

Roles and Responsibilities: Who Is Accountable?



WITH LIBRARY BOARDS AND LIBRARY DIRECTORS: COOPERATION IS THE KEY

The responsibilities of trustees can be divided into four general areas:

1. Governance
 - a. Organization
 - b. Policy Determination
2. Finance
3. Personnel / Human Resources
4. Service & Community Relations

The responsibilities and duties of the library board are many and may at times appear to coincide with the duties of the library director. Understanding the differences in roles, responsibilities, and accountability assures teamwork and results in better library service for the community.

The public library board in Idaho is a governing, policy-making body, elected or appointed to govern the library, not to run it. The library's director, on the other hand, is appointed by the board to administer the library and to take responsibility for its day-to-day operations.



- The board should not run the library, but should ensure that the library is being run properly.
- The board should not attempt to manage the library, but must ensure that the library is being managed properly.

Policy determination and management are different roles:

- Policy determination relies heavily on the board's participation and knowledge.
- Management is the responsibility of the person hired by the library's board to administer, direct, or run the library: the library director.
- Cooperation is the key.

The following comparative lists show the division between the complementary roles of the library's board of trustees and its administrator (director).



Governance and Policy Making

Board of Trustees	Library Director
<p>Determines the goals and objectives of the library and methods of evaluating progress toward meeting those goals and objectives. Reviews goals and objectives annually and evaluates progress.</p>	<p>Provides assistance and direction to the board in setting goals and objectives and determining methods of evaluation. Provides information and opinion on how the library is progressing.</p>
<p>Relates the library and its programs to the community and its needs, discovered through systematic assessment of the community and through systematic analysis of library services.</p>	<p>Assists the board to know the needs of the community and to respond to these needs through library programs and services.</p>
<p>Determines and adopts written policies to govern the operation, use, and programs of the library. Adopts bylaws for board procedures. Reviews policies on a regular basis, especially as part of the orientation of new trustees.</p>	<p>Recommends needed policies to the board and studies examples and sources of information. Carries out policies as adopted by the board, interprets policies to staff and public. Provides the board with recommendations and materials for study.</p>
<p>Knows local, state, and national laws which affect libraries, and plans an active part in initiating and supporting beneficial library legislation.</p>	<p>Administers the library within the framework of the law and the library's goals and objectives, policies, and budget.</p>
<p>Is aware of and makes use of the services and consultants of the Idaho Commission for Libraries.</p>	
<p>Attends regional, state, and national library association meetings and workshops when possible and joins appropriate organizations working for improved libraries. Studies library publications.</p>	
<p>Budgets for continuing education experiences for administration, staff, and trustees.</p>	
<p>Seeks a cooperative relationship with officials of the municipality or other local governing units, keeping in mind the special legal responsibilities of the library board.</p>	<p>Prepares all needed library reports for local unity of government and the Idaho Commission for Libraries. Provides copies to the board.</p>
<p>Attends all board meetings and committee meetings to which assigned. Carries out all special assignments properly.</p>	<p>Attends all board and committee meetings except those meetings or parts of meetings in which the director's salary and tenure are discussed.</p>



Finance

Board of Trustees	Library Director
<p>Is completely informed about the financial status of the library.</p>	<p>Provides regular reports of budget status and expenditures at each board meeting.</p>
<p>Works with the library director to formulate a budget adequate to carry out the library's goals and objectives, within any limitations of state law.</p>	<p>Prepares for board discussion a suggested annual budget in consultation with staff and board. Supplies facts and figures to the board to aid in interpreting the library's current and future financial needs.</p>
<p>Presents the budget to the funding agency, public officials, and the public; explains and defends it.</p>	<p>Follows the budget process as it moves through the funding process. Works with the board in interpreting budget and financial needs of the library to public officials and the public. Provides leadership in supporting the budget.</p>
<p>Works to secure adequate funds for staff and services.</p>	<p>Identifies financial needs of the library and works with the board and staff for adequate funding.</p>
<p>Explores all ways of increasing the library's income through tapping other sources and taking advantage of all available means of cooperation and other libraries.</p>	<p>Calls the board's attention to ways of stretching the budget. Assists the board in cooperating with other libraries. Advises the board of potential partnerships.</p>
<p>Sees that complete and accurate records concerning finances, personnel, property inventory, and annual reports are on file at the library.</p>	

Notes:



Human Resources / Personnel

Board of Trustees	Library Director
<p>Employs a competent and qualified library director and pays an adequate salary.</p>	<p>Acts as technical advisor to the board. Hires and directs subordinate staff members in line with library HR policies.</p>
<p>Provides adequate compensation and reasonable fringe benefits for all employees. Provides agreeable working conditions and opportunities for professional growth.</p>	<p>Works for needed improvements in working conditions, salary scales, and fringe benefits.</p>
<p>Provides a planned orientation program for new trustees.</p>	<p>Assists in the orientation of new trustees, including introduction to library procedures, departments, and staff.</p>
<p>Develops policies to guide staff selection.</p>	<p>Provides the board with recommendations and materials for study. Applies guidelines in selecting staff. Takes full responsibility for day-to-day administration of the library.</p>
<p>Provides in-service training for the professional development of staff members on effective implementation of library policies. Whenever possible, provides opportunities for additional education and advancement. Considers establishment of career ladders within the library if possible.</p>	

Notes:



Service and Community Relations

Board of Trustees	Library Director
Interprets the community and its needs to the library director and reflects them in goals, objectives, and policies.	Interprets the community and its needs to the board.
Establishes a library materials selection policy reflecting community needs and including a freedom to read provision.	Provides information and expert advice about this policy, together with recommendations reflecting professional knowledge. Selects and orders books and materials in harmony with the policy's criteria.
Establishes ways of providing service, not just to individuals, but also to organized agencies and institutions within the community in both the public and private sector.	Offers regular and special services to public and private community groups. Seeks effective and innovative ways of providing library services to groups, individuals, and the total community.
Establishes, supports, and participates in a planned community relations program, allocating responsibility for various tasks, per available personnel and talents.	
Advocates for the library and its programs and services at every opportunity.	
Seeks to extend library services to those who have been reluctant to use the library and to those unable to take advantage of customary library programs.	

Notes:

Rule of Good Practice:

Individual board members do not act alone. An individual's authority to act comes from the board's actions. This precept is important for the library's well-being as well as for that of the board.



Review: Whose Job Is It?

Directions: Per the preceding pages, who is accountable for shouldering the following roles and responsibilities? If it is the board of library trustees, circle Trustees. If it is the library director, circle Director. If it is a duty common to both the library's board and director, circle both words.

1.	Trustees	Director	Determines goals and objectives of the library
2.	Trustees	Director	Acts as technical advisor to the board
3.	Trustees	Director	Provides regular reports of budget status and expenditures
4.	Trustees	Director	Determines and adopts collection development policy
5.	Trustees	Director	Provides for in-service training for staff development
6.	Trustees	Director	Recommends needed policies and provides recommendations and materials for study
7.	Trustees	Director	Reviews policies on a regular basis, especially as part of the orientation of new trustees
8.	Trustees	Director	Is completely informed about the financial status of the library
9.	Trustees	Director	Attends all board meetings
10.	Trustees	Director	Selects materials in harmony with collection development policy
11.	Trustees	Director	Sees that complete and accurate records concerning finances, personnel, property inventory, and annual reports are on file at the library
12.	Trustees	Director	Works for needed improvements for salaries and benefits
13.	Trustees	Director	Is responsible for the day-to-day running of the library
14.	Trustees	Director	Reviews policies regularly



15.	Trustees	Director	Recommends needed policies
16.	Trustees	Director	Establishes ways of providing library services to the community
17.	Trustees	Director	Ensures that the library is well run
18.	Trustees	Director	Prepares annual budget for discussion
19.	Trustees	Director	Explains and defends the budget
20.	Trustees	Director	Carries out policies, interpreting them to the public
21.	Trustees	Director	Identifies financial needs of the library
22.	Trustees	Director	Knows local, state, and national laws affecting the library
23.	Trustees	Director	Manages the library
24.	Trustees	Director	Works to secure adequate funding
25.	Trustees	Director	Attends all committee meetings
26.	Trustees	Director	Follows budget process as it moves through the funding process
27.	Trustees	Director	Provides assistance and direction in setting goals and objectives for the library



Accountability: an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions

