

# Rhode Island Public Library Trustees Handbook

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## INTRODUCTION

Since the Office of Library and Information Services published the first Rhode Island trustees manual in 1980, Rhode Island public libraries have continued to respond to an ever increasing demand for service. In so doing, they consistently have taken advantage of new opportunities to provide this service more efficiently and effectively via technology, cooperative networks, and the efforts of trained, dedicated staff. And trustees, new and experienced, have continued to contribute their expertise and judgment to the decision-making processes necessary for sound governance of their institutions amid this climate of change and possibility. To aid in this ongoing endeavor, this revised and updated handbook has been published as a source of current information, guidance, and, hopefully, inspiration.

This handbook has been published in loose-leaf format so that single pages or sections can be updated or added and so that trustees can add their own pertinent documents to make this a single reference source.

## Public Library Service in Rhode Island - A Brief History

Public library service in Rhode Island generally began in the mid-19th century, when public libraries were established in various communities throughout the state. In 1867, the General Assembly passed a public library law giving cities and towns authority to establish or accept a public library, though some already existed. As these libraries developed and new ones were established, two qualities that seemed to distinguish them all were autonomy and Independence. The prime emphasis was on serving a given neighborhood or section within a city or town. Indeed, by 1963 there were 74 community libraries in the 39 cities and towns. The majority of these libraries received token support from their local governments. With several libraries operating independently of each other in certain cities and towns, the effect of this funding was further minimized. Most often, these libraries relied heavily on dedicated and resourceful library trustees to generate private funding. Today, cities and towns assume the bulk of public library funding with appropriations exceeding an annual total of \$26 million.

State aid to public libraries traces its roots to 1870, with the creation of the State Board of Education. By 1935, the Rhode Island State Library had assumed responsibility for both state aid for community libraries and library extension service. Specifically, it supervised the expenditure of state appropriations for public libraries for salaries and books and appropriations for extension service to libraries, schools, clubs, and civic organizations. In 1960, these appropriations amounted to \$41,000 -- far from today's state aid program exceeding \$7 million.

State aid was first supplemented by federal aid in 1957, when the General Assembly created Public Library Service to Rural Areas as an agency within the Department of State. This enabled Rhode Island to take advantage of funds provided by the Library Services Act (LSA), passed by Congress in 1956 to promote extension of public library service to rural areas. LSA later evolved into LSCA, the Library Services and Construction Act, which then evolved into LSTA, the Library Services and Technology Act, the principal source of federal funding for the nation's public libraries today.

The publication in 1963 of *Library Cooperation*, John Humphry and Lucille Wickersham's study of library service in Rhode Island, ushered in a new era for the state's libraries. As a direct result of this study and legislation initiated by the Rhode Island Library Association (RILA) based on its recommendations, Rhode Island was able to offer its citizens a comprehensive statewide library service program. The Department of State Library Services (now the Office of Library and Information Services) was founded in 1964 to oversee and promote library service and library cooperation in the state; an interrelated library network was developed and funded; a state grant-in-aid program based on per capita support was established for cities and towns; and Rhode Island became one of a handful of states providing funding for public library construction.

In 1986, Rhode Island also became one of two states whose constitution formally recognizes the state's responsibility for the provision of public library service, when a constitutional amendment to this effect was approved by voters by a margin of 68% to 32%. This paved the way for legislation passed in 1989 that represented a dramatic increase in the state's financial commitment to library service whereby, by the year 2000, state aid would amount to 25% of local aid and the LORI would

be funded at a 100% level. The grim realities of a state economy gone sour sidetracked progress toward achieving this level of state funding up until 1994, when a better economy and an increased awareness among legislators of the value placed on public libraries by Rhode Islanders of all ages and backgrounds resulted in increased funding for public libraries to the point where state aid at the 25% level was soon achieved.

Today, Rhode Islanders are served by 49 public libraries and their branches. Staffed by skilled professional librarians and paraprofessionals, these libraries provide access to a wide range of book and non-book materials. As member of LORI (Library of RI), the state multitype library network and CLAN (Cooperating Libraries Automated Network), they provide easy access to the collections of libraries throughout the state and country. Meanwhile, many eye-catching, well-designed public library buildings are in operation throughout Rhode Island as a result of local initiatives and a state public library construction program that has generated over \$105 million worth of construction since 1965, \$43.6 million of which is state funding.

Faced with new challenges and concerns in the age of the virtual library, it is important to reflect upon the role Rhode Island's public libraries have played in enriching and improving the lives of their users. This can only encourage and inspire today's librarians and trustees to remain at the forefront of the information age, leading the way to improved and expanded services for all.

## Duties and Responsibilities of Trustees

Virginia Young's *The Library Trustee: A Practical Guidebook, 5th ed.* (the trustee's bible) offers the table below to clarify the typically separate duties and obligations of the library board and the librarian.

### *Of the Library Board*

1. Employ a competent and qualified librarian.
2. Determine and adopt written policies to govern the operation and program of the library.
3. Determine the purposes of the library and secure adequate funds to carry on the library's program.
4. Know the program and needs of the library in relation to the community; keep abreast of standards and library trends; cooperate with the librarian in planning the library program; and support the librarian and staff in carrying it out.
5. Establish, support, and participate in a planned public relations program.
6. Assist in the preparation of the annual budget.
7. Know local and state laws; actively support library legislation in the state and nation.
8. Establish library policies dealing with book and material selection.
9. Attend all board meetings and see that accurate records are kept on file at the library.
10. Attend regional, state, and national trustee meetings and workshops, and affiliate with the appropriate professional organizations.
11. Be aware of the services of the state library.
12. Report regularly to the governing officials and the general public.

### *Of the Librarian*

1. Act as technical advisor to the board; recommend needed policies for board action; recommend employment of all personnel, and supervise their work.
2. Carry out the policies of the library as adopted by the board.
3. Suggest and carry out plans for extending library services.
4. Prepare regular reports embodying the library's current progress and future needs; cooperate with the board to plan and carry out the library program.
5. Maintain an active program of public relations.
6. Prepare an annual budget for the library in consultation with the board and give a current report of expenditures against the budget at each meeting.
7. Know local and state laws; actively support library legislation in the state and nation.
8. Select and order all books and other library materials.
9. Attend all board meetings other than those in which the librarian's salary or tenure are under discussion; serve as secretary of the board if appropriate.
10. Affiliate with the state and national professional organizations and attend professional meetings and workshops.
11. Make use of the services and consultants of the state library.
12. Report regularly to the library board, to the officials of local government, and to the general public.

With this outline of the library board's governance responsibilities and the library director's administrative responsibilities in mind, the following tips define the functions of a library trustee in a very practical way.

## ***Tips: Now That I'm a Trustee What Exactly Do I Do?***

**Use the library.** Each library is unique and is designed to meet the specific library service needs of the community it serves. Unless you are familiar with your library's services, operations, collections, and programs, you cannot fully appreciate the library or understand its challenges or opportunities. Use the library and attend its programs. Take a turn as a volunteer.

**Attend and contribute.** You can't contribute to, support, or be aware of library service in your community if you fail to attend the scheduled board meetings. Meetings are held at least quarterly and often more frequently. Before you attend, be prepared. Look over and think about agendas sent to you in advance. Review notes from previous meetings. Go ready to listen, contribute, take notes, and follow up.

**Monitor and review.** As a representative of your community, you are the eyes and ears of library service. You are in a good position to know how the service is being perceived and to make suggestions for improvement. Know the plans and policies of your library and be sure they are current and in compliance with the law. Understand how the library is being financed. Read policies, letters, contracts, performance reviews, grants, and other communication carefully. Be sure plans, contracts, and reports are submitted on time.

**Plan and evaluate.** Each year goals and objectives should be written to build on the strengths of your program and to address its weaknesses. Know the strong and weak points of the services your library provides and help find ways to make them better. To help you plan and evaluate effectively, a "planning" section has been included in this handbook.

**Advocate and communicate.** A primary responsibility of all trustees is to be an advocate for library service. Talk to those who are responsible for funding the library and explain to them how the library serves your community. Make your friends, neighbors, and associates aware, too. Tell them about the library's achievements and ask them to help solve its problems. Look for opportunities to promote good public relations. Open the lines of communication with other trustees and librarians, especially from nearby libraries. Beyond support for your own library, be an advocate for all library service and the importance of reading and literacy.

**Support and encourage.** Being a librarian can be more stressful than you might imagine. Understand your librarian's problems and offer support. If you have a criticism, be assertive but diplomatic. If something is going well, say so. Above all, be positive and let your librarian and library staff members know they are not alone.

**Know your community.** Your library should be meeting the particular information needs of your community. You can only understand these if you know your community. Be a participant. Observe and talk to others. Remember to be an advocate for your library.

## **Qualifications of Trustees**

Each trustee brings to the board certain strengths, skills, talents, and personal experience that uniquely serve the library. The board should represent a broad spectrum of community interests, occupations, and geographic areas. Such diversity assures that the library will serve the total community.

It is impossible to represent all the divergent interests of the service area on the board at the same time, but over a period of years the representation should rotate to include as many segments of the population as possible. A well-balanced board can bring in less experienced members who will provide new viewpoints.

Competencies necessary to fulfill board duties should also be present in the overall composition of the board. Collectively the board should strive to have:

- rapport with the entire community
- occupational diversity
- political acumen and influence
- business management/financial experience
- legal knowledge
- diversity in age, race, and sex
- varied personal backgrounds

Appointing authorities and individual candidates should be given a written statement of the duties and responsibilities of membership on the library board. An interested potential board member should not accept if lack of time or other commitments will prevent full participation.

**Effective trustees are citizens who have:**

- interest in the library and the community
- time to devote to board responsibilities
- awareness of the library's role in the community as a center of information, culture, recreation, and lifelong learning
- knowledge of the community and its diversity
- ability to think and plan creatively, to question objectively, and to carry out plans effectively
- skill in establishing policies for effective and efficient operation of the library
- sound judgment, a sense of fiscal responsibility, and political awareness  
willingness to represent the library at meetings and public functions; good communication skills; the ability to relate to the public
- interest in working with local, state, and national library leaders and trustees to improve library service on all levels

# **Board Basics**

## **What is a Library Board of Trustees?**

A library board of trustees is a group of citizens responsible for the governing of a public library. Board members are the vital link between the library and its community. Trustees serve as library advocates and leaders in developing responsible and creative service to all members of the public.

Public library trustees are volunteers who serve their community. Trustees may be reimbursed, however, for any reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of library business.

Rhode Island public library boards are governing boards and carry full responsibility for the library and its policies. For example, the board selects, appoints, and regularly evaluates the performance of the library director. The director serves as chief administrator and is fully responsible for library policy administration, personnel selection and management, development and administration of programs and services, and selection of materials. Sound administrative standards dictate that the library director acts in accordance with established library board policy and that the library board does not engage in direct management.

## **How are Library Boards of Trustees Selected?**

According to the statutes of the State of Rhode Island (RI General Laws 29-4-5), for public libraries established by a city or town, library board members are appointed by city or town councils. Board members of private, non-profit corporations serving as public libraries and receiving city or town appropriations are appointed in accordance with established corporation bylaws. All trustees should be aware of the appointment/selection process for their own city or town.

## **How Long Should a Trustee Serve?**

No trustee should serve on the board indefinitely, no matter how dedicated and no matter how effective he or she is. Continuity of service provides for the wisdom of experience, but change provides the essential infusion of new ideas. Both are needed. Board members should recruit and encourage qualified potential trustees.

The number of reappointments by a governing body is not stipulated by Rhode Island statutes, but it is generally recommended that members of the boards of library trustees serve no more than two consecutive terms.

If a vacancy occurs prior to the expiration of a trustee's term, the position is filled in the same manner that appointments are made, and the new appointee completes the unexpired term.

## **For What are Boards of Trustees Responsible?**

In accordance with powers granted by Rhode Island law (RI General Laws 29-4-5 through 7), trustees determine overall operating and administrative policies. This responsibility was confirmed in a July 1994 legal opinion issued by the legal counsel to the Governor (Appendix 10). The board acts as an agent of public trust governing the library. The library director is responsible for the internal management, daily operation and procedures of the library. He or she exercises professional judgment under the direction and the review of the board to implement the goals, objectives and policies set by the board.

There are four components of library governance that stand out as primary responsibilities for library board trustees. They are to:

1. Make everyone in the community aware of the library.
2. Secure adequate financial support.
3. Hire a competent director when the position becomes vacant.
4. Encourage continued growth and development of library staff.

The duties and responsibilities of the library trustee and the library director may appear to overlap. Understanding the differences in function assures teamwork and better library service.

## **How Does an Effective Board of Trustees Operate?**

A public library board can run most effectively if it has bylaws for its own operation and if it conducts successful business meetings.

### **Board Of Trustees Bylaws**

Every board of trustees should have its own written bylaws. Bylaws provide an opportunity for a library board to establish rules and routines for governing its actions and carrying out its responsibilities. Bylaws usually include:

1. Selection, appointment, terms, number and composition of board
2. Place, time, and responsibility for regular meetings and date of annual meeting
3. Procedures for calling special meetings
4. Attendance requirements
5. Definition and requirements of a quorum
6. Parliamentary rules to be followed
7. Duties of officers
8. Appointments and duties of any standing committees
9. Duties of individual library board members
10. Provision for special committees
11. Role, relationship with, and responsibilities of the library director
12. Required reports and annual timetables

13. Procedures for adopting or amending bylaws
14. Order of business

The board bylaws provide the general structure for your work. Be sure that all members of the board understand their specific roles, assignments, and the expectations for all officers and committees as outlined in your bylaws.

### **Meetings of the Board of Trustees**

Regular meetings should be held to conduct board business effectively. Although library board trustees serve without pay, they are expected to give time and effort to their responsibilities. The knowledge and ability of individual members come together in the regular meetings of the board, where all members are equal and only the board can make a decision.

Most library boards schedule regular monthly meetings at times and places planned and announced well in advance. Regular and special meetings are subject to the requirements of the state open meetings law.

An agenda should be prepared jointly by the chair and the librarian with input from other board members and staff, respectively. It is good practice to ask at each board meeting what items members may wish to have placed on the next agenda. What does a traditional agenda look like? Here is one based on *Robert's Rules of Order*:

- 1) Roll call
- 2) Reading previous minutes and statistical reports
- 3) Correspondence and communication
- 4) Report of the librarian
- 5) Reports of any standing committees
- 6) Reports of special committees
- 7) Old (unfinished) business
- 8) New business
- 9) Adjournment

## *Tips for Effective Board Meetings*

**Work with an agenda.** Know the purpose of the meeting and what tasks must be accomplished or what issues must be resolved. Build an agenda around these understandings and mail it to the director and trustees far enough in advance so that they can organize their thoughts on each item before the meeting. Prioritize items if necessary so you do what is most important first. Also, gather and mail out supporting documents with the agenda so members have time to read and think about them. To comply with Rhode Island's open meeting law, let your patrons know about the meeting.

**Be prepared.** Be sure the information you will need is available. Also, be sure you have on hand the tools (for example, a flip chart) that you will need. Each member should be familiar with the agenda and any supporting documents before the meeting convenes.

**Establish ground rules.** Establishing bylaws helps the board avoid facing the same questions and issues over and over. Bylaws provide consistency and order. They provide rules for participation, such as time limits for speakers and how to decide issues when there is disagreement. They answer such important questions as what constitutes a quorum, how often the board meets, who keeps the minutes, and so on.

**Start and end on time.** From your agenda, estimate how much time may be needed for each item. Let board members know how long the meeting is expected to run. The chair should try hard to reach those expectations.

**Lead actively.** The chair should follow the rules and the agenda, move the discussion along, keep on track, encourage all to participate, review and clarify when necessary, and be fair.

**Be diplomatic.** It is okay to be assertive but also be polite and considerate. No one member should dominate the meeting.

**Make assignments clear.** Any action assignments should be reviewed and clarified at the end of the meeting so there is no doubt who is expected to do what and by when.

**Follow up.** It is useful to send members copies of the minutes after each meeting. The chair or someone assigned should follow up to see that specific action assignments have been accomplished.

## Legal Responsibilities of Trustees

Public library trustees must know and accept their legal responsibilities as governing agents of the library. Trustees need to be aware of general legal requirements, strive to act within the law, and seek expert assistance as appropriate.

Library trustees appointed by municipalities are bound by the Rhode Island Code of Ethics and the regulations of the Rhode Island Ethics Commission. Among the regulations is the filing of a financial statement with the Ethics Commission. As previously noted, according to state statute (RI General Laws 29-4-6), trustees are the legal guardians and custodians of the library and are responsible for the promulgation of all its rules and regulations.

As with any public official, trusteeship carries with it certain basic legal responsibilities:

- Maintaining good faith with constituency
- Obeying federal, state, and local laws
- Accepting office, including all its powers and obligations
- Showing diligence in the job
- Managing property and finances for the constituency served
- Making proper choice of library director

As a trustee, you hold a public trust for the citizens and taxpayers of the community you serve. When you accept this office, you also accept duties and responsibilities. You should understand that your board's decisions are subject to public scrutiny and to challenge in court. This makes fulfilling the board's legal duties in a responsible manner of the utmost importance. Review carefully the areas of liability and guidelines for preserving the public trust.

### Areas of Liability

- Errors in acts in excess of authority (examples: censorship, dress codes for employees)
- Nonfeasance (examples: failure to get needed copyright clearances, failure to meet contractual obligations)
- Negligence (examples: unsafe buildings and grounds, failure to supervise funds)
- Intentional tort (examples: libel, assault, improper discharging of an employee, theft)  
Acts in contradiction to the law (examples: improper reimbursement to trustees and employees, authorizing payment of improper expenses, purchasing certain property without bidding, failing to follow pertinent rules for hiring)
- Conflict of interest (examples: compensating an attorney who is a board member to do legal work for the library, hiring a relative)

## **Indemnification**

Although suits brought against library board members are not common occurrences, members are at some risk and should seek to protect themselves. The library board should check with the local governing authority to determine if members are shielded from personal liability. If the board does not have statutory protection, it should investigate other options. Libraries established under the corporate structure will need to determine if individual board members are liable for damage caused by the corporation. Some library boards protect themselves by purchasing director liability insurance for members and employees.

The American Library Trustee Association (ALTA) developed and approved the following indemnification statement:

It should be considered mandatory that every library have an adequate level of insurance coverage. If any claim or action not covered by insurance or state statute is instituted against a trustee, officer, employee or volunteer of the library system arising out of an act or omission by a trustee, officer, employee or volunteer acting in good faith for a purpose considered to be in the best interest of the system, or if any claim or action not covered by insurance or state statute is instituted against a trustee, officer, employee or volunteer allegedly arising out of an act or omission occurring within the scope of his/her duties as such a trustee, officer, employee or volunteer, the system should at the request of the trustee, officer, employee or volunteer:

- a) appear and defend against the claim or action, and
- b) pay or indemnify the trustee, officer, employee or volunteer for a judgement and court costs, based on such claim or action, and
- c) pay or indemnify the trustee, officer, employee or volunteer for a compromise or settlement of such claim or action, providing the settlement is approved by the board of trustees.

Decisions as to whether the system shall retain its own attorney or reimburse the trustee, officer, employee or volunteer expenses for their own legal counsel shall rest with the board of trustees and shall be determined by the nature of the claim or action.

The term trustee, officer, employee or volunteer shall include any former trustee, officer, employee or volunteer of the system.

**Does your board have legal counsel?**

**Do you understand your legal responsibilities as a board member?**

# Library Planning

Planning is the deliberate, preferred manner of preparing for library service in the future. It is the responsible means of fulfilling future community library needs.

A long-range plan, based on knowledge of the community, community expectations, resources of the community, and realistic projections of the future needs of the community will enable the library trustees and administration to better perform their responsibilities for providing efficient and progressive library service.

Rhode Island public library standards specify that each public library has a long-range plan specifying the library's mission statement, goals and objectives, and methods for evaluation.

## What is a Plan?

- **A summary of the current status of the library.** Look critically at what the library does now. A plan is reality pushed into the future. By assessing the current situation, obvious needs and directions can be identified. Don't be afraid to brag about a good library.
- **An assessment of community needs.** A library's first responsibility is to address the needs of its community. It is basic to planning to know what the community needs are. The American Library Association has developed a number of tools that can help identify useful statistics and statistical sources for understanding your community.
- **A statement of the library's mission, goals, and objectives.** Once the library's overall role and mission are defined, specific goals with measurable objectives can be set. All future decisions should be made in view of the long-range plan.
- **An on-going process.** Planning is an on-going process. No plan is perfect. Unexpected events necessitate changes in any plan, and changing times present new problems and suggest new approaches to meeting library goals. Unless some crisis requires immediate updating of the plan, the plan should be updated on an annual basis.

## Planning Tools

*The New Planning for Results* published by the Public Library Association in 2001 is the planning guide most helpful to librarians and trustees involved in long-range planning.

## **How is a Plan Developed?**

There is no one best way to plan. Planning requires commitment, time, and organization.

- **Preparation for planning requires:**

- Clarifying planning purposes and methods
- Defining responsibilities
- Allocating resources to planning
- Establishing a planning schedule

- **Gathering the information for planning requires:**

- Reviewing community needs for library services including cultural, recreational, educational, and information resources of the community
- Looking at the demographic and economic data of the community
- Identifying factors in the library's environment that may affect the provision of services

- **Analyzing the information requires:**

- Understanding of the needs for library service
- Realizing objectively what the community has and what the community lacks
- Defining the library's role in the community

- **Development of a library's mission, goals, and objectives requires:**

- Responding to the community's needs, interests, and priorities
- Prioritizing programs and directing efforts toward tasks leading to the attainment of the stated objectives
- Evaluating where your library is in relation to the total plan

**Remember that excellence in public library service is not an idle dream. It is achieved daily by libraries matching their services with community needs, interests, and priorities as identified through effective, thoughtful planning.**

## **Benefits of a Plan**

- Allows rational justification of your budget to governing authorities
- Helps you prioritize programs and direct efforts to attaining objectives
- Motivates the staff and board
- Encourages coordination and accountability
- Gives a clear measure for success
- Assures enough lead time to undertake projects effectively
- Leads to steady growth by encouraging yearly evaluation

## **Recipe for a Plan**

A plan is a flexible document seasoned by specific local needs. Most plans include the following:

- Description of the library's service area and communities
- Summary of data supporting library's needs
- Statement of general goals and specific objectives
- Details of services, programs, personnel, collection, and facilities desired
- Identification of priorities
- Timetable for achieving goals and objectives, both short- and long-range
- Cost projections for implementing the plan
- Projections of resources needed to implement the plan
- Assignments and responsibilities for implementing the plan
- Publicity campaign to accompany changes
- Provision for evaluation and reassessment at specific intervals

**Does the library have a long-range plan on file at the Office of Library and Information Services?**

**Is the plan updated annually?**

**Have procedures been drawn up for evaluating the plan?**

**Is the responsibility for planning clearly defined?**

**Are you familiar with and committed to your library's long-range plan?**

## **SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PLANNING**

### **Board of Trustees**

Analyzes the community and considers the strengths and the weaknesses of library service.

Sets goals, adopts both short- and long-range plans for library growth.

Sets priorities and decides on a course of action to implement plans.

### **Library Director**

Participates fully in the community analysis process and in the continuing survey of library service.

Recommends plans for the library's growth and objectives to achieve goals. Selects strategies for achieving objectives.

Administers the library according to plans adopted by the board; suggests revisions as needed.

## **EVALUATION**

Evaluate the library annually when planning for future development. Review the budget in relation to service, personnel, public relations, policies, regulations, building maintenance, etc.

Conduct an annual appraisal of the board's performance, including attendance and committee work. (See Appendix 1)

## **Planning Library Buildings**

As trustees face the challenges of planning library services for the future, increased space and additional locations may become a major consideration. Boards must decide whether to build a new library, renovate or expand current facilities, or find an existing space to be converted into a library.

Construction plans should be considered in the context of the total library plan. Trustees need to study service needs, explore alternatives, estimate funding needs and potential sources, and establish priorities.

Most planning processes will lead to the identification of a probable date when new library space should be in operation.

While having a new building may be the best answer, it is not always the most practical and should be measured against other options: purchase of an existing building, lease of an existing building, remodeling of the library, addition to the library, or in some cases, adding branches. Depending on the library and its services, the addition of a bookmobile or other outreach techniques may be considered in expansion plans.

Numerous resources are available from the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) Professional Collection for all boards considering a building project. OLIS also has prepared an information packet relating to the state construction program which includes: project requirements, application procedures, regulations, sample forms, and a construction checklist and bibliography.

### **Building Program**

After the library has completed its community analysis, defined its long-term goals and objectives, and determined the need for additional space, a library building program is developed. The building program defines the specific needs of the library in both quantitative and qualitative terms. The building program should bring together the thinking of the library board, the library director, the library staff, and the community on the purpose, scope, and function of the library building. It is strongly recommended that a library consultant be hired to assist in writing the library building program for any major project.

The building program should also stress that the building must be flexible and able to respond to future developments. Library functions and spaces should be able to expand and contract as needs develop or diminish. Existing and future technologies should be anticipated. Computerization, miniaturization, electronics, and other factors are already in play and will continue to develop. These technologies have implications for the building's structure, its heating, ventilating, and air conditioning systems (HVAC), its power, lighting, electronic, and communications systems (PLEC), as well as ergonomic considerations in planning spaces and equipment.

### **Architect**

The architect should be hired only after a library has completed these beginning steps of

construction planning. The architect can then use the library building program in designing the building. In hiring an architect, the library should solicit applications, rank them by preference, and then enter into negotiations with the top choice, conducting personal interviews with the person or firm that interests the library board. The past experience of the architect should be considered, as well as the architect's personal philosophy. Final fees are discussed and an agreement is reached. If an agreement cannot be reached with the first choice, the board then declares that is the case and enters negotiations with the next candidate.

## **Design of the Building**

Once an architect is hired, the actual design of the building can proceed along with final decisions on location, size, addition or all new construction, etc. The general steps that will follow are:

- Preparation of schematic design
- Preparation of preliminary plans and design development
- Preparation of specifications and working drawings
- Advertising and receipt of bids
- Bonding process
- Award of contracts
- Actual construction
- Acceptance of performance
- Move to new building

## **PLANNING RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Office of Library and Information Services should be consulted for building-related state standards, guidelines and for general information regarding your building program and the availability of state or federal funding for the project. Trustees, staff, consultants, architects, interior designers, city councils, regional planning departments, and community members all fit into the picture.

### **Trustees**

- Determine that a new building is needed
- Provide leadership in the campaign to inform the community and secure necessary support for the project
- Appoint a building committee and assign tasks
- Select and hire a library building consultant
- Select and hire an architect
- Obtain financing for the project
- Select and purchase the site
- Approve the written building program

- Approve preliminary and final architectural plans
- Solicit and approve bid documents
- Approve all contracts and any change orders to the contract

### **Library Staff**

The library director and staff actively participate in planning for construction projects by compiling information, surveys, and statistics; by helping to prepare a written building program; by preparing construction applications and reports; and by maintaining project records. The library director is an essential member of the building team in ensuring a facility that will successfully support the library program.

### **Library Building Consultant**

The consultant is usually an experienced librarian who has participated in several successful building projects. The cost of a building consultant can usually be saved many times over in reductions in construction and operating costs. Working with board and staff, the building consultant can provide any or all of the following services:

- Survey the library's space needs
- Write the library building program
- Project future staff and operating costs
- Prepare a preliminary project budget
- Provide site analysis and recommendations
- Provide advice on funding options
- Provide assistance in selection of the architect
- Review all plans prepared by the architect and provide a written evaluation
- Review needs, specifications, and layout for shelving, furniture, and equipment
- Provide a final inspection of the facility

The American Library Association publication *Library Building Consultants* is available for loan from the Professional Collection of the Office of Library and Information Services.

## **We're Set to Go, What's Next?**

The board with its planning completed, money in hand, and architect in the final stage of plans should follow this sequence:

- Review every nuance of the building plan. Decide what features can be optional (bid alternatives) so that separate bids can be taken on these items.
- Review estimated costs so that the construction bids do not surprise.
- Follow all local ordinances and structures. Zoning and building codes should be checked as plans are made, but enlist the help of appropriate officials in the plan review and in recommending contractors to be asked to bid.
- Follow correct bidding procedures, legal and ethical. Allow time for bidders to estimate closely. Invite enough bidders so that there is a range.
- Analyze bids ruthlessly. Be sure you are getting what was specified with no unsuitable substitutes. Accept the bid that most closely meets specifications as well as offering good value.
- All bids too costly? You can call for new bids to an amended set of specifications. You can also rule out the optional features (bid alternatives) that did prove to be too much.
- Create a team of board, director, architect, and contractor to follow progress and to make regular reports.
- Expect some changes. Discoveries will be made about unexpected problems and opportunities. The contractor may suggest, for example, that a new tile may be less expensive and service just as well as that specified. If so, that's a credit you can apply to something that will cost more (such as discovering poor soil on the site).
- Expect performance. This building is going to be a fixture in the community for a long time and should be properly and expertly built. Some boards find that the contractor has taken the job as a fill-in. Don't accept excuses!
- Watch the expenditure of funds in a professional manner. Payments should be made upon proper evidence, but promptly. If you need financial advice, seek it from a good mortgage banker or experienced purchaser of construction.
- Meet frequently during the building process. Meetings keep you in touch with progress, permit decisions on changes, and provide the material for ongoing public relations in the community.
- Plan for orderly occupation of the building when it's ready, with festivities and community involvement. Allow plenty of time for moving in, completing the landscaping and other amenities, and then showing off the newest and best community asset.

Keep in the back of your mind how long it took to achieve this objective. Keep "need for expansion" in your planning process so that the next building will arrive when it is needed. There is nothing more satisfying than a new facility that enhances the ability of the board to bring exciting services to an appreciative community.

## **Questions and Answers about Buildings**

Confirm the needs the building will serve and decide how to translate these into an actual plan:

### **1. Should the board use a building consultant?**

In recent years, numbers of librarians have specialized as building consultants, most often in determining space needs and layout for the purposes the board has approved. A consultant will look at the community data, consult with the librarian, staff, and board, and apply data to recommendations right down to location and size of a department in the building. Most consultants are not designers, but they provide guidance to the architect who must visualize the structure. The use of a building consultant is required for most projects using state or federal funding via the Office of Library and Information Services, and OLIS can provide names of consultants for the board's consideration.

### **2. How does a board find an architect?**

Boards can visit or review plans and pictures of other libraries for clues to find suitable architects to interview. Until a few years ago, there were few architects specializing in libraries, but many in the profession have since found these structures challenging.

The board will need to be satisfied that the architect has some understanding of the functions of libraries, will work closely with the board on designs reflecting what the board feels the community will enjoy, and will give good supervision with the contractor. Legal counsel should be sought on an appropriate contract.

Even architects experienced in library design need the guidance of specifications for use of the library: space for special purposes, the need for floor loads, extra power, access by people with disabilities. Directors (and the building consultant) will have noted special needs for public and private areas, for loading, for staff use, and for expansion at a later date.

### **3. How does the board find a contractor?**

Specifications created by an architect will be submitted to contractors for bids. It is wise for the board to have the specifications include a number of options so that the board can add or subtract options as cost is known. Libraries that think ahead have often been able to secure inexpensive future expansion space. And the board should be prepared to settle for less luxurious features if costs mount.

The board should interview contractors if it wishes to prequalify them for the bidding. Often the city or town will have a list of those to whom it offers bidding opportunities and regulations governing the bidding process. Multiple bids are needed, but an overly long list may not add to the board's ability to make the decision. Low bid is one factor, probably the most important, but value and

evidence of good work elsewhere are considerations.

#### **4. Who supervises the building?**

Usually the library director is the link from the board to the architect and builder, and is the person who checks to be sure the library is meeting local ordinances and codes. The director and architect and sometimes the builder give the board decisions on changes as well as regular reports on progress. The board watches and asks questions. The project is a team effort, which may also involve local officials. The better the original plans and the more precise the specifications, the more likely that construction will run smoothly.

Most library boards, having weathered a building project, report that vigilance on the part of the board, watchdogging by the architect, timely performance by the builder, and surveillance by the director kept the project on time and in good order. Most boards also report relief when the project was completed; building can be a trying time for all the people involved.

#### **5. How does the library keep the public informed?**

As construction on a new building progresses, there will be public interest in what's happening. Regular updating through press releases is indicated, and there are times during the process when special events can be held, such as groundbreaking, cornerstone laying (perhaps with a time capsule), the first brick, and topping off. In the case of additions, the public should be carefully forewarned of disruptions or change in service due to construction.

#### **6. How should the board plan well in advance for use of the new facility?**

Plan and announce, when it's safe to do so, an occupancy date when the public can see the building. If the community is to be involved in helping to move, set dates and procedures.

Withhold an open house until the library is really ready, including completed parking areas and landscaping. Make the ceremonies memorable; the date will be the library's birthday for many years.

#### **7. When does the board begin thinking about future needs?**

Ideally, the new space will meet the needs for a long time. But not forever! Keep on the planning agenda some space for thinking about what comes next.

Most of these elements apply to planning of new space, whether in a new building, an existing building, or a conversion.

#### **Construction Timetable**

Trustees should understand that the planning process for library construction will require a substantial amount of effort by the board, the library director, and the staff. Planning normally takes approximately twenty-four months and delays must be anticipated.

### **Sample Timetable for a Building Project**

Feb.	Preliminary determination of a space need
Mar.	Selection of a building program consultant if one is to be hired
May	Building program written
June	Site application completed
Nov.	General and financial application (local funding commitment) completed
Mar.	Architect's contract signed
	Title to site transferred
Apr.	Architect's schematic plans reviewed by trustees and director
May	Architect's design development plans reviewed by trustees and director
July	Architect's working drawings reviewed by trustees and director
Aug.	Advertise for bids after approval of architect's final plans
Oct.	Bids are publicly opened and contract awarded to lowest bidder meeting all requirements
Nov.	Construction of library begins

### **Funding for Buildings**

The need for a new library building or renovation of an existing one is usually evident long before funds are available to begin the project. Good planning, along with the commitment of the board, can help shorten the time between these two points.

There are a variety of sources for financing library buildings. In most cases, more than one source is used. The board and the library director should be aware of the different funding possibilities and be thoroughly familiar with the advantages and disadvantages of each one.

### **Local Government Appropriation**

The local government is a viable source of funding for buildings. It is not uncommon for a project to be financed over a period of three to five years, scheduled to accommodate the use of current revenues.

## **Bond Issues**

Another method is to have a library bond referendum on the ballot to finance the project. This method requires the development of a comprehensive needs statement, convincing the local government of the needs, understanding the electorate, and conducting an effective campaign.

## **State Funding**

Rhode Island statutes (RI General Laws 29-6-6) provide for reimbursement of up to fifty percent of an approved public library construction project. The state grant-in-aid may be paid in installments over a twenty-year period, and begins during the fiscal year following completion of the project. State reimbursement also includes the cost of borrowing the state allotment. Projects are scheduled as they are approved and funds are available for reimbursement within the annual cap for reimbursement funds set aside by the Library Board of Rhode Island.

## **Federal Grants**

Currently, funds may be appropriated in any federal fiscal year for library construction, renovation, and technology enhancement from Title II of the Library Services and Construction Act and are allocated to and administered by the state library agency. Funding is limited to not more than one-half of the total cost of the project. Current priorities established by the Library Board of Rhode Island for Title II funds are: (1) remodeling and renovation to provide for handicapped accessibility; (2) technology enhancement; and, (3) other new construction and/or renovation and remodeling.

## **Gifts, Bequests, and Foundation Funding**

Gifts and bequests from citizens and corporations, as well as private foundation grants, have traditionally provided funds to supplement other sources of funding. Occasionally, a single benefactor will contribute the full amount or make a substantial contribution to the building fund. As a rule, however, securing funds by this means is a slow process and should not be relied on as the sole funding source.

## **Professional Fundraising Campaigns**

Fundraising requires a great deal of time and careful planning. Hiring a professional fundraiser may be expensive, but may be a very worthwhile investment toward mounting an effective building campaign.

## Effective Library Policymaking

Policymaking is one of the board's most important responsibilities. Policies are vital tools in carrying out the board's planning and evaluation decisions. Library policies established by the board govern and guide all phases of the public library's operation. Effective policies are management tools for running the library. The trustees, with the help of the director and staff, create these tools. The director and staff use them.

### Benefits of Policy

- Determines the library's mission and roles and ensures that the library's goals and objectives, plans, and procedures support the mission.
- Guides the director and staff in implementing the board's decision.
- Provides direction and consistency in day-to-day services and operation.
- Assures that library users and staff are treated fairly and consistently.
- Encourages informed and active decision-making by anticipating needs and problems before they reach the crisis stage.

### Who Makes Policy?

While only trustees have the legal responsibility and authority to make policy, experience shows that this process works best when the library director and staff are involved in researching options, drafting policies, and making reports and recommendations to the trustees. Again, as emphasized at the beginning of this manual, effective library services and development are the result of partnerships. The trustees, director, and staff should cooperate with one another and complement each other's efforts.

It is the **responsibility of the director and staff** to keep the trustees informed about progress and problems. They advise, assist, report, and recommend. When policy decisions are made, they implement the board's decisions, administering the library's programs within the framework of the board's policies, plans, and budget.

It is the **responsibility of trustees** to establish library policy. In so doing, they should solicit information and advice from the director, the staff, and the library's users. They ensure that policies are consistent with the library's mission and goals and are compatible with the library's conditions and circumstances. Because they understand that for a policy to be meaningful it must be implemented, trustees help the director and staff to understand, accept, and follow the policies they make.

### Review and Revise

The environment the library belongs to is not static. Effective policymaking is flexible to reflect changing circumstances. A policy is rarely a finished product, but is more like a work in progress. Policies should be reviewed and revised periodically as changing circumstances, needs, and demographics dictate. Sometimes a change in policy is dictated from outside agencies. The need to address requirements of the *Americans with Disabilities Act* is a recent example of how library policy can be affected by changes in laws and attitudes in society. The issue of sexual harassment is another example.

As libraries face new developments, policies should be revised as a means of thinking about the meaning of such changes, addressing problems that arise, and taking advantage of new opportunities. To cite a common example, as new formats such as video or audio tapes become popular and are acquired, the collection development policy should be reviewed to reflect the change. Another issue is electronic access to information and how to provide it.

As policies are reviewed, keep in mind some key questions. Look for those policies which guide the general operation and development of the library. Are these policies still appropriate? Do they account for changes in the library's environment? Are the goals set by the board and plans designed to reach those goals consistent with these guiding policies? Examine each policy and ask if it is understood, still relevant, and enforced. What is missing? What new circumstances or needs require changes in policy? What problems or misunderstandings could be cleared up by changing a policy or making a new one? Are there legal issues, especially new ones, that the library's policies do not address?

### **Organizing a Policy Manual**

All the library's policies should be recorded, compiled, and organized for ready access in a policy manual. The manual should include not only the policies written by the trustees, but those set by other governing authorities (local, state, and federal) which affect the library. For example, state and local officials often determine purchasing policies and personnel policies such as salary schedules, retirement, etc.

The contents of a policy manual can be arranged topically with headings that provide ready access. As policies are added or revised, the manual can be updated with date of adoption noted. This handbook should include the board's policies so that new trustees can become familiar with them at the beginning of their tenure. A separate manual can be created for public access. New staff members should also be acquainted with all relevant policies.

## **Making Policy: Creating Tools for Organizing and Managing**

While policy may be viewed as a management tool for defining and coordinating relationships, describing library practices, assigning responsibility, and so on, the process of establishing or revising policy is an organizing tool. Policy-making provides the trustees, director, and staff with an excellent opportunity to understand the library's community, to evaluate the library's strengths and weaknesses, to reach consensus on the library's purposes and priorities, to clarify and strengthen relationships within the library, and to communicate the library's needs and achievements to the community at large. Policy-making that achieves such multiple goals usually requires broad participation.

Policy-making begins with a **statement of the problem** the policy addresses. A key question to ask is "how does this policy contribute to the mission and goals of the library?" What needs and reasons are there to change this policy or make a new one? Existing policies related to the policy in question need to be considered.

Next, **assignments are made**. Typically, the board will assign a committee, including the director and staff members, to make an assessment of the problem and an analysis of how the problems identified can be treated. The result may be a **list of available options**. Any analysis must consider:

- both long- and short-range effects of enacting the policy
- potential side effects of the policy    positive and negative
- estimated costs of implementing the policy, including budget dollars, staff resources, building and equipment requirements, and collection implications
- legal implications of enacting and implementing the policy

Once assessment and analysis are completed, the working group **reports to the board**. The report may include recommendations. The committee will pass on to the board any relevant and supporting documents to be considered.

The **board reviews** the work and recommendations of the committee and makes the decisions that will shape the final policy. Often a first draft of the policy will be written, again, by a committee assigned by the board. The draft statement is distributed and reviewed by those who may be concerned or have helpful responses to contribute. After responses are considered, the board completes a final draft and formally adopts the policy in a business meeting.

Once the **policy is adopted**, it must be **introduced** to the staff. Training may be required. The policy should be **published and distributed** to all who may be affected or concerned. In communicating the policy, the board can use the policy itself as a public relations tool to tell the community they are working actively to improve the library and its services.

Broad participation in policy-making is important because it creates understanding and consensus. Those who contribute to making policy are more likely to accept it and implement it. The aims of a policy as a management tool are accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, and coordination. The aims of policy-making as an organizing tool are understanding and cooperation.

## **A Policy List for Public Libraries**

Here is a list of policies that may be relevant to your library's needs. Every library does not necessarily require every policy on the list. It is provided to help boards check their policy accomplishments and needs. The list is arranged in the form of an outline to underscore how policies may relate to one another. Listed under each policy are items that may be considered and covered when making the policy.

- I. Mission and Role Statement
- II. Library Board Bylaws
- III. Public Services or User-Related Policies
  - A. Eligibility for borrowing and services
    - 1. Resident and non-resident
    - 2. Interlibrary loan
    - 3. Programming and outreach
      - 4. Unattended children
      - 5. Acceptable use of the Internet
  - B. Collection development policy
    - 1. Mission and goals with community description
    - 2. Responsibility for selection
    - 3. Selection criteria for each format
    - 4. Scope of collection and priorities
    - 5. Selection procedures and vendor relations
    - 6. Evaluation, weeding, and maintenance
    - 7. Censorship, access, and challenged materials procedure
    - 8. Intellectual Freedom Statement, Library Bill of Rights
    - 9. Gifts and donations
  - C. Circulation policy
    - 1. Loan period and renewal
    - 2. Confidentiality
    - 3. Reserved materials
    - 4. Fines, damages
    - 5. Special collections
    - 6. Audiovisual equipment
  - Reference policy
  - E. Facilities policy
    - 1. Hours of operation
    - 2. *Americans with Disabilities Act* compliance

3. Security
4. Meeting room use
5. Exhibits and displays
6. Use of library equipment

- F. Community relations policy
1. Cooperative borrowing agreements
  2. Relations with schools
  3. Public relations
  4. Volunteers
  5. Friends group

IV. Management Policies (The management practices of many public libraries fall under the authority of a city or town government which may have its own policies or contracts governing the items listed below. This list is provided as a reference for trustees as a description of what might be included in a management policy. References should be made to applicable city or town policies where they exist; the board should develop its own policies with the advice of local officials as need be when it addresses issues not covered by existing city or town policies or union contracts.)

- A. General
1. Responsibility and authority
  2. Budgeting and purchasing

- B. Personnel
1. Responsibility and authority
  2. Job descriptions and classification
  3. Salaries and benefits
  4. Hours, sick leave, overtime, holidays, and vacation
  5. Hiring and termination
  6. Performance evaluation and promotion
  7. Continuing education and professional development
  8. Discipline and grievances
  9. Compliance with the *Americans with Disabilities Act* and EEO guidelines

- C. Facilities
1. Responsibility and procedures for maintenance
  2. Acquisition and ownership
  3. Insurance and liability
  4. Emergency preparedness
  5. Use of equipment, vehicles, etc.

## **Personnel Practices**

Human relationships determine the inner climate of the library. Every effort should be given to make these relationships cordially cooperative and mutually understanding. Chief among these relationships, because of its effect on the overall library administration, is that between the library

board and the library director.

The working relationships that prevail within the library determine the attitudes of librarians and staff, which in turn determine the quality of service offered to the public.

### **HIRING A NEW DIRECTOR**

One of the most important functions of a board of trustees is the hiring of a competent library director. It may, in fact, be the most important single act undertaken by the board. Not only does it directly affect the future of the library, it also forces the board to step back and take a look at itself and the library. This informal evaluation process can result in new perspectives regarding the library's role in the community. Trustees should be aware of current practices in the profession, requirements imposed by Rhode Island public library standards, the current needs and direction of the library, and competitive professional salaries and benefits.

#### **Preliminary Assessment**

As soon as the vacancy is anticipated, the board should meet to formulate a plan of action.

The board should make a realistic appraisal of the situation. The members should decide what qualifications the library requires in a library director and what the library has to offer the director. Offer the best salary possible to secure the services of a qualified person. Consider any added incentives or challenges offered by the job opportunity.

#### **Look at the current situation**

- What are the current needs of the library?
- What qualifications are needed in the next director?
- What is the reason for the job opening? An exit interview can be very helpful. Is the departing director upward-bound, retiring, or dissatisfied?
- What changes, if any, are necessary to the job description and the qualifications statement?

### **The job description might include:**

- areas of responsibility
- specific duties
- salary and fringe benefits
- initial period of evaluation
- desirable areas of expertise
- minimum qualifications and experience
- to whom the director is responsible

### **Method of Recruitment**

A search committee can be formed consisting of three to five board members or board/library users. This committee selects a chair and establishes a procedure for the search process.

Items to be addressed might include:

- scope of the search (national, regional, local)
- timetable
- calendar of activities for the candidates
- affirmative action and equal employment opportunity requirements
- confidentiality and discretion
- record keeping of committee actions
- unique circumstances associated with the position and community
- method for involving the full board and staff in the selection process

### **Advertisement**

It is good practice to conduct a search even if there are staff members qualified for the position. The eligible staff members should be encouraged to apply. All should understand that the goal of the search is to select the best-qualified person for the job. All applicants should receive consideration and due process in accordance with equal opportunity laws.

The job advertisement is the primary vehicle for publicizing the vacancy and attracting applicants. It should be carefully worded and might contain the following:

- job title
- duties/responsibilities
- qualifications (including education, experience, and personal characteristics)
- salary range and minimum salary
- fringe benefits (including vacation and retirement)
- request for resume and references
- date of availability
- organization contact (preferably a specifically named person)

- closing date for applications
- an equal opportunity employer statement

**The job advertisement can be posted/distributed to:**

- Jobline, a listing of current openings posted on the OLIS website
- library schools in Rhode Island and the Northeast
- national professional journals such as *Library Journal*, *Library Hotline*, and *American Libraries*
- local newspapers

**Screening**

After the closing date for applications, the search committee screens all applications, deciding between qualified and unqualified applicants. Candidates who do not meet the requirements for the position should be notified immediately.

Candidates who satisfy the requirements for the position become part of an official pool of applicants for further consideration. Narrowing this pool to a list of final candidates is perhaps the most difficult part of the search committee's task. Success of the evaluation process is contingent upon the formulation of an appropriate set of criteria against which all candidates can be rated objectively. After this process is completed, the search committee should be able to agree on three to five candidates to be called for interviews. It is appropriate to send each candidate background information about the library and the community, including the library's budget, annual report and long-range plan. Before the interviews, a plan for the process should be developed:

- Designate one person to handle the planning of the interviews, making contact with the candidates to schedule the interviews.
- Designate one person to conduct interviews with others assisting. Limit the interview team to a reasonable size, usually three to five people.
- Identify what expenses will be paid or reimbursed and notify each candidate.
- Plan the location for the interview, accommodations for the candidate, a tour of the library and community, etc.
- Include an opportunity for the candidates to meet the library staff.
- Agree upon a set of specific questions to be asked of each candidate.
- Allow adequate time for discussion. The interview is a mutual evaluation process. The committee should provide the candidate with a fair, accurate picture of the library, working conditions, and expectations.
- Allow time between interviews to complete evaluation sheets while the members' reactions are still fresh.

## **The Interview**

Agree to a standard list of questions to be asked of each candidate. This makes for a smooth interviewing process and helps to assure that only legal questions are asked and that each candidate responds to the same set of questions. The interview is an important step in selecting the most qualified person for the job; proper judgment here can help reduce turnover and organizational problems.

The chair can wrap up the interview process with comments covering the timetable for the final selection and the notification procedure.

## **Final Decision**

After all interviews have been completed, the search committee meets to discuss the results and to rank the candidates in order of preference. References are checked on the first choice. Following this, a recommendation is made to the full board. Once the library board agrees on a candidate to be the new director, the chair of the library board makes an official offer, which includes a written notice of appointment. Such letters of appointment typically cover position title, starting date, salary, moving expenses, fringe benefits, and a deadline for the candidate to respond to the offer (normally two weeks). Upon receipt of written acceptance, publicity about the appointment is usually sent to the local newspapers, to library publications, and to appropriate local offices.

Write all other candidates interviewed, thanking them and informing them of your decision **only after** acceptance has been received. If the first choice declines or is unavailable, the board can consider the second choice.

## **After the New Director Arrives**

**Orient** the new director and assist him/her with relocation. Provide help with school and housing information and additional information on the library and the community. A subscription to the local newspaper is a valuable tool to acclimate the new library director.

**Welcome** the new director. News releases and photographic coverage should be arranged. Personal introductions to staff members, trustees, community representatives, and local government officials should be scheduled promptly. An open house or reception hosted by the board, and assisted by the Friends of the Library, is a standard courtesy.

## **RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE BOARD AND THE DIRECTOR**

It is critical to the progress of the library that the board and the director work together toward common goals in a climate that fosters a free and open exchange of viewpoints. The expectations, roles, and responsibilities of each should be clearly delineated and understood.

According to the library's written personnel policies, there is generally an initial evaluation period that allows the board and the director time to develop a working relationship. During this time either party may reconsider the arrangement.

A reciprocal relationship will flourish if the board follows these guidelines:

1. Hire with enthusiasm after an appropriate search.
2. Before hiring, be clear about your expectations of the director and your goals for the library.
3. Reveal any special problems the library has.
4. Support the director (new or continuing) in pursuit of goals and objectives decided on in discussion between board and director.
5. Handle problems as they arise. Be patient with the director while sticking to the goal of excellence in library management.
6. Define the roles of the board and the director and stick to the division, but provide mutual support in performance of the roles.
7. Treat the director as a team member and leader of the library, a participant in decision-making, and as the professional advisor and resource.
8. Call for adequate reporting from the director.
9. Encourage the director to be involved in professional activities and give financial support to this participation.
10. Support the director in his or her position as administrator and stay out of the day-to-day operation of the library. Encourage the director to feel free to talk with the board members about problems.
11. Talk about the library in the community, including praise for the director. Introduce the director to the community. Aim for visibility for board, director, and library.
12. Encourage the director to be a futurist--aware of trends and projects of others.
13. Maintain a professional relationship with the director. Pass on the good things that trustees hear about their library. Share the success.
14. Pay the director an adequate progressive salary, a standard that applies to staff as well. A contented, adequately-compensated staff responds well to the direction of a head librarian and to the desires of the board.

## **TRUSTEES AND STAFF RELATIONSHIP**

In the interest of efficient administration, the board should develop a clear policy on its relationship with employees of the library. While the board should strive to create a climate of cordiality and friendly interest with staff, members should not personally intervene in matters between the staff and supervisors.

The director, as the chief administrator of the library, is responsible to the board for all personnel matters. Good management practices suggest that staff concerns, and all other administrative questions, should be brought to the attention of the board by the director.

## **EVALUATING THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR**

Performance appraisal of the library director is an integral part of the evaluation of the library as a whole. It is a continuous process that should be used as a means toward determining the accomplishment of organizational goals and objectives and how well the library is being managed.

A formal evaluation of the director is good management practice and should be done regularly, at least on an annual basis. The evaluation should be based on the job description and/or negotiated objectives agreed upon at the time of hiring or soon thereafter. The criteria should be defined specifically, providing the board with evidence of good management if the objectives are met.

### **Purposes of the Performance Evaluation:**

- to provide the director with a clear understanding of the board's expectations
- to ensure that the director is aware of how well the board's expectations are being met
- to serve as a formal vehicle of communication between the board and director
- to identify the board's actual concerns so that appropriate action can be taken
- to document the justification for salary adjustments

### **Methods of Evaluation**

To be effective the evaluation method and process must be designed to accommodate your specific local situation. Directors can be judged in many ways, but quality of performance is clearly the best measure.

- Has the director managed the operation of the library so as to provide the intended services?
- Has the director managed the staff so that operations are friendly, efficient, and cost-effective?
- Has the director been a leader in making the library an important service in the community?
- Has the director moved forward satisfactorily on achieving the goals and objectives outlined for the library and for the director?
- Has the director provided sufficient information to the board so that it can perform its duties?

- Has the director kept in touch with new trends in library service and relayed these to staff and board?

These are among the questions boards might use in assessing the director's performance. Any evaluation of the director should be based on how the library is doing. Is there satisfaction in the community? Is there praise for the library? Is there movement toward goals?

The American Library Trustee Association (ALTA) has published a guide entitled *Evaluating the Library Director* that is useful in developing an evaluation method for your library's situation. It is available for loan from the Professional Collection of the Office of Library and Information Services.

### **Developing the Evaluation Process**

- Board and director jointly develop a list of factors that lend themselves to objective evaluation.
- Board develops general evaluation method, criteria, rating scale, and form.
- Board and director identify goals, long-range plans, and specific areas that need attention.
- Director prepares a set of objectives with time line.
- Board reviews objectives and suggests changes, if appropriate.
- Board and director negotiate changes in objectives.
- Director and board confirm objectives.
- Director handles implementation of actions to meet objectives, including delegation of tasks to staff.
  - Director makes periodic reports to board on progress toward achieving objectives.
- Board and director make revisions to objectives negotiated.
- Board conducts annual formal evaluation review.
- Board provides periodic feedback to the director.
- Evaluation process is repeated.

### **Expectations and Evaluation**

Directors are accountable to many varied and sometimes conflicting constituencies. The board and the director must recognize these groups and agree on the priority of the demands of each. These constituencies might include:

- elected officials and the appointed governing officer who supervises other local government department heads
- library staff members who have diverse personal expectations for their director
- special interest groups who exert pressure on the director to respond to their concerns
- individual members of the board of trustees who have personal priorities for the library and the director

Good communication, effective public relations, a written plan, and clear policies will all help the board and director to deal with any conflicting expectations.

**Remember:** If the librarian is having a problem, give timely help X don't wait for an annual evaluation. Single episodes, slips, or errors should be handled when they occur, not held in waiting for an annual criticism.

The board's performance must also be evaluated as part of this process. Did the board conduct itself well, abide by the board/director divisions of responsibility, set objectives and work toward them, listen to reports, provide needed assistance throughout the year?

The evaluation should be a constructive process. Most library directors welcome the opportunity to review past performance objectively against established criteria. A good evaluation interview will include both strengths and weaknesses and will help the director be more effective in managing the library.

### **DISMISSAL OF THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR**

One of the most difficult situations a board may have to face is the dismissal of the library director. It is an action that should not be taken lightly because it will reflect on the future of the library and on the career of the director.

There is less likelihood of having to take this action if care is taken in the hiring process and the board has a well-developed evaluation procedure.

If efforts taken to improve the difficulty are unsuccessful, and the working relationship between the board and the director reaches a point that it is not possible to continue, then dismissal becomes a last resort.

Generally the reasons for discharge are for poor performance or infraction of rules. Both the reasons for dismissal and the procedures to be followed should be stated explicitly in writing and adopted by the board as policy. It is important to avoid vague terms. An appeals procedure should be included to ensure fairness and to protect the director from false charges.

In considering dismissal of the director, the board should ask itself the following questions:

- Has the board acted responsibly?
- Has the board dealt with problems as they arose?
- Has the director received written notification of his/her dismissal and the reasons for dismissal?
- Has the director been given a full hearing?
- Have the charges been listed explicitly?
- Can the board defend its position?
- Does the board need legal advice?
- How will the dismissal be handled with the public?
- Do the policies need to be changed?

The board should understand that its responsibility is to provide the best possible library service.

Every effort should be made to ensure that personalities and biases are not leading factors in a decision to replace the director.

**Are personnel policies reviewed periodically?**

**Do board members refrain from intervening in matters between the staff and supervisors?**

**Do the board and director jointly determine the criteria to be used in evaluating the director?**

## SUMMARY OF PERSONNEL RESPONSIBILITIES

### **Board of Trustees**

Employs a library director in compliance with library standards and develops guidelines for staff selection.

Provides adequate salary scale and fringe benefits for all employees.

Adopts personnel policies and personnel manual.  
personnel

### **Board of Trustees**

Recommends qualifications and candidates for board. Notifies appropriate authorities of board vacancies. Provides orientation for new trustees.

Develops standards for evaluating library director's performance. Reviews director's effectiveness.

### **Library Director**

Hires and directs staff.

Suggests improvements needed in salary and working conditions. Utilizes skills and initiative of staff members to the library's advantage.

Provides board with recommendations and materials to review. Maintains a  
manual.

### **Library Director**

Recommends criteria and assists in the selection of new trustees. Participates in orientation by introducing library staff, explaining procedures, etc.

Suggests basis for evaluation criteria. Provides materials for board to study. Maintains records of all personnel.

## JOINT RESPONSIBILITIES

Observe all local, state, and federal laws that relate to current employment practices.

Provide in-service training for professional development of staff members and effective implementation of policies. Provides opportunity for continuing education and advancement of staff and trustees.

## **Trustees and the Library's Budget**

Public library trustees are legally responsible for overseeing library finances. Accountability and awareness are keys to meeting fiscal responsibilities. Accountability is imperative because public funds are being expended. Awareness is crucial because the board cannot make wise budgeting decisions unless members are aware of how the library is funded, what it costs to run the library, what the library needs, and what those needs will cost.

Planning, budgeting, and public relations are linked together. Planning is about understanding the library's role in the community and its strengths and weaknesses so needs can be identified and priorities determined. Based on those understandings, goals are set and strategies designed to accomplish goals. Since it makes little sense to make plans that can't be supported financially, budgeting and planning go together. Plans are made within the limits of what is fiscally possible and budgets reflect planning decisions. Public relations, an ongoing process, is important because if the plan and budget are not understood and supported by the public and the library's funding authority, the board's work is in vain.

Monitoring how the library's budget is being spent is a continual trustee activity. Funds must be spent appropriately and legally, accurate records must be kept, and changing costs which will affect the budget must be tracked.

## ***Tips for Successful Budget Planning***

**First, know who does what.** A necessary first step in successful budget planning is knowing who has authority and who does what in the budget planning process. Written policies and procedures should outline responsibilities and roles clearly. Developing the budget should not be up to the library director alone. Developing a budget is a team process. Trustees can play a vital role in creating the budget and getting it approved because they are the library's link to the community and its government.

**Understand the budget's planning context.** The planning process is central to developing the budget since the budget must reflect the purpose and priorities of the library. Decide your priorities, make a plan that reflects those priorities, and then tie your budget to the plan. Be able to tell your funding agency what you are doing for your community, what you want to do, and what the expected results are. Requests, in other words, should be made within the context of a planning process. It's not enough to ask for X percentage in increased funding. Tie requests to clearly stated purposes and priorities.

**Give yourself and others time.** It takes time to make a budget. Boards should develop planning calendars. Since budgeting, like planning, is a cooperative process, the director and staff must be given adequate time to make requests and recommendations. Local funding authorities must be given enough time to consider the budget, too. Think long range, so funding resources for future growth can be identified or developed.

**Question everything.** Don't simply manipulate a pre-existing pattern by adding and subtracting percentages or figures from programs and columns that were set up before. Again, the budget is the tool for accomplishing specific goals. When a goal has been accomplished, phase out the program or project that was designed to meet it and make a case that funding should be moved to the next priority or purpose.

**Be realistic.** Tune in to what is happening in your community. Understand the community's ability to pay so you know what can and can't be expected. Understand the competing demands of other agencies on your funding agency so you know your fair share in relation to others. Use the Office of Library and Information Services' annual *Comparable Statistics of Rhode Island Public Libraries* to compare your situation with others and to understand your town government's level of effort.

**Don't restrict your budget to available funding.** Remember that funds may increase or become unexpectedly available. Be ready to make use of those funds. Be in a position to find and use other sources of income such as federal and state grants and contributions. Not all money has to come from local government sources. Grants, donations, and sponsors can often be used for one-time projects. Look for community support for alternative funding when appropriate. When you find and use other funds, be sure your funding agency knows and publicize it within the community.

**The library is a business.** A shoe store doesn't sell computers. It sells shoes. That is its mission or purpose. If it doesn't sell shoes, those in charge will be held accountable. Understand what your library is supposed to accomplish. For example, if your mission says that the library's role is to

supply popular reading materials to the community, be sure it is playing that role and that the budget makes it possible. Remember that those who are responsible for the budget must be accountable.

**Keep it simple and tell the truth.** Make the library and its needs understandable and accessible. When talking to the public or officials, avoid acronyms and professional vocabulary that may be misunderstood. Do not exaggerate or underestimate. If you say something will happen if the budget is cut, you should be sure that those effects will happen. Be mindful of the importance of credibility.

**There is nothing secret about the budget.** People have a right to know how their money is spent. Make the budget understandable. Learn how to use simple and familiar comparisons to illustrate the value people are getting for their tax dollars. For example, instead of using large figures, use per capita figures for expenditures and then compare these to the average cost of a meal in a restaurant, the cost of one hardbound book, or the price of a ski lift ticket.

**Read, listen, and learn.** Learn from other agencies about how they develop and present their budgets. Pay attention to success and learn from the examples of others. Above all, listen to your funding agency and know what they are looking for and what impresses them.

**When presenting the budget, tell your story and make your case.** Don't justify only budget increases, but justify the base as well. Tell them why the community needs the service and what is unique about what you do. Describe your contributions and tell how taxpayers benefit. Tell who uses the service and provide stories about people whose lives have been improved or made richer because of the services the library provides. Outline your goals and plans. Be sure they know you are accountable. And last, the use of graphs and/or charts is always effective in illustrating your case and should be used whenever possible.

## **Public Relations: The Trustee as a Library Ambassador**

Traditionally, public libraries have done little to sell themselves. At a time when costs and demands are rising and public agencies must compete for limited resources, it is crucial that the director, the staff, and trustees work together to foster a positive public image for the library. While it is important to establish a formal and active public relations program for the library, public relations also encompasses a wide range of daily and informal activities. Library trustees can play a significant role in creating good will for the library. Through their many and varied contacts in the community, trustees have frequent opportunities to inform others about library services, accomplishments, and needs. The trustees are the library's good will ambassadors, building awareness and support wherever possible.

While trustees are being vocal and visible on behalf of the library, they can also be sensitive to community information needs and demands for better library services. Trustees enjoy unique opportunities to serve as liaisons between the public and their library, translating community needs into improved policies and programs.

There are many ways public libraries can inform the public of the wide range of resources and services they provide. Even libraries with small budgets can find creative ways to publicize their accomplishments. Information and examples are available from the Office of Library and Information Services.

### **Board Responsibilities:**

- Establish a public relations policy
- Create a public relations plan and a budget for public relations activities
- Participate in public relations events and evaluate your library's public relations programs
- Encourage staff involvement in public relations and recruit volunteers

### **Individual Trustee Responsibilities**

- Be vocal, visible, and well informed use your library and spread the word about its services and successes
- Look for opportunities to build a positive image for the library
- Tell people about the library's programs, progress, and plans
- Be an advocate for all libraries talk about the merits of quality library service and the importance of reading
- Get to know local officials and persuade them to support the library
- Listen to the community be the library's eyes and ears
- Support the Friends of the Library and recruit new members

## Trustees and the Political Process

It is essential for trustees to be knowledgeable about the political process and to learn ways to affect decision-making. It is equally important for trustees to understand the layers of the political process.

In Rhode Island these layers include city/town and state officials who have certain powers through which libraries gain support. On the national level, Congress makes broad decisions that filter directly down to affect states and localities. Trustees need to cultivate frank, open relationships with all these officials, working with them to produce the best possible climate for libraries.

### Lobbying

Lobbying is the process of expressing opinions to the decision-makers and supporting those opinions. It provides an excellent opportunity for trustees to speak out with knowledge and experience, to present facts, figures, and evidence, and to help legislators understand libraries and what they mean to their constituents. Trustees should get to know their elected officials on the local, state, and national levels and to communicate with them about the issues affecting libraries.

Lobbying is the job of trustees. You represent the community and are advocates for the library. Trustees can make a difference because:

- You see the library from the user's viewpoint
- You have a perspective on the full range of public services
- You represent a broad base of consumers
- You are volunteer participants in government
- You are voters

Remember, you do not have to do it alone. Others in the community will be willing to support you if you provide them with the facts and let them know you need their help. In any lobbying effort, participants need to understand the legislative process and to proceed under a coordinated plan of action.

Although there are a variety of ways to lobby, there is no substitute for personal contact. Remember always to thank your elected officials for listening to you and for helping you.

Keep up with proposed legislation on the local, state, and national levels that may have an impact on library service in your community. Support and participate in state and national legislative lobbying activities sponsored by the Rhode Island Library Association (RILA), the Rhode Island Coalition of Library Advocates (COLA), and the American Library Association. Be a true advocate for libraries!

Lobbying is not a "dirty" word but a cornerstone of democracy; citizens have an obligation to express their opinions and concerns with elected officials. There are many ways to lobby. Personal contact may be the best. However you choose to lobby, some basic rules apply:

- Hostile or threatening behavior has a negative impact. Be considerate and polite. Take a positive approach.
- Timing is important. Keep in touch with officials all year and keep on top of political developments that affect the library. Don't wait until it's too late.
- Credibility is crucial. Clearly state who you represent. Have a clear purpose in mind.
- Know what you are talking about. Focus on facts, figures, evidence.
- Be concise, clear, and consistent.
- Be persistent but reasonable. Politics is the art of compromise. Respect the opinions of others.
- Know the personality and interests of the official you are lobbying. If you can relate your goals to his or hers, you may be more successful.  
Be prepared to back your opinion with those of others, but avoid repetition and overkill.
- Orchestrate your lobbying effort carefully with others.
- Thank officials for their consideration even when they don't agree. When an elected official supports you, follow up with praise and positive reinforcement.

# Intellectual Freedom: A Special Trust

Intellectual Freedom is the phrase to express the concept of access to many kinds of thoughts, ideas and information. Libraries are the traditional custodians of history and the intellectual expressions of men and women, both popular and unpopular.

## Collection Development and Materials Policies

Collection development and materials policies are guided by the principles of intellectual freedom. These stem from the First Amendment of the Constitution which affirms a citizen's right to hold individual beliefs and to express them. Freedom of speech and freedom of the press also apply to their counterpart, the right of unrestricted **access** to the expressions and beliefs of others.

In the process of acquiring and offering materials, libraries may encounter criticism, often in the form of a demand for censorship. Censorship arises out of personal opinions and convictions formed by the experiences and values of individuals. It is precisely the differences between people as individuals and groups that invigorate this country and make it unique. Our citizens strongly value freedom of thought for each individual. The freedom built into the U.S. Constitution enriches the lives of those fortunate to be its citizens. Freedom of expression tolerates and encourages a wide range of opinions, thoughts, and controversy.

Trustees have a mission to protect the right of all people to have access to materials they want and need and to help build a library that answers to community needs and interests. Inevitably, differences will arise over public purchase of certain books, videos, recordings, art, etc. When the library's ownership of materials is challenged, it becomes a **censorship** issue because critics may want not only to remove the material, but also to prevent patrons from borrowing or reading the material.

## What is the Role of the Trustees in this Clash of Opinions?

- Trustees start with a conviction that the library, which cannot own everything, should try to offer a spectrum of opinion. A firm selection policy should be a part of the policy manual and serves as a base for purchases made by the library staff.
- Public libraries play a unique role in the preservation of democracy by providing an open, non-judgmental place where people can pursue their interests and gain an understanding of diverse opinions.
- Trustees play an essential role in safeguarding the intellectual liberty of the public and they must recognize, understand and support freedom of access. The test of a trustee's commitment comes when he/she is called upon to allow and defend the expression of ideas opposed to personal beliefs.
- Censorship campaigns have been waged against ideals and works throughout history for many different reasons -- politics, sex, religion, science, civil rights, race, etc. History has often shown

that what is censored at one time or by one person may be a classic in another time or for another person.

- Trustees have an obligation to assure that the public library provides readers with a variety of materials representing a continuum of viewpoints - liberal, conservative and "middle of the road" -- regardless of special-interest pressure groups.

### **Dealing with Concerns about Library Materials**

One of the major responsibilities of the library director is to handle these complaints in a respectful and fair manner. The key to successfully addressing these concerns is to be sure that the library staff, library board/library governing authority are knowledgeable about the complaint procedures and their implementation.

The written materials selection policy should contain these concepts:

- Selection of library materials is the responsibility of the library director. Members of the professional staff, who are qualified by education and training, may also select books and library materials under the direction of the library director. Materials selected by these trained professionals are considered to be selected by the board.
- Selection of materials will be made based on the needs of the community and standard selection criteria such as: literary merit, accuracy, enduring value, authoritativeness, social significance, format, availability, and cost. No library material should be excluded because of the author's nationality, race, sex, religion, political or social views.
- The board regards censorship to be an individual matter. Patrons are free to reject for themselves materials that they disapprove of, but they must not use this right of self-censorship to restrict the freedom of others to read.
- The library board supports and adheres to the principles of the *Freedom to Read Statement* (Appendix 4) and the *Library Bill of Rights* (Appendix 3), and firmly declares that whenever censorship is involved, no library materials can be removed from the library except under court order.

### **Being Prepared**

The politically astute board and library director should prepare comprehensive collection development and public service policies to guide the selection of materials and **defuse** potential censorship. Trustees must recognize the right of citizens to question any board actions and be willing to listen and to explain the policies of the library. The board should project an open, concerned image without accommodating censorship demands.

## **Handling the Censor**

The recent increased attention to censorship of library materials may be attributed to many things, among them a trend to more accountability in government and a reaction to perceived modern permissiveness. To prevent such an attack, trustees and library directors, working closely together, need to have carefully developed policies in place, plus a "Freedom to Read" public information program in operation.

If an attack comes, trustees and library directors need to be well prepared to enforce the policies and to resolve the complaint amicably if possible, but to meet it with a calm and sustained plan of action. Trustees must firmly support the director in such circumstances.

Libraries need a simple method of dealing with any selection challenges. Ordinarily, the library sets up a procedure by which a patron may request, in writing, reconsideration. As part of this process, the patron should discuss complaints with the library director and then the library board, if necessary.

Rhode Island public libraries can get assistance and support in handling any censorship challenges from the Rhode Island Library Association and its Intellectual Freedom Committee, the American Library Association's Office of Intellectual Freedom, and the local chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union. No library should be without the latest editions of *The Intellectual Freedom Manual* published by the American Library Association and the Rhode Island Library Association's *Intellectual Freedom Handbook*.

# The Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services

In 1964, the Department of State Library Services was established by law as the agency of state government charged with overseeing library development and cooperation in the State. The Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) replaced this agency in 1996, making this function part of the Rhode Island Department of Administration. The provision of library services within OLIS is governed by the 17-member Library Board of Rhode Island, a widely representative body which approves the policies, plans, fiscal programs, and services provided to libraries. The duties and responsibilities of OLIS are outlined in state law (RI General Laws 29-3.1-7) and include: (1) development of a systematic program of public library development and interlibrary cooperation; (2) preparation of a total budget for state aid to libraries; (3) creation of an annual program for the use of Federal funds; (4) development of standards and regulations for public library development; (5) cooperation with the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education in the development of effective school library media services and their integration into statewide library networking activities; (6) cooperation with the Commissioner of Higher Education in supporting and encouraging effective library services throughout the state system of higher education; and, (7) coordination of library services to state government.

## The OLIS Mission Statement:

The state library agency of Rhode Island supports and strengthens library services by planning, by coordinating, by providing consultation services, training, and funding, and by promoting collaboration among libraries to ensure that all residents will benefit from free, open, convenient, and timely access to excellent library and information resources and services

## How OLIS Supports Public Library Services

- Disburses state and federal funding to public libraries
- Provides consulting services to public libraries and branches
- Sponsors and conducts continuing education programs for librarians and **trustees**
- Serves as the public library for the blind and physically handicapped, serving 2,000 users statewide with talking books, magazines, and equipment provided by the Library of Congress
- Provides support services for libraries including reading development activities such as the Summer Reading Program and the Young Adult Round Table
- Oversees and supports library service in state institutions
- Administers a program providing up to 50% of the costs for public library construction projects, using state and federal funds
- Maintains a Professional Collection of library science materials, designed to meet the reference and information needs of librarians, trustees, library school students, and friends of libraries

## How OLIS Supports Library Networking

- Administers the LORI, the state network of over 220 academic, public, school, special, and institutional, libraries statewide
- Maintains and develops the [www.olis.ri.gov](http://www.olis.ri.gov) website, the major electronic information and communication resource for the RI library community
- Maintains and funds the delivery system that serves as the backbone of the state network, LORI
- Funds LORI services, including a major grant to the Providence Public Library as the Statewide Reference Resource Center

## OLIS Publications of Interest to Librarians and Trustees\*

*Minimum Standards for Rhode Island Public Libraries (2000)*

*Comparable Statistics of Rhode Island Public Libraries (annual)*

*OLIS Five-Year Plan*

*Standards for LORI Member Libraries*

*How to Apply for Public Library Construction/Renovation Funding...*

\* For a complete list see the OLIS web site at: [www.olis.ri.gov](http://www.olis.ri.gov)

The Office of Library and Information Services is located at One Capitol Hill, Providence RI 02908 and can be reached by telephone at 222-2726 or fax at 222-4195. The OLIS staff directory is located at <http://www.olis.ri.gov/aboutus/staff.php>

## The Library of Rhode Island

The Library of Rhode Island is a virtual library, the sum total of the immense diversity and depth represented by the collections and skills embodied in the nearly 600 libraries of Rhode Island. This virtual library is not a structure, not a single building, or a single library collection, not even a single administration, but an infrastructure that interconnects the collections, staff, and missions of the state's libraries. Services are supported on a cooperative basis by local, state, federal government, and community agencies and organizations. Libraries in Rhode Island receive appropriate levels of funding so that residents can make optimum use of the many informational and cultural resources available in their collections or through electronic gateways. All types of libraries work together to share their expertise and their resources for the benefit of all the people of Rhode Island.

Citizens of Rhode Island can find materials and information on any subject, rapidly, from convenient locations, on demand. Library users are assisted by librarians and expert staff, who tailor resources and services to meet individual needs, and help people to locate books, materials, and information that nourish personal and economic growth. Through the virtual library, Rhode Islanders have access to a wide variety of library resources in many formats. Foreign language materials, literacy and English-as-a-Second-Language learning and teaching materials, talking books, Braille and large print for the visually impaired, and professional assistance in the use of the materials is available from any library location. Each library user has access to the programs and services s/he needs.

Computers and telecommunications technology are one part of the virtual library infrastructure; interlibrary loan, delivery and telefacsimile services and other cooperative efforts are also vital. Technology makes it possible for each library to be a door to the worldwide virtual library. With the help of a trained librarian, users can locate the resources they seek, or enter the virtual library using their personal computer at home or at work. The virtual library itself is also a door to libraries in the rest of the world, as well as to the Internet and the World Wide Web. Through the virtual library, users have access to books and other materials, online databases, web pages, and other information, which can be delivered in hard copy or electronic form.

State government has primary responsibility for providing the infrastructure for this virtual library, while individual communities, academic institutions, schools, and other organizations are responsible for tailoring their local resources and facilities to local needs and institutional missions. Sufficient staff are available at the state level with the expertise to maintain the infrastructure for both electronic and physical delivery of materials and information, ensure access to information and library resources, increase public awareness of these resources, provide referral service, and maintain quality control. Local libraries have incentives to participate in the virtual library and assistance in maintaining high-quality facilities and services. Through the Office of Library and Information Services, other State agencies are well informed about the needs, capabilities, services, resources, and complexities of all types of libraries throughout Rhode Island.

# LORI: The State Library Network

## Statewide Networks

The American Library Association's *Standards for Library Functions at the State Level* defines a network as "a combination of diverse information sources linked in a formal relationship." These standards assign specific networking responsibilities to the state library agency, including:

- to promote the concept of networking to make optimum use of total library and information resources within the state and plan for participation in the evolving national information system
- to effect exchange of information and materials through networks that open new sources and channels for the flow of information
- to ensure that the networks of library and information sources within a state's own borders transcend state boundaries and are linked to other networks state, regional, national, and international
- to encourage, by grants and other funding, the development and continuation of networks

## LORI Established in Law

The General Assembly established the Rhode Island Library Network (later renamed LORI) in 1989. The legislature recognized the need for multitype library networking as envisioned in *Standards for Library Functions at the State Level* and detailed in the *Rhode Island Library Study*, a strategic plan for library services done in 1988 by the Department of State Library Services and the Rhode Island Library Association in consultation with Peat Marwick Main and Co. The legislative intent in creating the Network was "to provide each individual in Rhode Island with equal opportunity of access to resources that will satisfy their and society's information needs and interests." The law authorizes the Office of Library and Information Services to tie together all of the state's libraries, regardless of type or primary clientele, through a coherent system of communications and delivery that will make the resources of each library available to the users of all libraries.

RI General Law 29-6-9 requires the Office of Library and Information Services to include as part of its annual budget proposal funding "for the administration and operation of the LORI to:

- (1) provide central support services for LORI, such as delivery of materials, telecommunications, consultant services, and access to bibliographic and other Information sources;
- (2) reimburse libraries for the actual cost of providing services to individuals outside the library's primary clientele;

support the development, maintenance of and access to the resource sharing potential embodied in specialized collections and services at the Providence Public Library and other libraries which can be provided most cost-effectively on a statewide basis."

LORI also provides the means for librarians to communicate electronically. Staff at LORI libraries can use the online system, LORI, to answer a request for a library user, send interlibrary messages, conduct and participate in meetings, interact with colleagues on a statewide library "bulletin board," access the Internet, and complete their annual reports, surveys, and other documentation.

In order for the network to provide these services, the Office of Library and Information Services provides central support for LORI member libraries, including:

- access to bibliographic utilities for interlibrary loan (transaction costs, telecommunications, annual fees, start-up costs, equipment)
- statewide database of monograph and serial holdings
- planning and implementation of a statewide telecommunications network
- access to specialized databases
- statewide delivery of materials
- consultant services, information and referral, and training

Future plans include leadership and financial support by the Office of Library and Information Services for cooperative collection development and preservation activities.

The LORI Committee, advisory to OLIS, developed a set of standards that each library must meet as a participant in the statewide network. Any institution that complies with the *Standards for LORI Member Libraries* and is a signatory to the *LORI Interlibrary Loan Code* is considered a LORI member.

## **Friends of the Library**

Friends of the Library are groups of citizens who join together to support, improve, and promote libraries. They understand the importance of library service to the community and work in a variety of ways to help provide quality service and to stimulate the use of the library.

Friends have no personal vested interest in the library and are in the unique position of being able to make enormous contributions in several areas: fund raising, services, public relations, advocacy, volunteerism, and community involvement. Their activities change as needs change. Friends usually select a limited number of activities to emphasize.

The roles of trustees, library director, and Friends are related but distinct. Trustees represent citizen control and governance of the library. The library director represents the administration and management of the library. Friends of the Library represent citizen participation and assistance to the library. It is important to the success of the total library program that all three understand clearly their respective roles and work together toward common goals.

### **Working with Friends**

Trustees should assist the Friends organization and support its activities by providing leadership in the following ways:

- Develop a policy on Friends
- Become a member and attend Friends' special events
- Appoint a liaison with the Friends
- Ask for input from the Friends
- Express appreciation to Friends for their support and service

A good relationship between the library director and the Friends group is essential in fostering a climate for joint accomplishments. They must have a basic understanding of each other's goals and objectives, a recognition of the strengths that each brings to a common purpose, and the realization that through cooperation they can achieve ultimate success.

### **What do Friends do?**

The purposes of organizing a Friends group are varied. Friends are usually organized with one or more of the following objectives:

- To increase community awareness and use of the library
- To work for library legislation or appropriations
- To encourage gifts, endowments, and memorials for the library
- To provide direct financial assistance

- To raise money and campaign for new building, renovation, or expansion projects
- To sponsor programs designed to add to the cultural life of the community
- To volunteer to work on specific library projects designated by the director

**Friends can be most effective by:**

- Adopting bylaws, including a clear statement of the Friends' roles
- Keeping informed of library plans and policies
- Planning their activities with the approval of the library director
- Carrying out projects without excessive demands on the library staff

**Need help in organizing or revitalizing a Friends group?**

The Office of Library and Information Services can provide assistance in getting a Friends group organized and in maintaining an active program. Books, videotapes, audiotapes, lists of other Friends groups, and a variety of brochures and newsletters are available for loan from the OLIS Professional Collection.

**Does your library have a Friends group?**

**Does the board have a policy on the Friends group?**

## **Volunteers in the Library**

Volunteers constitute an important community resource for many public libraries. When a program is developed, it should be with the understanding that the use of qualified volunteers in a library program is a supplement to, not a substitute for, paid staff.

Volunteers usually come to the library on an individual basis and participate in on-going work or special projects within the library setting. Their tasks should be of genuine significance and should enhance the services and capabilities of the library. Volunteers can be advocates for the library within the community.

Libraries should not undertake a volunteer program unless the library board and the director are committed to the concept and are willing to devote the necessary time to develop a program that is well managed and will benefit the library.

Successful volunteer programs are:

- Planned and approved by the staff and board
- Based on written policy
- Managed under sound personnel practices (interviewing, training, evaluation, and development are important to volunteers)
- Clear about job descriptions, the status of the volunteer, supervision, expectations as to work schedule, and consistent service
- Clear about policies concerning insurance, use of library vehicles, and paid expenses
- Aware of the need to recognize and show appreciation for volunteer work
- Realistic in expectations of hours donated, types of work to be done, and training required
- Open to the community, in an effort to use the skills and talents of people who can contribute to the enhancement of library service

**Has the board adopted a policy for volunteers?**

**Are there procedures in place for managing the volunteer program?**

## Organizations Serving Trustees

Continuing education and networking are essential components of effective trusteeship. The following organizations provide such opportunities for their members.

### **American Library Association (ALA) ([www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org))**

The American Library Association is the oldest and largest library association in the world. Its membership of more than fifty-five thousand includes librarians, **trustees**, other interested people, and institutions.

The purpose of the association is to provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all. Major areas of concern include access to information, legislation and funding, intellectual freedom, public awareness, personnel resources, and library services, development, and technology. The association publishes a monthly journal for members, *American Libraries*, and has two major conferences a year (Midwinter and Annual).

### **Association of Library Trustees & Advocates (ALTA) (<http://www.ala.org/ala/alta/alta.htm>)**

The Association of Library Trustees and Advocates is the division of ALA that is primarily concerned with the interests of **trusteeship**. Membership benefits include: the means to connect with libraries of all sizes in all parts of the country; advisory services from the professional headquarters staff; ALTA's newsletter subscription; the opportunity to serve on one of the ALTA committees of special interest to trustees; information on publications relating to library trusteeship; and discounts on ALTA publications.

### **ALA Washington (DC) Office (<http://www.ala.org/ala/washoff/washingtonoffice.htm>)**

The American Library Association has an office in Washington that serves as a liaison between the membership of ALA and the federal government. The staff monitors actions of the federal government that affect libraries and disseminates this information to the membership. The staff also supplies information on libraries to Congress and government agencies, and works for legislation affecting library programs.

### **Friends of Libraries USA (FOLUSA) ([www.folusa.com](http://www.folusa.com))**

FOLUSA is a national organization that works to develop and support local and state Friends of Library groups throughout the country. The organization meets twice a year in conjunction with the American Library Association. Meetings offer opportunities to meet peers from other states, to engage in problem solving, and to share successes. FOLUSA's website offers a number of valuable online publications, especially fact sheets relating to all topics of interest to library friends.

**Rhode Island Library Association (RILA) ([www.uri.edu/library/rila/rila.html](http://www.uri.edu/library/rila/rila.html))**

RILA is a professional and educational organization of librarians, library staff, **trustees**, and library supporters, whose purpose is to promote the profession of librarianship and to improve the visibility, accessibility, responsiveness, and effectiveness of library and information services throughout Rhode Island. Membership is open to everyone. For more information contact the Reference Department of the Office of Library and Information Services (222-5768) or visit the RILA web site.

**Rhode Island Coalition of Library Advocates (COLA)**

<http://www.bodees.com/COLA/COLA.htm>

COLA is a statewide nonprofit grassroots organization that seeks to improve the quality of life of all Rhode Islanders by supporting libraries of all kinds. COLA works to help improve library service through advocacy, education, public awareness, and encouragement of local library support groups.

# ***APPENDIXES***

## ***The Board Evaluates Itself***

Successful boards pay attention to the process of how they operate. Just as they evaluate the progress of their library, they must assess the operation of the board and determine how they can do the job better. Here is a sample self-evaluation checklist:

Our board prepares to do its job by...

- YES/NO      Conducting a thorough orientation for all new board members.
- YES/NO      Integrating new members into the team as quickly as possible.
- YES/NO      Attending board development conferences.
- YES/NO      Providing monthly board development activities for all board members.
- YES/NO      Performing an annual self-evaluation of board operations.
- YES/NO      Providing all board members with copies of the mission statement, bylaws, constitution, long-range plan, and all other important documents of the library.
- YES/NO      Touring all facilities at least once a year.

Our board ensures good meetings by...

- YES/NO      Limiting most meetings to two hours or less.
- YES/NO      Providing a comfortable meeting room conducive to business.
- YES/NO      Convening and adjourning on time.
- YES/NO      Sticking to the prepared agenda.
- YES/NO      Working for consensus rather than fighting for a majority.
- YES/NO      Following a businesslike system of parliamentary rules.
- YES/ NO      Including the director as a resource for all deliberations.
- YES/NO      Confining all discussion to policy issues and avoiding management issues.

YES/NO Allowing/encouraging all board members to participate in discussion.

Individual board members...

YES/NO Attend at least 90% of all board meetings and committee meetings to which they are assigned.

YES/NO Come to meetings prepared to discuss agenda issues.

YES/NO Come to meetings on time.

YES/NO See themselves as part of a team effort.

YES/NO Act as advocates for the library.

YES/NO Know their responsibility as board members of the library.

YES/NO Attempt to exercise authority only during official meetings of the board.

YES/NO Represent the broad interest of the library and all constituents, not special interests.

YES/NO Understand that the most efficient way to govern is to delegate management to the director.

Our board plans for the future of the library by...

YES/NO Annually reviewing and approving the mission statement.

YES/NO Annually reviewing progress toward the long-range plan and modifying the long-range plan.

YES/NO Operating from opportunity to opportunity rather than crisis to crisis.

**Reinforcements and solutions:**

**In which of the major categories above does our board show real strength?**

**In which of the major categories above does our board need improvement?**

## **Sample Bylaws\***

### Article I: Name

This organization shall be called "The Board of Trustees of the \_\_\_\_\_ Library" existing by virtue of the provisions of Chapter \_\_\_\_\_ of the Laws of the State of \_\_\_\_\_ and exercising the powers and authority and assuming the responsibilities delegated to it under the said statute.

### Article II: Officers

Section 1. The officers shall be a president, a vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer, elected from among the appointed trustees at the annual meeting of the board.

Section 2. A nominating committee shall be appointed by the president three months prior to the annual meeting who will present a slate of officers at the annual meeting. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.

Section 3. Officers shall serve a term of one year from the annual meeting at which they are elected and until their successors are duly elected.

Section 4. The president shall preside at all meetings of the board, authorize calls for any special meetings, appoint all committees, execute all documents authorized by the board, serve as an ex-officio voting member of all committees, and generally perform all duties associated with that office.

Section 5. The vice president, in the event of the absence or disability of the president, or of a vacancy in that office, shall assume and perform the duties and functions of the president.

Section 6. The secretary shall keep a true and accurate record of all meetings of the board, shall issue notice of all regular and special meetings, and shall perform such other duties as are generally associated with that office.

Section 7. The treasurer shall be the disbursing officer of the board, co-sign all checks, and shall perform such duties as generally devolve upon the office. He shall be bonded in an amount as may be required by a resolution of the board. In the absence or inability of the treasurer, his duties shall be performed by such other members of the board as the board may designate.

### Article III: Meetings

Section 1. The regular meetings shall be held each month, the date and hour to be set by the board at its annual meeting.

Section 2. The annual meeting, which shall be for the purpose of election of officers and the adoption of an annual report, shall be held at the time of the regular meeting in \_ of each year.

Section 3. The order of business for regular meetings shall include, but not be limited to, the following items which shall be covered in the sequence shown so far as

circumstances will permit:

- (a) Roll call of members
- (b) Disposition of minutes of previous regular meeting and any intervening special meeting
- (c) Director's financial report of the library
- (d) Action on bills
- (e) Progress and service report of director
- (f) Committee reports
- (g) Communications
- (h) Unfinished business
- (i) New business
- (j) Public presentation to, or discussion with, the board
- (k) Adjournment

Section 4. Special meetings may be called by the secretary at the direction of the president, or at the request of \_\_\_\_\_ members, for the transaction of business as stated in the call of the meeting.

Section 5. A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting shall consist of \_\_\_\_ members of the board present in person.

Section 6. Conduct of meetings: Proceedings of all meetings shall be governed by *Robert's Rules of Order*.

#### Article IV: Library Director and Staff

The board shall appoint a qualified library director who shall be the executive and administrative officer of the library on behalf of the board and under its review and direction. The director shall recommend to the board the appointment and specify the duties of other employees and shall be held responsible for the proper direction and supervision of the staff, for the care and maintenance of library property, for an adequate and proper selection of books in keeping with the stated policy of the board, for the efficiency of library service to the public, and for its financial operation within the limitations of the budgeted appropriation. In the case of part-time or temporary employees, the director shall have interim authority to appoint without prior approval of the board provided that any such appointment shall be reported to the board at its next regular meeting.

#### Article V: Committees

Section 1. The president shall appoint committees of one or more members each for such specific purposes as the business of the board may require from time to time. The Committee shall be considered to be discharged upon the completion of the purpose for which it was appointed and after the final report is made to the board.

Section 2. All committees shall make a progress report to the library board at each of its meetings.

Section 3. No committee will have other than advisory powers unless, by suitable action of the board, it is granted specific powers to act.

Article VI: General

Section 1. An affirmative vote of the majority of all members of the board present at the time shall be necessary to approve any action before the board. The president may vote upon and may move or second a proposal before the board.

Section 2. The bylaws may be amended by the majority vote of all members of the board provided written notice of the proposed amendment shall have been mailed to all members at least ten days prior to the meeting at which such action is proposed to be taken.

Section 3. Any rule or resolution of the board, whether contained in these bylaws or otherwise, may be suspended temporarily in connection with business at hand, but such suspension, to be valid, may be taken only at a meeting at which two-thirds (\_\_\_) of the members of the board shall be present and two-thirds of those present shall so approve.

\*Reprinted with permission from: *The Library Trustee: A Practical Guidebook, 5th edition*  
by Virginia Young.

## ***Library Bill of Rights***

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948.

Amended February 2, 1961, June 27, 1967, and January 23, 1980,  
by the ALA Council.

## ***The Freedom To Read Statement***

(Excerpts)

1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those which are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.
2. Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation contained in the books they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what books should be published or circulated.
3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to determine the acceptability of a book on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.
4. There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.
5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any book the prejudgment of a label characterizing the book or author as subversive or dangerous.
6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large.
7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a bad book is a good one, the answer to a bad idea is a good one.

Adopted June 25, 1953; revised January 28, 1972, January 16, 1991, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee.

## ***The Freedom To View Statement***

The Freedom to View, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest possible access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video and other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

Endorsed by the ALA Council, January 10, 1990.

## ***Ethics Statement for Public Library Trustees***

Trustees must promote a high level of library service while observing ethical standards.

Trustees must avoid situations in which personal interests might be served or financial benefits gained at the expense of library users, colleagues or the institution.

It is incumbent on any trustee to disqualify himself or herself immediately whenever the appearance of a conflict of interest exists.

Trustees must distinguish clearly in their actions and statements between their personal philosophy and attitudes and those of the institution, acknowledging the formal position of the board even if they personally disagree.

A trustee must respect the confidential nature of library business while being aware of and in compliance with applicable laws governing freedom of information.

Trustees must be prepared to support to the fullest the efforts of librarians in resisting censorship of library materials by groups or individuals.

Trustees who accept membership on a library board are expected to perform all of the functions of library trustees.

Approved by the Public Library Association Board of Directors and the ALTA Board of Directors,  
July 8, 1985.

## ***Glossary of Common Library Terms and Acronyms***

Academic Library	The library of a junior college, community college, four-year college, or university.
ARIHSL	Association of Rhode Island Health Science Librarians, an organization of health science librarians with the purpose of improving and increasing access to library and information services for health care professionals.
ALA	American Library Association, the largest and oldest national library association in the world.
Bibliographic Record	A set of information that describes and catalogs a book or other library material retrieved from library collections.
Blog	A <a href="#">website</a> in which journal entries are posted on a regular basis and displayed in reverse chronological order. The term blog is a shortened form of <b>weblog</b> or <b>web log</b> .
Cataloging	The process of describing an item in the collection and assigning a classification (call) number.
CE	Continuing education.
CLAN	Cooperating Libraries Automated Network, Rhode Island's cooperative of public libraries sharing an automated circulation and online catalog system.
COLA	Coalition of Library Advocates, the Rhode Island citizen advocacy group whose purpose is to promote library services and increased support for libraries of all types.
CRIARL	Consortium of Rhode Island Academic and Research Libraries, a consortium of academic and research libraries whose purpose is to promote cooperation and communication among members.
Disaster Plan	The document outlining the library's plans and procedures for dealing with and recovering from disasters of any kind.

Document Delivery	Getting a requested document, book or other piece of information into the hands of the requester.
FOLUSA	Friends of Libraries USA.
HELIN	Higher Education Library Information Network, the automated network made up of most of Rhode Island institutions of higher education.
Holdings	The book collection and other materials owned by a library.
Humphry Study	The study done by John Humphry in the early 1960s which resulted in the formation of the Office of Library and Information Services and a model for library cooperation in RI.
ILL	Interlibrary loan.
Internet	A world-wide series of interconnected networks, accessible to one another through standard addressing and communication protocols.
LAN	Local area network of computers.
LC	Library of Congress. Originally established to serve the needs of the Congress; now performs many of the functions served by the national libraries of other countries.
Library Board of RI	The policy-setting board for OLIS of State Library Services created by the General Assembly in 1990.
LORI	Library of Rhode Island, the state library network.
LSTA	Library Services and Technology Act.
LTV	Library Television, a locally produced cable television program featuring library news.
MARC	Machine Readable Cataloging. Developed by the Library of Congress, MARC is a standard way of putting the description of a book or other item into a machine readable record to permit sharing with other automated systems.
MLS	Master of Library Science, the graduate degree from a library

school  
professional library degree.

or department. The term for the

NCLIS	National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. A permanent, independent agency of the Executive Branch of the federal government, created in 1970. Advises the President and Congress on implementation of national information policy.
NEDCC	Northeast Document Conservation Center. A service for preservation, restoration, and conservation of library and related documentary materials.
NELA	New England Library Association.
NELINET	New England Library Information Network. A membership organization of academic, public, and special libraries founded to provide shared cataloging services from OCLC.
NERTCL	New England Round Table of Children's Librarians, a section of NELA.
Network	Two or more organizations engaged in a common pattern of information exchange through communications links, or some common objectives; an assemblage of computer devices that communicate with one another through standardized addresses and connections; a network of libraries.
OCLC	OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Incorporated. An Ohio corporation established for the sharing of cataloging information among libraries, and now the vendor and maintainer of an international database of bibliographic records and of the means for accessing that data for cataloging, interlibrary loan, and reference uses.
OLIS	Office of Library and Information Services, the state library agency responsible for leadership and support for the development and coordination of libraries and library service in Rhode Island.
OSHEAN	Ocean State Higher education, Economic development and Administrative Network, a non-profit consortium formed to foster the development of a high-speed communications infrastructure.
PLA	Public Library Association, a division of the American Library Association.

Preservation Plan	The library's description of its ongoing program by which the general and specific needs for the care of its collections are determined, priorities are established, and resources for implementation are identified.
Public Library	A library supported by a town or special district for the benefit of all residents of the community. Usually funded by property taxation, state and federal funds, donations, and endowments. A number of "public" libraries may actually be privately owned and governed associations which provide free public library service by contract with the town, or by tradition.
Readers' Adviser	A librarian who recommends titles and prepares subject bibliographies.
Reference Service	Personal assistance provided by members of the reference staff to library patrons in pursuit of information.
Resource Sharing	Any means by which information and/or materials in one library are available to users of another library.
RILA	Rhode Island Library Association
RIEMA	Rhode Island Educational Media Association, the professional association for school library media center staff, whose purpose is to promote the development of programs in media technology and library services for children and young adults in Rhode Island's educational institutions.
RILINK	The cooperative effort by Rhode Island school libraries to share their resources through an interactive, web-based union catalog of library materials. Students and teachers at RILINK member schools can use the catalog at <a href="http://www.rilink.org">www.rilink.org</a> to look for, and request, books or other items at member libraries. Items requested are delivered to each school through the statewide library network.
RINET	A statewide telecommunications network involving OLIS, the RI Department of Education, WSBE Channel 36, the University of RI, and Brown University, the purpose of which is to connect libraries and schools to electronic library and educational resources.
School Library Media Center	An organized learning facility offering the entire school community diverse information sources: books, periodicals, audiovisual

	materials, equipment, and electronic information technologies. It functions as a resource and teaching center and is the "heart" of the school.
Special Library	A library serving a special purpose or clientele, e.g., a library in a private business, hospital, governmental agency, etc.
State Library Agencies	Units of state government providing consultant assistance and grant funds to public, school, and state institution libraries as well as long-range planning and support for interlibrary cooperation.
Statewide Reference Resource Center	Providence Public Library serves as the Statewide Reference Resource Center with state funding provided via the Office of Library and Information Services. The goal of the program is to provide quality reference services to all LORI member libraries and to all residents of Rhode Island.
Talking Books Plus	Talking Books Plus is the Rhode Island Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped located within the RI Office of Library and Information Services. It functions as a public library for eligible persons with disabilities who reside in Rhode Island.
Technical Processing	The preparation of a book or other item for placement in a library collection so it can be readily identified and available for use.
URI GSLIS	University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Library and Information Studies.
Vertical File	A collection of pamphlets, clippings and similar materials arranged for ready reference in a file cabinet of some kind.
Weeding	The selection of library material from the collection to be discarded or transferred to storage.

## **A Trustee's Reading List**

- Kinney, Lisa F. *Lobby for Your Library: Know What Works*. ALA, 1992.
- Kitta, Donna. *Library Trustees Meeting the Challenge*. (videorecording). ALA Video, 1988.
- Trustee Tool Kit for Library Leadership*. California State Library, 1998.
- Manley, Will. *For Library Trustees Only: Living With Your Director*. McFarland, 1993.
- Moore, Mary. *The Successful Library Trustee Handbook*. ALA, 2005.
- Rubin, Renee. *Avoiding liability risk: an attorney's advice to library trustees and others*. American Library Trustee Association, c1994.
- Rubin, Richard. *Hiring Library Employees: a how-to-do-it manual*. Neal-Schuman, 1993.
- Swan, James. *Working together: a how-to-do-it manual for trustees and librarians*. Neal-Schuman, 1992.
- Young, Virginia. *The Library Trustee: a Practical Guidebook*. 5th edition. ALA, 1995.
- Young, Virginia. *The Trustee of a Small Public Library*. 2nd ed. ALA, 1992.

### American Library Trustee Association (ALTA) Publications Series

1. *Securing a New Library Director* (rev. 1985)
2. *Consultants and Library Boards - Working Partnership* (1981)
3. *Library Service to Farmers* (1981)
4. *Library Trustees in State Organizations* (1982)
5. *Library Trustees and Personnel* (1983)
6. *Evaluating the Library Director* (1983)
7. *Library Boards - Who Are They and How Do They Get There? A Survey*. (1988)
8. *Major Duties, Functions, and Responsibilities of Public Library Trustees - An Outline*. (1988)
9. *A Questionnaire to Evaluate Your Library and Library Board* (1988)
10. *Public Relations as a Library Trustee's Responsibility, Not New - Just Different* (1990)

\*\*\*\*\* All titles are available for loan from the OLIS Professional Collection \*\*\*\*\*

***Index: RI Library and Library-Related Laws***

<u>Subject</u>	<u>RI General Laws Title - Chapter- Section(s)</u>
Confidentiality of Library Records	11-18-32 & 38-2-2
Conflict of Interest	36-14-1 through 21
Construction (State Aid)	29-6-6
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***Legal Opinion: "Control of Personnel Policies"***

In 1994, at the request of the (then) Department of State Library Services, Elizabeth Murdock Myer, the (then) Department Legal Counsel to the Governor, rendered an opinion regarding the authority of library boards of trustees.

In her September 28, 1994 memo Ms. Myer refers to section 29-4-5 of the Rhode Island General Laws relating to trustees, and states that:

"It is clear from the Rhode Island General Laws that the appointment of a librarian and the fixing of the compensation of the librarian is within the powers of the Board of Trustees which are appointed by the town or city council. In addition, other rules and regulations can be enacted by the Board of Trustees that govern other matters involving personnel and library maintenance. Since Section 29 of the Rhode Island General Laws pertaining to libraries and librarians affect every town and city alike, it is clear such section falls within the provisions of Article XIII Section 4 of the Rhode Island Constitution which states that the Rhode Island General Laws will prevail over contrary provisions of a Home Rule Charter.

In conclusion, the Board of Trustees are selected by the town council. Once appointed, however, the town council may not intervene in those affairs that have been specifically delegated to the Board of Trustees pursuant to the Rhode Island General Laws."