



How to Become a Library Board Member

Appointment to the Library Board

Public libraries in Ontario operate under the authority of the Ontario *Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P44*. Municipal governments create public library boards and municipal councils appoint board members for a 4-year term that is concurrent with Council's elected term of office. Applications are sought by the Clerk's Department and appointments are made shortly after Council holds its first official meeting.

The Woodstock Public Library Board is a seven (7) member board composed of four (4) citizen representatives and three (3) members of Council.

Under the *Public Libraries Act*, a person is qualified to be appointed as a member of the board who is:

- At least 18 years old.
- A Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada.
- A resident of the City of Woodstock.
- Cannot be an employee of the Library or the Municipality.

Competencies for prospective board members are:

- Belief in the value of the library in the community.
- Commitment to the community.
- Community development and engagement.
- Community representation.
- Creativity
- Ethics and integrity.
- Experience serving on volunteer boards or advisory committees.
- Good communication skills
- Good decision-making skills
- Interested in advocating on behalf of the library.
- Interpersonal skills.
- Knowledge of the community's social and economic conditions.
- Leadership abilities
- Open to continuous learning.
- Organizational skills
- Policy development

- Strategic thinking and planning
- Time and energy
- Knowledge about or having experience with diversity and inclusion.

Additional skills and knowledge for prospective board members include:

- Business
- Education and literacy
- Financial planning and management
- Human resources
- Information technology
- Labour relations
- Legal expertise
- Management experience
- Marketing and public relations
- Risk management
- Stakeholder engagement
- Succession planning

Library Board Member Job Description

A board's duty is to provide comprehensive, effective and efficient public library service that reflects the community's needs and builds community capacity. Today's libraries need strong leadership. Governance must include ongoing budget oversight and a focus on future thinking to plan for a library that delivers on its vision and mission for the community.

Responsibilities

- To provide a comprehensive and effective public library service that reflects the community's needs.
- To make policies to govern library operations within the framework of government legislation and regulations and establish a regular review cycle.
- To define the library's vision, mission and strategic direction and to secure adequate funding to achieve these goals.
- To hire and evaluate a competent and qualified Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who manages the daily operations of the library in accordance with library policy and established best practices.
- To work with the CEO to prepare a budget to meet the library's goals and objectives and to present this budget to municipal council.
- To delegate authority and resources to the staff to run the library.
- To practice due diligence.
- To be aware of local and other laws that affect library services.

- To be able to demonstrate the accountability and integrity of the board through its planning documents, budgets, policies and practices.
- To monitor and report regularly on the library's effectiveness to governing officials and the community.
- To act as a bridge between City Council, the library, and the community.
- To participate in professional development.
- To develop a succession plan and policy.
- To assess the board performance regularly.

Only the board has the authority to act or speak on behalf of the library. Individual board members have no authority to act on their own.

Desirable Qualifications

- Commitment, belief in the community and in the public library as an essential community service.
- Knowledge of the community's social and economic conditions.
- Aptitude for planning, organizational skills and creativity.
- A commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Good communication skills. Willingness to discuss issues fully, listen to opposing viewpoints, and make reasoned decisions.
- Willingness to seek and listen to input from community members and community organizations.
- Ability to advocate on behalf of the library.
- Willingness to build knowledge and understanding of the broader library community.
- Willingness to devote time and energy.
- Be open to continuous learning.
- Have internet access for emails, reports and video conferencing.

Relevant Experience

- Experience serving on volunteer boards or advisory committees.
- Demonstrated leadership abilities.

Time Commitment

- Members are appointed to the Board for a term of four (4) years by City Council.
- The positions of board chair and vice chair are elected at the Board's first meeting.
- Members are expected to prepare for and attend regular and special meetings of the library board. The Board typically holds ten regular meetings a year: January to June and September to December. The time and date of board meetings are scheduled subject to trustee availability.
- The time commitment includes preparation time to read and carefully consider reports and other information in the meeting package and monthly meetings of approximately two (2) hours.

- Board members may be expected to participate on board committees which are established to deal with specific issues such as planning, policy review, or hiring of the CEO.
- Board members may be asked to represent the library at public meetings, library events, and community events.
- Board members may be expected to participate in professional development including workshops, webinars, and conferences which may be offered virtually, locally, or provincially.

Compensation

- Library Board members are volunteers and do not receive pay for their attendance at board meetings, training, or events.
- Library Board members may be compensated for registration, mileage, accommodations, and meals while attending library conferences.

15 June 2022