

Public Library Roles at a Glance

Goal:

To uphold the community's right to a quality public library

The Board's Role:

- Govern the library
- Approve policy,
- Secure adequate funding
- Hire a competent, qualified library director.

The Director's Role:

- Manage the library
- Implement the board's policies
- Manage the staff
- Help lead the library forward possible to meet the needs of the community

The Role of the Library Staff:

- Follow the lead of the library director.

This chart has been adapted from the Handbook for New Public Library
Directors in New York State

Library Trustees	Library Director	Library Staff
Planning		
Determines the goals and objectives of the library and methods of evaluating progress towards meeting them	Provides assistance and direction to the board in setting goals and objectives and determining methods of evaluation	Provides assistance to the library director at his/her request.
Policy Making		
Considers what policies are needed to carry out the library's plan most effectively	Recommends policies as needed. Advises board on merit of decisions it is considering	
Adopts library policy	Administers library in accordance with adopted policies. Interprets policies to staff and public.	Assists the director with enforcing the policies.
Establishes policies	Selects and orders all library materials. Delegates this to staff as appropriate.	
Administration		
Indirect responsibility through the employment of director	Has direct responsibility for administration of the library within the framework of the board's plan, policies and budget.	Keeps the library moving forward at the direction of the library director.
Keeps in touch with library's progress and problems through director's reports, personal use of the library and feedback from the public.	Reports at each board meeting and keeps the board informed of the library's progress and problems.	Keeps the director informed of progress/problems.

Personnel		
Employs library director and confirms staff appointments	Employs and supervises staff	
Sees that personnel policies provide fringe benefits and compatible working conditions	Recommends needed improvements in working conditions, fringe benefits and salary scale.	
Provides adequate salary scale and approves salaries	Utilizes skills and initiative of staff members to the library's advantage	
Develops criteria for evaluating library director's effectiveness.	Suggestions basis for evaluation of staff	
Periodic performance evaluations of the director.	Maintains records of personnel evaluations.	
Budget		
Responsible for securing adequate funding the library.	Responsible for understanding funding options and educating the board as necessary.	
Scrutinizes preliminary budget submitted by library director, makes necessary changes, officially adopts budget. Explores and considers all ways of increasing library's income.	Prepares preliminary budget recommendation based on present and anticipated revenues and needs in relation to the board's plan for library growth. Calls board's attention to ways of stretching budget through cooperation with other libraries and agencies.	
Authorizes expenditures in accordance with the budget.	Decides on use of money on the basis of the approved budget.	Makes suggestions for purchases to the director.

Board Meetings		
Attends and participates in all regular and special meetings.	Attends all regular and special board meetings.	Always welcome to attend board meetings at their discretion. Not included in wage.
Follows NYS Open Meetings Law.	Gives appropriate public notice of meetings.	
Approves minutes	Facilitates the preparation of the agenda with the board president.	
Public Relations		
Establishes and participates in planned program of public relations	Maintains an active program of public relations.	Positively represents the library, library director and board in the community. Reports problems to the library director to evaluate.
Serves as “connecting link” between the library and the community, interpreting the one to the other.	Interprets board policies to staff and public and involves library in community activities	Encourages patrons to attend programming offered by the library.
Keeps political fences mended	Keeps political fences mended.	Keeps political fences mended.
Advocacy		
Participates in regular outreach to local, county, state and federal legislators.	Establishes regular outreach to local, county, state and federal legislators.	Assists the director in outreach efforts where applicable.
Seeks information on state/national funding and legislative issues related to libraries.	Keeps the board informed about state/national funding and legislative issues related to libraries	Keeps the director informed of local fundraising opportunities.
Participates in NYLA’s Library Lobby Day in Albany	Participates in NYLA’s Library Lobby Day in Albany	If funds allow, participates in NYLA’s Lobby Day in Albany

Continuing Education

Reads board materials and library related publications.	Reads the Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State.	
Reads the Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State.	Calls significant materials to attention of library board.	
Sees that new trustees have planned orientation.	Attends continuing education offered by their System, the New York Library Association and the American Library Association.	Attends continuing education opportunities as funds allow.
Belongs to the New York Library Association, New York State Association for Library Boards and American Library Association.	Organizes orientation of new trustees.	
Attends county, System, state and national trustee related meetings.	Informs trustees of important meetings and workshops for them to attend. Urges travel funds be provided in the budget for trustee and staff education.	
Budgets accordingly for continuing education for staff and trustees; and payment of appropriate professional affiliation dues	Belongs to the New York Library Association, New York State Association for Library Boards and American Library Association. Urges payment of dues in budget.	

Planning for the Library's Growth

Analyzes the community and considers library's strengths and weaknesses in relation to it.	Suggests and provides materials for community analysis. Helps analyze the library's strengths and weaknesses.	Assists the director in analyzing library's strengths and weaknesses as requested.
Sets goals and adopts short and long range plans for library's growth.	Recommends plans for library's growth and means for implementing plans.	
Sets priorities and decides on course of action to implement plans.	Administers library in terms of plans adopted by the board.	
Seeks corresponding budget increases to manage library growth		