

How the Roles of Board of Trustees and the Library Director Differ

The Board of Trustees and the Library Director are both involved in library governance and policy development, financial management, and personnel administration. However, the type and level of involvement must be clearly differentiated to avoid conflict and for the library to operate professionally and effectively. Most conflicts can be avoided if the Board and Director understand and respect each other's roles.

Typically, the Board establishes overall personnel policies such as guidelines for salary and benefits, hiring practices, and other personnel actions. The Board hires the Library Director and sets salary and benefits. They are also responsible for maintenance of the library building.

The Library Director is responsible for the day-to-day management of the library including the selection of books and materials, and creation of programs and events. The Director acts as the professional/technical adviser to the Library Board on policy, finances, planning, library performance, and more.

Some of the ways the roles of the Library Director and the Board differ are:

- The Library Director may suggest or draft policies. It is the Board that actually adopts the policies. Once a policy is adopted, the Director and staff carry it out as they operate the library.
- The Board hires and evaluates the Library Director while the Director hires and evaluates other staff.
- The Library Director may draft a budget request; the Board officially adopts the budget.

Duties and Responsibilities of the Board and Library Director:

Staff:

Trustees employ a competent and qualified librarian, which includes recruiting, hiring and annually evaluating the Director based upon a well-defined job description and expectations. The Board also adopts personnel policy and sets adequate salary and benefits for all staff.

The Library Director recruits, hires, and annually evaluates library staff, in conjunction with the Trustees, based upon well-defined job descriptions and expectations. Suggest improvements needed in salaries, working conditions and personnel policy.

Policy:

Trustees determine and adopt written policies to govern the operation of the library.

The Library Director carries out the policies of the library as adopted by the Board. Director also recommends additional policies or revisions to existing policies to Library Board.

Planning/Management:

Trustees determine the direction of the library by studying community needs. They see that a plan is developed for meeting needs and that the plan is carried out.

The Director suggests and carries out plans for library services. This includes managing the day-to-day operation of the library, design library services to meet community needs/interests, and reporting the library's progress and future needs to the Board.

Budget:

Trustees examine the budget proposed by the Director; make revisions as needed; officially adopt the budget; present library budget . During the year they review expenditures in accord with budget, amending line items within the budget if needed.

The Director prepares and submits to the Board a budget request based on present and anticipated needs. During the year the Director maintains complete and accurate records of finances and expends funds based on approved budget.

Advocacy:

Trustees advocate for the library through contacts with general public, civic organizations, and public officials and work to secure adequate funds to carry out the library's services.

The Director also advocates for the library through contacts with general public, civic organizations, and public officials and works to secure adequate funds to carry out the library's services. The Director may attend Town Department Head meetings to share information.

Legal Issues:

Trustees should be familiar with library ordinance as well as state and federal laws affecting the library.

The Library Director should be familiar with library ordinance and keep the Board informed on laws and current events affecting the library.

Continuing Education:

Trustees participate in continuing education activities and professional organizations and encourage the Library Director to do the same. They participate in orientation of new Trustees.

Library Director participates in continuing education activities and professional organizations; encourages continuing education for library staff. The Director can participate in orientation of new Trustees.

Communication

Trustees communicate with the Library Director, rather than individual staff members.

The Library Director communicates with the Library Board.

Collection Development:

Trustees adopt collection development policy.

The Library Director selects and orders all books and other library materials and resources, in accordance with library policy.

Board Meetings:

Trustees regularly attend all Board meetings, conduct affairs of Board as voting members.

The Library Director attends Board meetings; prepares written progress report; provides information as needed/requested by Board.