

Lapeer District Library Board of Trustees Job Description

The duties of trustees are few in number but broad in scope. They are:

- select and hire a qualified Library director;
- secure adequate funding for the Library's service program;
- exercise fiduciary responsibility for the use of public and private funds;
- adopt policies and rules regarding Library governance and use;
- regularly plan and evaluate the Library's service program;
- promote the Library in the local community and in society in general;
- establish clear by-laws for the library board;
- conduct the business of the Library in an open and ethical manner in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Everything the Library Board does either falls within one of these duties or is done in support of them. A trustee makes a personal commitment to contribute the time and energy to faithfully carry out these duties. Although the Board is legally responsible for all aspects of the institution, it is unreasonable to expect a trustee or the whole Board to be expert on every activity or concern that affects the Library. Sometimes the most important thing a Board can do is acknowledge that it does not have enough information or resources, and ask for help.

It is also important to remember that the Board's authority, while broad, is a collective authority. Trustees must work cooperatively with other members of the Board; no trustee can speak or act for the Board unless specifically empowered to do so.

Checklist for Effective Library Trustee:

- Be active and informed about Library matters; ask questions of the director and study the issues;
- Attend all Board meetings and participate;
- Question issues until you understand. Don't be reluctant to vote no on a proposal that you don't understand or are uncomfortable about;
- Be a team player and treat your fellow Board members with respect;
- Support Board decisions even if you disagree. A democracy works by the rule of the majority. Seek reconsideration in the future if circumstances change;
- Understand the roles of all involved – the Board, director, staff, Friends, patrons, etc.;
- Don't go along with conflicts of interest by any Board member. A trustee or family member may not receive any gain, tangible or intangible, in dealing with the Library;
- Advocate for the Library in every manner possible;
- Stand up for decent salaries for Library staff. Good pay is a measure of respect for the individual and for the institution;
- Respect the role of the director and support the director's administrative decisions;
- It's about the Library, not about you. Your job is to provide the highest quality Library service possible for your community.



Examples of advocacy activities, educational activities and resources:

Advocacy

- Attend township, county and city meetings to talk up library services
- Attend Spring Expo, sponsored by the Lapeer Area Chamber of Commerce
- Attend Economic Club luncheons when invited
- Read information regarding issues when sent

Education activities

- Attend FOML workshops
- Attend other training if library budget allows

Education resources

- American Library Association: www.ala.org
- United for Libraries: www.ala.org/united (see Melissa for username and pw)
- Michigan Library Association: <https://www.milibraries.org/>
- Library of Michigan: <https://www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan/0,9327,7-381-88855---,00.html>
- Michigan Public Libraries Trustee Manual: https://www.michigan.gov/documents/libraryofmichigan/2017_Trustee_hndbk_12-19-17_ADA_DONE_609159_7.pdf
- Friends of Michigan Libraries, Trustee Alliance: <http://fomltrusteealliance.org/>
- Mideastern Michigan Library Cooperative: <http://mmlc.info/>
- Webjunction: <https://www.webjunction.org/home.html>
- Freedom to Read Statement: <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>
- Library Bill of Rights: <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>
- Public's Right to Information: <https://www.foia.gov/>
- Intellectual Freedom: <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom>
- Confidentiality of Patron Records: <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/statementspols/otherpolicies/policyconfidentiality>
- Open Meetings Act (MI): https://www.michigan.gov/documents/ag/OMA_handbook_287134_7.pdf

