



Finger Lakes Library System

TRUSTEE NEWSLETTER

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Trustee Education Requirement Check In

We know that being on a board is an education in and of itself, but now is a great time to check your Board's progress towards meeting the new [Trustee Education requirements](#). Board presidents should be tracking trustees' education hours and compliance.



From the Trustee Handbook Book Club to other workshops on Open Meetings Law and Director Evaluations, there have been many opportunities to learn more about your duties and roles. Coming up in October, at the in-person FLLS Annual Meeting you'll have another chance to fulfill the education requirement and prepare your library to weather any challenges.

[Free for All: New Yorkers for Intellectual Freedom](#)

launched its new website to inform, educate, and activate library professionals and advocates across New York State about the rise of intellectual freedom challenges.

NYS Lactation Legislation Expanded

In June, Lactation Accommodation update emails (including a sample policy) were sent out to directors and trustees. Please be sure to review and have your board pass this policy as soon as possible.

In the News: Library Meeting Room Policies



Read about the importance-and implications-of meeting room policies in this [Book Riot article](#)

Libraries are public spaces where community members gather to engage in many activities from book clubs to repair cafes. Typically these are library sponsored programs, but sometimes outside organizations approach libraries about using meeting rooms. How does your library handle such requests?

Your library's Meeting Room policy should address:

- Who can use the room
- When is it available
- Process-How does the public request to use the space?
- Cost (if any)

Your policy should also be clear about which types of events take priority.

Sample Meeting Room Policies:

[Seneca Falls Library](#)

[Tompkins County Public Library](#)

Board Calendar

Construction Grant Applications

[Click here](#) for more information and a full timeline

Trustee Handbook Book Club:

Strategic Planning

Tuesday, August 15, 2023

(5:00–6:30pm) [REGISTER](#)



Join us for business, networking, and Trustee Training. More details coming in our Sept–Oct Trustee Newsletter

Risk Management

All businesses—and your library is seen as a corporation in the eyes of the law—are exposed to a variety of risks. While library boards can be held liable, there are ways to protect your library, trustees, and your community. Minimizing risk begins with solid library [policies and procedures](#).

Your library may consider purchasing Directors and Officers liability insurance. We also recommend obtaining cybersecurity insurance.

You can read more about Risk Management and policies in the [Trustee Handbook \(2018\)](#).

View the [Trustee Handbook Book Club](#) session on Risk Management [here](#).

Board Best Practices: Committees

One glance at trustee roles and responsibilities and it's easy to see that Boards are busy. Establishing committees is an efficient and effective way to delegate the work and make progress toward your library's goals. Committee work can be long-term (standing) or short-term for a special project. Committees should be included in your library's bylaws.

What committees should we have?

While there is no rule about which ones or how many, it is advisable to have Finance, Personnel, and Buildings and Grounds committees.

Do we have to keep minutes?

Yes, it is good practice, especially if a committee makes a decision or votes on something. Remember, minutes are summaries, not word for word recounting of the meeting.

Committees report back to the full board about their work. Your board meeting agenda should reflect any reports made.

Reports should be included in the Board meeting materials that are posted on your website 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

What about quorum?

With the exception of association libraries, Board committees must meet quorum to conduct business. In this case, quorum is a simple majority of the committee members.

What About Open Meetings Law?

According to [NYS Open Meeting Law](#), anytime enough municipal, school or special legislative library board members are together to constitute quorum the requirement for a public meeting has been met and the public must be notified. Association library board committees do not need to follow this rule.



Director Evaluations

One of the New York State [Public and Association Library Minimum Standards](#) requires that library boards hire a qualified, paid director. (We'll take a look at the process of hiring a director and succession planning in upcoming newsletters.) Although unwritten, this standard holds the expectation that boards will work with the library director to further the organization's mission and vision. This includes providing authentic and useful feedback on a director's performance.

Director evaluations are part of a healthy board/director relationship and work to improve library culture and enrich the community's experience. Evaluations also offer opportunities for professional growth and can inform the conversation around incentives or compensation.

A good place to start is with your director's basic job description. You—and your director—need to know what the expectations of the position are. Next, the board should establish an evaluation process or policy. The resources below offer examples and suggestions.

Resources:

- [Handbook for New Public Library Directors in New York State](#)
- [United for Libraries Organizational Tools for Trustees](#)
- [Director Evaluations: A Workshop for Trustees and Directors—Southern Tier Library System](#) (recording)
- [Trustee Handbook Book Club](#) session on *Personnel* [here](#).

Board Self Evaluation

Evaluating your library's director is a good time for boards to review their own roles and responsibilities and turn the mirror on themselves. A quick exercise is to reflect on the [Working Together: Roles & Responsibilities Guidelines chart](#) in the 2018 Trustee Handbook on pages 107–108.

Is your board letting your library's director do what you hired them to do?



This year's Summer Reading theme focuses on inclusivity, belonging, and bringing our communities together.