

Division of Responsibility between the Board and Director

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Under the Illinois Public Library Law (75ILCS 5/4-7) the Board of Library Trustees is, among other functions, empowered to formulate “reasonable rules and regulations... in order to render the use of the library of the greatest benefit to the greatest number” and to “appoint a competent Director and necessary assistants, to fix their compensation, to remove such appointees, and to retain professional consultants as needed.” Thus, in defining and delineating the division of responsibility between the Board and the Director, the Board recognizes that the ultimate responsibility to the community to provide “the greatest benefit to the greatest number” rests with the Board. Policy determination is the Board’s power and duty. Management is the Director’s responsibility, for which he or she is responsible to the Board. The division and sharing of these responsibilities fall into various categories.

I. Goals and Objectives for the Library

A. Board responsibility: It shall be the duty of the Board to determine the goals and objectives of the library and the methods of meeting them, to review the goals and objectives annually, and to evaluate progress.

B. Director responsibility: The Director shall provide assistance and direction in setting goals and objectives and in determining means of evaluation.

C. Joint responsibility: The Board shall relate the library and its program to the community and its needs through systematic study of the community and through systematic analysis of library service with the assistance of the Director, who shall participate fully and prepare regular reports on current progress and future needs.

II. Written Policies.

A. Board responsibility: The Board shall determine and adopt written policies to govern operation, use, and programs of the library and shall adopt bylaws for Board procedures.

B. Director responsibility: The Director shall recommend needed policies to the Board and supply samples and sources of information. The director shall carry out the policies as adopted by the Board with recommendations and materials for study, and administer the library within the framework of the library’s goals, objectives, policies, and budget.

C. Joint responsibility: Both the Board and the Director shall know local, state, and national laws which affect libraries and play an active role in initiating and supporting beneficial library legislation; shall participate fully in the library system and make use of the consultants of the Illinois State Library; shall attend regional, state, and national library association meetings and workshops when possible and join appropriate organizations working for improved libraries; and shall study library publications.

III. Governance.

A. Board responsibility: The Board shall cooperate with other local government officials, keeping in mind the special legal responsibilities of a library board. Board members shall attend all Board meetings and committee meetings to which they are assigned and shall carry out all special assignments promptly.

B. Director responsibility: The Director shall prepare all needed library reports to the government, the system, and the Illinois State Library and shall provide copies to the Board. The Director shall attend all Board and committee meetings except those meetings or parts of meetings in which the Director’s salary and tenure are discussed.

IV. Financial Status of the Library.

A. Board responsibility: The Board shall keep aware of the financial status of the library. The Board shall effectively manage the revenues and expenses in a fiscally responsible manner with the management goal of meeting community needs while maintaining adequate reserves.

B. Director responsibility: The Director shall provide a report of budget status and expenditure at each Board meeting.

The Director shall supply facts and figures to the Board to aid in interpreting the library's financial need.

C. Joint responsibility: The Director shall prepare two annual budgets in consultation with staff and Board; first, the appropriation request which anticipates the needs for the coming year, and second, an operating budget, once the available revenues are determined. The Board shall work with the Director to formulate these budgets, adequate to carry out the library's goals and objectives, within any limitations of the state law.

V. Budget Presentation.

A. Board responsibility: The Board shall present the budget to the general public, shall explain and defend it, and shall help to secure adequate funds, staff, and services.

B. Director responsibility: The Director shall assist the Board in cooperating with other libraries and shall call the Board's attention to ways of stretching the budget.

C. Joint responsibility: The Director shall work with the Board in interpreting budget and financial needs to public officials and the public. The Board and the Director shall see that complete and accurate records concerning finances, personnel, property inventory, and annual reports are on file at the library.