposed contract or other matter, or attempt in any way to influence the voting on any such question.

Board members will not accept payments to make referrals or to act as a paid agent before the board or board committee.

## **8) Political Neutrality**

Board members will not use library facilities, equipment, supplies, services (including staff services) or any other resources for election campaign or campaign-related activities.

Board members will not use a position of authority at the library to compel staff or volunteers to engage in partisan political activities. (See OP-16: The Library and Political Elections).

## 9) Gifts

Board members will not accept or provide any gift or benefit where it may be, or perceived to be, in exchange for favour or influence. Exceptions include:

- a) small gifts (cards or edibles, such as chocolates or cookies)
- b) advertising material (calendars, scratch pads, pens, t-shirts)
- c) any hospitality or gift that has a monetary value under \$100