Library Board Basics

A Handbook for Library Trustees and Managers

Public Library Services Branch
Alberta Municipal Affairs

Alberta Government

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Introduction to Public Library Service in Alberta

Congratulations on being a library trustee. Your board makes fundamental decisions about how it will provide library service to your community. This is a critical role. It is up to you and the rest of your board to guide and shape current and future library service in your community.

Where do you begin? How will you do your job effectively? This handbook will provide some basic information to assist you.

Public Library History and Values

Libraries have a long history. In North America and elsewhere, public libraries were formed to provide citizens with information they needed to improve their lives. Public library services now involve literacy, culture, recreation, entertainment, learning and more.

Public libraries have developed values and principles that have endured for generations.

- Public libraries are free in all senses of the word.
    - Public libraries are for everyone, and provide service to the whole community.
    - Public libraries do not charge for basic library service.
    - Public libraries value intellectual freedom and do not censor ideas.
- Public libraries exist to serve the community and help people.

Public Libraries in Alberta

In Alberta, library service is defined by legislation dating from 1907. Libraries have a long history in both the large cities and the smaller villages and towns of this province. Albertans recognize that libraries help build strong communities.

Alberta libraries have a strong history of local autonomy. Library service was and is a municipal service. A provincial network has grown over the years, with library systems, resource sharing and other arrangements creating links between libraries, but the public library is still established and governed at the local level.

> " *Within a library can be found the seeds of a better tomorrow.* "
>
> *- Lois Hole*

Library Service in Alberta: Public Library Services Branch (PLSB), Alberta Municipal Affairs

Public Library Services Branch is part of Alberta Municipal Affairs. Activities and responsibilities of Public Library Services Branch include:
- Administering library legislation
- Delivering grants to municipal, intermunicipal and library system boards
- Building the provincial Public Library Network and supporting cooperation between network participants
- Managing the Public Library Network Policy and related policies and agreements
- Supporting technology initiatives that build the provincial network
- Consulting with municipalities, library boards and staff
- Providing workshops and training
- Promoting excellence in Alberta's public libraries

Public Library Services Branch: Contact Information

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Main Switchboard: 780-427-4871
(Dial 310-0000 first to reach us toll-free)
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Contact Information as of June 2018
(Current contact information is always available at www.albertalibraries.ca)

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Public Library Services Branch: the Public Library Network

Public libraries provide citizens with educational, cultural, and recreational opportunities. Libraries have different strengths and no single library can provide services as effectively as all libraries in partnership. Public libraries are most effective when they share and cooperate with each other in a network.

The Government of Alberta has established and sustains a network known as the Public Library Network that connects Alberta's public libraries to enable access to public library resources and services for Albertans. The network is coordinated and supported by Alberta Municipal Affairs through Public Library Services Branch. Network components include policies, agreements, technology, infrastructure, and support. The network also relies on the participation of public library staff and trustees throughout the province.
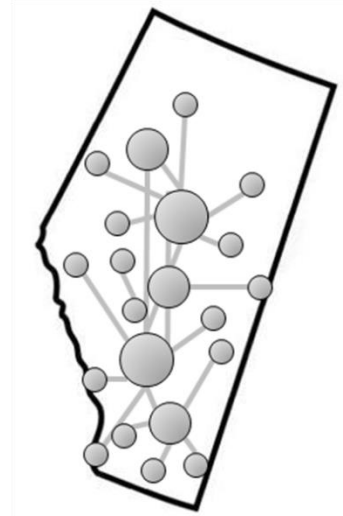
The Province supports the network with:

- Infrastructure such as Supernet and interlibrary loan management
- E-content for all Albertans such as books, magazines, newspapers, video, language learning software and content for the print disabled
- Policy and guidelines
- Funding to designated network Nodes

The network Nodes implement policy, facilitate network access for participants, and provide support to library staff in smaller centres. Network participants follow guidelines and access the network through a partner Node (e.g. a library system).

A Public Library Network Policy that defines the library network has been approved by the Government of Alberta. There is a Resource Sharing Operational Policy that sets rules for interlibrary loan (ILL) and Alberta-wide borrowing (also called ME Libraries). The Supernet Operational Policy defines how the province provides Supernet to Alberta libraries. The Electronic Resources Operational Policy defines how the province provides e-resources to Alberta public libraries and the roles that other network partners have in delivering those resources. Other operational policies will be written as they are needed.

> *Copies of provincial policies on the*
> *Public Library Network*
> *can be found at our website for libraries*
>
> ***www.albertalibraries.ca***

Library Service in Alberta: Library Systems

Library systems are formed under the *Libraries Act*, and implement the policies of the Public Library Network as network Nodes. Municipalities are members of the systems. Library systems provide centralized services to municipalities and municipal libraries, including:

- Centralized purchasing, cataloguing and processing of books and other materials
- Provision of a library catalogue
- IT support
- Delivery of materials between libraries
- Training and consultation
- Direct delivery of library service to the public via system-run libraries or other venues such as programming websites
- Connection to the provincial Public Library Network

All but the biggest libraries access resource sharing via their library system.

Library systems are managed and controlled by a system board. The board consists of one trustee for each member municipality. System boards tend to include many members, so they typically appoint an executive group to conduct some of the business of the board.

There are seven library systems in Alberta, as shown in the map below:

Values in Action: Supporting Intellectual Freedom

Public libraries around the world value intellectual freedom. Intellectual freedom is the right of all individuals to seek out and consider information on a topic from all perspectives, without restriction or censorship. Most public libraries in Alberta have adopted the Library Association of Alberta's Statement of Intellectual Freedom or the Canadian Federation of Library Associations' Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries as part of their policies.

Library Association of Alberta Statement of Intellectual Freedom

Every Albertan, as embodied in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and as supported in the Alberta Bill of Rights and Alberta's Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act, has the fundamental right to have access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity and intellectual activity, and to express their thoughts publicly. This right to intellectual freedom, under the law, is essential to the health and development of democracy and society in Alberta.

Libraries in Alberta have a fundamental responsibility to protect and promote intellectual freedom.

Alberta libraries have a responsibility to guarantee and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge, opinion, creativity and intellectual activity including those which some elements of society consider unconventional, unpopular, unorthodox or unacceptable.

To this end, Alberta libraries shall acquire and make available, through purchase or resource sharing, the widest variety of materials and communication media (including the Internet) that support the intellectual and recreational pursuits of both their communities and individual Albertans.

Alberta libraries have a responsibility to guarantee the right of free expression by making available all of the library's facilities and services to any Albertan who needs them regardless of age, religion, ability, gender, sexual orientation, social or political views, national origin, economic status, location and/or level of information literacy.

Alberta libraries provide service based upon the right of each Albertan to judge individually on questions of politics, religion and morality. Parents have the responsibility for determining their children's access to all library materials.

Alberta library employees do not need to endorse or support every idea or presentation contained in the materials they make available. Alberta library employees do have the responsibility to insure that all perspectives are represented in their collections.

Alberta libraries should resist all efforts to limit their ability to protect and promote intellectual freedom, while at the same time recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups. All requests for removal or limitation of access to materials must, however, follow the library's written procedures for reconsidering materials.

Canadian Federation of Library Associations' Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations recognizes and values the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as the guarantor of the fundamental freedoms in Canada of conscience and religion; of thought, belief, opinion, and expression; of peaceful assembly; and of association.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations supports and promotes the universal principles of intellectual freedom as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which include the interlocking freedoms to hold opinions and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

In accordance with these principles, the Canadian Federation of Library Associations affirms that all persons in Canada have a fundamental right, subject only to the Constitution and the law, to have access to the full range of knowledge, imagination, ideas, and opinion, and to express their thoughts publicly. Only the courts may abridge free expression rights in Canada.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations affirms further that libraries have a core responsibility to support, defend and promote the universal principles of intellectual freedom and privacy.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations holds that libraries are a key institution in Canada for rendering expressive content accessible and affordable to all. Libraries are essential gateways for all persons living in Canada to advance themselves through literacy, lifelong learning, social engagement, and cultural enrichment.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and facilitate access to constitutionally protected expressions of knowledge, imagination, ideas, and opinion, including those which some individuals and groups consider unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, in accordance with their mandates and professional values and standards, libraries provide, defend and promote equitable access to the widest possible variety of expressive content and resist calls for censorship and the adoption of systems that deny or restrict access to resources.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and foster free expression and the right to safe and welcoming places and conditions. To this end, libraries make available their public spaces and services to individuals and groups without discrimination.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and defend privacy in the individual's pursuit of expressive content. To this end, libraries protect the identities and activities of library users except when required by the courts to cede them.

Furthermore, in accordance with established library policies, procedures and due process, libraries resist efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups.

Library employees, volunteers and employers as well as library governing entities have a core responsibility to uphold the principles of intellectual freedom in the performance of their respective library roles.

Approved by Executive Council June 27, 1974

Amended November 17, 1983; November 18, 1985; and September 27, 2015

The Municipal Library Board

The municipal library board is the legal entity that manages and controls the library. Municipal council creates the library board by passing a bylaw.

Public library boards in Alberta are created under the authority of the *Libraries Act.* The library board is a governing board, not an advisory board. The *Libraries Act* states that the library board is a corporation that has full management and control of the library.

The library board has a number of general responsibilities:
- To provide library service that meets local needs
- To create policies and plans that enable good library service and good management of the library
- To obtain adequate funding and budget the library's expenditures
- To communicate with and respond to the community and municipal council
- To employ a competent library manager, giving direction and evaluating performance
- To promote and support the library, and to advocate on behalf of the library
- To stay informed of library issues, trends and developments
- To be part of the larger library community, in Alberta and beyond

Important legislation

The *Libraries Act* is the legal basis for library boards in Alberta. It sets rules for:
- Board formation, trustee appointment and removal, and selection of board chair
- Financial accounting including budget preparation
- Board meeting frequency and recordkeeping
- Bylaws relating to library safety, use and fees

The *Libraries Regulation* includes required management practices:
- Public status of meetings and policies
- Province's right to inspect the board and library operations
- Professional librarian requirement for libraries in communities over 10,000 population
- Rules for the operation of public libraries housed in schools
- Annual report requirements
- Required policies and plan of service

Other legislation affecting library boards includes the Employment Standards Code and Regulation, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the *Freedom of Information and Privacy Act*, the *Copyright Act*, the *Human Rights Act*, and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Municipal Councils and Library Boards: Respective Roles and Authority

Public library service is a municipal service in Alberta, and the municipality is responsible for establishing library service. However, the municipality does not directly control the library or the library board. Library service is managed by a library board which is created by municipal bylaw. Roles are defined as follows:

<u>Municipal Council</u>

- Establishes the library board by bylaw under the *Libraries Act*
- Funds municipal library service
- Appoints (and removes) ALL board members, not just municipal councilors
- Accepts library bylaws from library board, and may disallow by not accepting
- Receives library budget and approves requested (or adjusted) municipal appropriation (Council does NOT approve the whole library budget – the board creates the budget)
- Accepts auditor or financial reviewer (that the board selects and hires)
- Receives reports from library board (financial report; annual report; plan of service; etc.)
- Signatory to / member of library system

<u>Library Board</u>

"The municipal board, subject to any enactment that limits its authority, has full management and control of the municipal library and shall, in accordance with the regulations, organize, promote and maintain comprehensive and efficient library services in the municipality and may co-operate with other boards and libraries in the provision of those services." (*Libraries Act*)

The board is a governing (not advisory) board under provincial legislation. It is a corporation: it can hire staff (and is an employer if it does so), enter into contracts and agreements, sue, or be sued. The board is accountable to the public and to municipal council. Other responsibilities of the board include:

- Creating bylaws and polices to enable delivery of public library service
- Operating within the legal framework set out by the *Libraries Act*
- Conducting a community needs assessment, determining library service priorities, and creating a Plan of Service based on the assessment and priorities
- Securing library funding, including requesting municipal appropriation and applying for provincial grants
- Providing the space and staff required for public library service delivery
- Keeping financial records and bank accounts
- Preparing and managing the library budget
- Handling finances appropriately and arranging regular review of financial records

Highlights of the *Libraries Act* for Municipal Boards

1. The library board has full management and control of the public library. 7, 17
2. Municipal library boards are formed by municipal council, via a bylaw. 3(1)
3. Municipal boards are named "The (name of municipality) Library Board". 3(4)
4. Municipal boards have 5-10 members, which may include up to two councilors from the municipality that formed the library board. 4(1) 4(3)
5. Council appoints and dismisses all board members. 4
6. A library employee cannot be on the board. 4(2)
7. A board member can serve up to three terms of up to three years each. 4(4) 4(5)
8. The municipal library board produces a budget and an estimate of required funds before each year and presents it by Dec 1 to council. The council can approve the funding request in whole or in part but does not have control over the budget itself, e.g. no line item veto. 8
9. The library board must keep financial records. A non-board member must review the finances yearly and send a report to council. The reviewer, level of review, and form of the review must all be acceptable to council. 9
10. Library systems are formed by agreement between member municipalities. 13, 14
11. The library system board includes members from each participating municipality. 16
12. Up to three municipalities may form an intermunicipal library board. 12
13. A board member missing 3 consecutive meetings without authorization by board resolution is deemed to have resigned. 31
14. The board elects its own chair and any other officers it needs, e.g. treasurer. 32
15. The board meets at least once every 4 months. 33
16. The board keeps a record of meeting minutes, resolutions and bylaws, signed by the chair or acting chair. 34
17. The board can pass bylaws for use of the library, including
    a. terms and conditions for public use of the building, use and borrowing of library materials, and suspension of borrowing privileges;
    b. fees for library cards, room rental and printouts; and
    c. late return and other penalties. 36
18. Library bylaws shall be forwarded to municipal council. Council may disallow a bylaw by not accepting it at a council meeting. 37, 38
19. Fees may not be charged for
    a. admittance to parts of the library used for library services.
    b. using library resources on the premises.
    c. borrowing library resources, in any format, normally lent by the library.
    d. interlibrary loan.
    e. consultation with library staff.
    f. basic information service. 36

This number indicates the relevant section in the Libraries Act.

Libraries Act: Safety and Use Bylaws

Library bylaws are policies which are legally enforceable. Bylaws are legally binding and protect the library and the people and items within the library. The *Libraries Act* 41 (1) states that "any person who willfully contravenes any bylaw under section 36 is guilty of an offence."

Note that the library board's bylaws are not municipal bylaws. The municipality passes only one bylaw related to library service, the one that establishes the library board. The library board's bylaws are passed by the board itself, as defined in the *Libraries Act*.

Library boards operating a service point may pass bylaws for the safety and use of the library if they have policies in the following areas:

- public admission to building 36(1)(a)(i)
- use of public library property by members of the public 36(1)(a)(ii)
- borrowing privileges 36(1)(a)(iii)
- fees 36(1)(b); 36(3)
- fines 36(1)(c)

The library board usually passes bylaws by reading and voting on them three times. These readings should be held over the course of at least two board meetings unless the board unanimously approves holding all three readings at the same meeting.

Once passed, the library board must forward a copy of the bylaw to municipal council. Council may disallow a library board bylaw by not accepting it at council meeting. If council does not accept the bylaw it goes back to the board for revision, and the revised bylaw must be re-submitted to council for acceptance at their next meeting. This process continues until council accepts the bylaw.
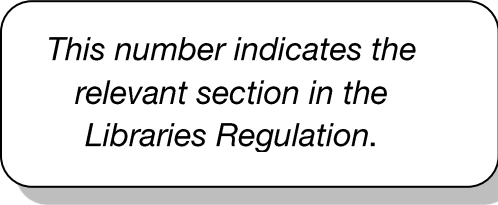
The *Freedom of Information and Privacy Act* (FOIP) also requires that a public body (e.g. a library board) must, by bylaw or other legal instrument by which it acts, designate a person or group to head the organization for the purposes of FOIP, and define any fees it will charge for FOIP related services.

*Samples of library bylaws, policies
and many more tools and resources
can be found at our website for libraries*

www.albertalibraries.ca

Highlights of the *Libraries Regulation*

1. Library bylaws and policies shall be forwarded to the Minister (province). Sections 3, 4
2. Board meetings are open to the public. 5
3. Library boards must have the following policies:
   a. Confidentiality of user records, except where disclosure is required by law
   b. Board and staff education and orientation, including expenses for training and association memberships
   c. Finance, including what will be reimbursed, how reimbursements will occur and signing officers of the board
   d. Personnel, including job descriptions, performance appraisals, working hours, conditions of employment and a grievance procedure
   e. Library resource selection/acquisition/purchase/disposition, including a policy on gifts and donations
   f. Resource sharing with other libraries via the provincial network
   g. Print-disabled services
   h. Borrowing of materials
   i. Hours of service
   j. Room rental, if applicable 7
4. Library systems must have a policy regarding library services they deliver to residents of member municipalities with no local library board. (Systems can run library "service points" where there is no local board.) 7(3)
5. The Minister (province) may inspect a library and board. 8
6. A municipal library board will develop a Plan of Service based on a community needs assessment, including a mission statement, goals and objectives. A current plan must be filed with the Minister (Libraries Branch) every 5 years or less. 13(1), 13(2)
7. A library board serving a municipality with more than 10,000 people must employ a professional librarian. 14(1)
8. Municipal library boards must submit annual report information to the province. 15
9. A school-housed public library requires:
   a. a legal agreement between the library board and school authority.
   b. its own bank account and signing officers who cannot be employees of the school authority.
   c. open hours outside of school hours, including summer hours as well as weekends and/or evenings. 17
10. All libraries that are part of a library system have to meet the requirements of the provincial resource sharing network. 35

This number indicates the relevant section in the Libraries Regulation.

Libraries Regulation: Policies

The *Libraries Regulation* requires the following policies:

- Confidentiality of user records 7(1)(a)
- Orientation and continuing education of board and staff 7(1)(b)
- Finance 7(1)(c)

Boards operating one or more service points must also have the following policies in place:

- Personnel 7(2)(a)
- Selection, acquisition and disposition of materials 7(2)(b)
- Resource sharing 7(2)(c)
- Provision for persons unable to use conventional print resources 7(2)(d)
- Provision for library resources to be lent 7(2)(e)
- Hours of service 7(2)(f)
- Terms and conditions for use of public meeting space 7(2)(g)

Other policies required under separate legislation:

- FOIP bylaw
- Records retention policy and schedule – FOIP
- Policy on Personal Information Banks (PIB) – FOIP
- Workplace violence, harassment and other unacceptable behavior – OH&S
- Working Alone policy and hazard assessment – OH&S

Recommended Public Library Policies

- Statement on intellectual freedom
- Expression of concern/request for reconsideration of library resources form (to be part of the "selection, acquisition and disposition of materials" policy)
- Waiving of fines/fees on library materials
- Internet access and acceptable use
- Job descriptions for Library Trustees

Policies are rules to guide future actions.
They help the board to govern proactively and they
help protect the library in controversial situations.

Policies: a working definition

Policies are rules which help library boards make day-to-day decisions and achieve their mandate. Policies provide library staff with practical guidance about how the library board expects them to provide library service, and provides for the establishment of consistent operational procedures.

Policies are different from procedures or guidelines. Policies are guiding principles, while procedures and guidelines are detailed operational instructions. Policies describe what will happen, while procedures and guidelines describe how it will happen. Procedures and guidelines put policies into action. Policies are the responsibility of the board, while procedures and guidelines are best left to staff.

How to develop policies

Policies express high-level strategic thinking of the board, so there is no single required approach that will fit every situation.

It is good to start with the service plans, vision, mission statement, and goals that define what the board is trying to accomplish. What does your plan of service say? Is your goal to prepare children for school, or to support local culture, or something entirely different? The board's service goals should be reflected in the policies that guide its actions.

Library policies must also accommodate local realities, e.g. how well the library is funded. Policies are part of the board's plan for dealing with real world issues. However, policies should be proactive and forward-looking, not reactive responses to past history (though sometimes recent crises point to the need for new policy).

Existing library policies can be a good starting point, but be thoughtful and make necessary changes. Use examples from other boards to help, but don't copy verbatim. Start fresh – don't use old approaches when writing new policy.

Policy writing tips

- Ensure the board has a common understanding of the philosophy your policies will reinforce.
- You need all legally required policies (see page 12), plus any others required by local needs.
- Think of questions that the policy needs to address. The "5 W's" (who, what, where, when, and how) can help, e.g. Who will be affected? When will the policy be in effect?
- Consider the policy's potential strengths and weaknesses, and what opportunities and threats it could create.
- Consider situations in which the policy will apply.
- Consider what procedures might be required to implement policy. Details might not be in the policy but they need to be considered.

Libraries Regulation: Plan of Service

Services are the reason libraries exist. All the other things demanding the board's attention – the building, the collection, the staff and the board itself – are means to an end.

Service planning makes a library better. It is also great for public relations, marketing and advocacy. When you ask the community about its needs and what the library can do for it, you show that the library matters in a very real way. You will make new positive connections with people and help them see the library in a positive light. When it comes time to ask municipal council for funding, you can show you are providing real benefits and responding to local needs.

Provincial legislation requires library boards to have a Plan of Service. The Plan of Service needs to be based on a community needs assessment, and it needs to include a mission statement, goals and objectives. The library board creates the plan. A plan must be filed with the Ministry every five years and it must be reviewed by the library yearly.

<u>What kind of library services are there?</u>

Libraries provide more than books: think of children's storytimes, author readings, art exhibits, and materials such as DVDs. Books are not a service in themselves: they are a resource that supports service.

The Public Library Association has defined 18 library "Service Responses" that describe the wide range of benefits that public libraries provide to communities. Instead of focusing on resources or programs, Service Responses explain the benefits that the community receives from the library. Your library doesn't just provide a storytime program, it develops readers and provides early literacy skills by providing a storytime program.

The Service Responses describe a huge variety of services. No library board can do it all! Your library board should focus on a few of these services in response to local needs.

Note that the Service Responses are very general. They are inspiring and powerful, but more specific goals and objectives based on the Service Responses need to be written when doing a plan.

<u>Services must respond to local needs</u>

Communities are unique: One might have a lot of temporary foreign workers and immigrants, while another might be a retirement centre. Each library board needs to look at its community's needs and deliver services in response.

The local community needs input into what the library does. It would be hard for a library board to determine local needs without this input. Besides, the community will have more faith in the process and results if it has been involved.

> *The point of community needs assessment is*
> *to understand the local situation,*
> *to tailor library services to fit local needs,*
> *and to show the board is listening to the community.*

Strategic Planning for Results: A Path to a Great Plan

Strategic Planning for Results is a planning process that is commonly used by Alberta library boards. It comes from the book of the same name by Sandra Nelson, published by the Public Library Association.

It is recommended because:

- It focuses on community needs and library services that respond to needs
- It is designed for libraries
- It is complete, sensible and easy to follow
- It will result in a good plan that meets legislated requirements

Strategic Planning for Results works as follows:

- The library board decides to do planning and develops its plan for doing so.
- The board recruits a group of community representatives.
- The community group has a meeting or two to determine community needs and to help pick library Service Responses.
- The library board and staff takes the community input and develops goals and objectives that put the service responses into action.
- The board finalizes and writes the plan, which mostly consists of the goals and objectives.

Strategic Planning for Results in Alberta

Help is available to Alberta libraries doing *Strategic Planning for Results:*

- A "toolkit" is available at www.albertalibraries.ca including detailed descriptions of the process, workbooks, forms, templates, sample plans and more.
- Trainers from Public Library Services Branch, library systems and the public library community are available to do a presentation for your board and get things started.
- Facilitators from Alberta Culture and Tourism, Public Library Services Branch and the systems can help you hold your public meetings.
- Other library boards can share their experiences and provide useful tips and lessons learned.

> *You can customize Planning for Results to fit your local situation or you can follow your own process. Alberta library boards often hold one public meeting instead of the two called for in the book.*

Strategic Planning for Results: Library Service Responses

1 Be an Informed Citizen: Local, National and World Affairs – Residents will have the information they need to support and promote democracy, to fulfill their civic responsibilities at the local, provincial and national levels, and to fully participate in community decision making.

2 Build Successful Enterprises: Business and Nonprofit Support – Business owners and nonprofit organization directors and their managers will have the resources they need to develop and maintain strong, viable organizations.

3 Celebrate Diversity: Cultural Awareness – Residents will have programs and services that promote appreciation and understanding of their personal heritage and the heritage of others in the community.

4 Connect to the Online World: Public Internet Access – Residents will have high speed access to the digital world with no unnecessary restrictions or fees to ensure that everyone can take advantage of the ever-growing resources and services available through the Internet.

5 Create Young Readers: Early Literacy – Children from birth to age five will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write and listen.

6 Discover Your Roots: Genealogy and Local History – Residents and visitors will have the resources they need to connect the past with the present through their family histories and to understand the history and traditions of the community.

7 Express Creativity: Create and Share Content – Residents will have the services and support they need to express themselves by creating original print, video, audio, or visual content in a real-world or online environment.

8 Get Facts Fast: Ready Reference – Residents will have someone to answer their questions on a wide array of topics of personal interest.

9 Know Your Community: Community Resources and Services – Residents will have a central source for information about the wide variety of programs, services and activities provided by community agencies and organizations.

10 Learn to Read and Write: Adult, Teen and Family Literacy – Adults and teens will have the support they need to improve their literacy skills in order to meet their personal goals and fulfill their responsibilities as parents, citizens and workers.

11 Make Career Choices: Job and Career Development – Adults and teens will have the skills and resources they need to identify career opportunities that suit their individual strengths and interests.

12 Make Informed Decisions: Health, Wealth and Other Life Choices – Residents will have the resources they need to identify and analyze risks, benefits, and alternatives before making decisions that affect their lives.

13 Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning – Residents will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

14 Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing and Listening for Pleasure – Residents who want materials to enhance their leisure time will find what they want when and where they want them and will have the help they need to make choices from among the options.

15 Succeed in School: Homework Help – Students will have the resources they need to succeed in school.

16 Understand How to Find, Evaluate and Use Information: Information Fluency – Residents will know when they need information to resolve an issue or answer a question and will have the skills to search for, locate, evaluate and effectively use information to meet their needs.

17 Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces – Residents will have safe and welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read and will have open and accessible virtual spaces that support networking.

18 Welcome to Canada: Services for New Immigrants – New immigrants and refugees will have information on citizenship, English/French language learning, employment, public schooling, health and safety, available social services and any other topics that they need to participate successfully in Canadian life.

The point of the service responses is to focus on services that respond to local needs and to talk about services in a way that is appealing to funders and users.

Other Legislation Affecting Libraries
(Information current as of March 2018)

- Employment Standards Code and Regulation
  - This provincial legislation sets rules for employer-employee relations. Library boards are affected by this legislation if they are employers.
  - Minimum wage, overtime and vacation pay, layoffs and termination, and payment of earnings are common Employment Standards issues.
  - **Contact:** Employment Standards Contact Centre of Alberta - 1‑877‑427‑3731. A guide to the standards can be found at http://work.alberta.ca/employment-standards/standards-and-definitions.html.

- *Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) Ac*t, Code and Regulation
  - This provincial legislation sets rules for safety in the workplace, including rules for working alone.
  - **Contact:** Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) of Alberta - 1-866-415-8690, http://work.alberta.ca/occupational-health-safety.html.

- *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (*FOIP)
  - This provincial legislation sets rules for how personal information can be collected, used and released.
  - **Contact:** FOIP-PIPA Help Desk - 780-427-5848. Dial toll free in Alberta by first dialing 310-0000 and then the number. Website: http://www.servicealberta.ca/foip/.

- *Copyright Act*
  - This federal legislation defines how copyrighted material can be used.
  - **Contact:** Copyright Board of Canada - 613-952-8621. A guide to Canadian copyright may be found at http://www.cipo.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cipoInternet-Internetopic.nsf/eng/h_wr02281.html.

- *Human Rights Act*
  - Federal and provincial legislation that upholds equality and prohibits discrimination based on gender, ethnicity or other group characteristics.
  - **Contact: Federal:** Online at https://www.canada.ca/en/services/culture/canadian-identity-society/human-rights.html.
  - **Contact: Provincial:** Online at http://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/employment.asp.

- Charter of Rights and Freedoms
  - The Charter is part of the Canadian constitution. Libraries might be affected by the Charter if their policies or actions infringe upon Charter rights.
  - Contact: Canadian Human Rights Commission – 1-888-214-1090. A copy of the Charter can be found at http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/page-15.html.

The Role of the Trustee

"Trustee" is a legal term which refers to a person who holds property, authority or a position of trust or responsibility for the benefit of another. A trustee is required to act for the benefit of the person or group whom the trustee is representing.

A library board member is a trustee. A library operates for the benefit of the public and a library trustee is therefore required to act in the public interest.

Carrying out this duty requires the library trustee to help develop and deliver good library service that meets the needs of the community. The trustee can best do this by:

- Advocating on behalf of the library and communicating the value of public libraries to funders, decision makers and the general public
- Securing adequate funding for library operations
- Ensuring library service is responsive to the needs of the community
- Providing governance and oversight (while leaving management to library staff)

Managing Multiple Roles

Library trustees fill other roles in their lives: they may be municipal councilors, parents, business owners, and many other things. Sometimes one role can conflict with another. How should you balance different responsibilities?

Think of the library trustee role, and the other roles you play in your life, as being like "hats". When you are acting as a library trustee (during a board meeting, at an official event, etc.) you have your trustee "hat" on and you act as a trustee. When you are filling some other role, you wear a different "hat" and you act accordingly. Different hats can change your perspective, and even the decisions you make.

It can be hard to know which hat you are wearing sometimes. If you are a library trustee and also a municipal councilor, what are you when the library board presents at a council meeting? Wear one hat or the other. Know what side of the table you are sitting at.

Remember: you will look silly if you try to wear two hats at the same time!

Library Trustees: Personal Responsibilities

When an individual agrees to serve as a trustee, he or she takes on the following six legal obligations:

1. A library trustee is expected to manage the affairs of the library with the same degree of skill, hard work and care he or she brings to their own affairs.

2. A library trustee has a duty to become informed about the business of the board, including applicable legislation and what is required in order to be an effective trustee.

3. A library trustee must keep confidential private information he or she learns as a result of their activity as a trustee and may not personally benefit from it, either during the term or after.

4. A library trustee must put the best interests of the board before his or her own or any other.

5. A library trustee may not make advance agreement with another person or organization to vote a certain way.

6. If a library trustee stands to make a personal profit from any activity of the board, he/she must declare his or her interest and may not participate in discussion or vote in relation to it.

In addition, the library trustee has the following three ethical obligations:

1. A library trustee must want to serve as a trustee.

2. A library trustee must endorse, without reservation, the mission of the library board.

3. A library trustee must believe in the value of libraries.

> ### *Good Boards Speak With One Voice*
>
> *Decisions are voted on in meetings, and the majority rules.*
>
> *Issues are debated before the vote – not after.*
>
> *If you disagree with a decision, your options include*
> *Asking for the vote to be recorded*
> *Not speaking for or against the decision in public*
> *Bringing up the issue at a later board meeting*
> *Resigning if you cannot accept the situation*

Funding and Finances

Funding sources

Library service is funded by municipalities, with additional funding from the provincial government and other sources such as fees and fundraising. Provincial funding is regulated under the Municipal Affairs Grant Regulation. Grant details are updated annually in the Public Library Grant Guidelines.

Local appropriation

Public library service is municipal and municipal funding (local appropriation) is necessary. Local appropriation can take two forms:

1. Money transferred directly to the library board by the municipality that the board then spends
2. Funds expended by the municipality on behalf of the library board for library operations (e.g. utilities, building maintenance, audit/financial review, etc.)

Local Appropriation per Capita is the local appropriation divided by the current population of the municipality. This provides a common comparison for library funding. (The most recent edition of Alberta Municipal Affairs' Official Populations list is available at http://municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/mc_official_populations.cfm.)

Current information about the average local appropriation levels can be found in your Board Basics package.

Local appropriation: process

The library board is legally required to submit a budget and estimate of money required for the following year to municipal council by December 1. The budget includes all expected revenue and expenditures for the following year; the estimate of money required is the portion of revenue that will come from the municipality.

The municipality can approve the estimate of money required in whole or in part. In other words, it can provide the money requested or some lesser amount. Council cannot change the budget itself, e.g. allowing one expenditure and not another. The board decides how to spend whatever money it has.

Provincial operating grants

All public library boards in Alberta are eligible to receive a provincial operating grant, so long as they meet certain conditions:

- The library board must receive local appropriation at or above an amount set in the provincial grant guidelines.
- The library board must be in full compliance with the *Libraries Act* and *Libraries Regulation*, including making sure that required documents such as policies, budget, and plan of service are submitted and up to date as required.
- The library board must follow the grant application process.

Library boards serving municipalities over 3,000 population receive a grant based on a formula. This formula is based on the local municipal appropriation and the population of the municipality as of a specific year.

Library boards serving municipalities under 3,000 population receive base grants regardless of the municipal funding level, so long as the municipality contributes the minimal local appropriation set out in the provincial grant guidelines.

Current information about the specific grant levels and local municipal appropriation levels can be found in your Board Basics package.

The minimum municipal appropriation levels are not necessarily sufficient. It is the library board's responsibility to develop funding sources sufficient to deliver library services.

Provincial operating grants: application process

In order to be considered eligible for funding, public library boards must complete and submit four documents as part of their grant application:

1. Public Library Survey and Annual Report of Public Libraries in Alberta, which is completed using a web-based tool called **LibPAS**
2. Previous year's Statement of Receipts and Disbursements, signed by a financial reviewer acceptable to council
3. Current year's Budget
4. Application for Financial Assistance, signed by a person authorized by the board

Grant application forms, document templates and other resources can be found at our website for libraries

www.albertalibraries.ca

Budgeting, financial reporting and bookkeeping

The budget is the library's financial plan. It is created in advance for the coming year. The budget is a key governance tool of the board. The plans and decisions that go into the budget allow the board to define and control the general activities of the library.

The budget is based on the Plan of Service, and is a key tool for implementing the plan.

The budget is a projection of what is planned and expected. Unexpected things often happen and budgets may need to be adjusted during the year.

The financial report (an audit, a statement of receipts and disbursements or another financial review document) is the record of actual financial activity over the past year. Where the budget is an estimate looking forward, the financial report is an accurate tally looking back. It must be reviewed by a non-library board member acceptable to municipal council. (This may be a full audit or a smaller scale review, depending on municipal and library requirements.)

Bookkeeping is the day-to-day tracking of finances. This is less strategically significant than budgeting and can be outsourced or delegated to the board treasurer, library manager or staff if appropriate.

Other funding sources

Other funding can supplement tax-based funding received from the municipality and the province.

Library boards may obtain charitable status depending on current Canadian Revenue Agency policies. A Friends group or other charitable fundraising arm can also help obtain funds that are only available to registered charities.

Grants

Community Initiatives Program (CIP)   http://culture.alberta.ca/cip
CIP provides funds to enhance and enrich community initiatives. Library boards are eligible to apply for project-based grants under this program. CIP grants provide financial assistance for such things as equipment purchases, facility construction or renovation projects, hosting/travel/special events, new programs or special funding (e.g. disaster) requests within Alberta. The Community Initiatives Program is funded by the Alberta Lottery Fund.

    General guidelines:
- Only one facility related application can be approved per organization per year.
- Only one capital and one non-capital grant in each fiscal year.
- The maximum level of funding for project-based grants is $75,000.

Community Facility Enhancement Program (CFEP)   http://culture.alberta.ca/cfep
CFEP assists with construction, renovation or redevelopment of community public-use facilities. The CFEP program is funded by the Alberta Lottery Fund.

General guidelines:
- Only one CFEP application can be approved per organization per year.
- Only one capital funding grant from CFEP or CIP in each fiscal year.
- Funding can be for a planning study, a capital project or a combination of the two.
- Maximum funding for any one facility in a fiscal year is $125,000.

Other

Fees and Fines can be levied by the library, subject to the *Libraries Act* and *Regulation*.

Private donations can be made by individuals or groups. Capital projects such as buildings and equipment and well-recognized services can be attractive to donors.

Effectiveness: How to Be a Strong Board

The following strategies can help a board to be effective:

- Governance: Strong boards are not involved in the operations of the library. They make big decisions and leave implementation details to staff.
- Vision and planning: The governing board looks ahead and plans for the future. It creates a Plan of Service to help it implement its vision of library service for the community.
- Measurement and evaluation: Results and outcomes need to be examined and evaluated via statistics and other measurements to determine if services are being delivered effectively.
- Community connection: The board must connect the library to the community by building relationships and having conversations with people and agencies.
- Advocacy: The board must communicate the value of library service to the community.
- Board-manager relationship: The library manager is the one employee that the board should work with as an employer. The board should consistently communicate expectations and evaluate performance, and let the manager manage staff and operations.
- Efficiency: Board officers other than the chair should be appointed as needed. Common officer positions include vice-chair, secretary and treasurer. Committees should be formed when an issue needs to be worked through outside regular meetings. Keeping board meetings on track ensures that necessary decisions are made, necessary work gets done and board members don't become discouraged by dysfunction.
- The library community: Good boards are connected to the Alberta library community, developing relationships with other players and contributing to the provincial network.
- Growth and learning: Good boards don't coast on the knowledge and abilities they have. They pay attention to library trends, pay attention to their community, and always seek to grow and do better.

> *Policies, plans and budgets are the board's best friends.*
>
> *Do big things – not small things.*
>
> *An effective working relationship between board and library manager is critical for library success.*
>
> *When you drop into the library, come as a volunteer or a patron.*

Governance, Planning and Evaluation

A good library board focuses on governance, not operational details.

The word "governance" comes from a Greek word meaning "to steer". Steer the library's course and let the staff deal with the day-to-day activities of the library.

Planning → Implementation & Operation → Measurement → Evaluation → (cycle)
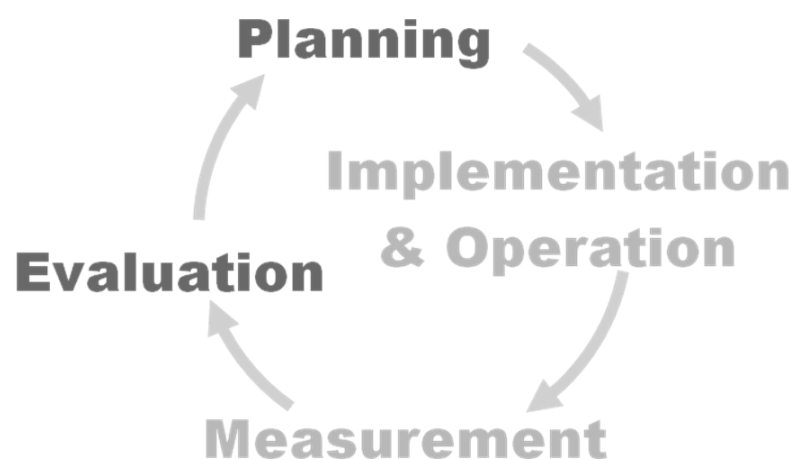
A well run organization has to plan its activities, manage operations, implement new initiatives, measure and evaluate results, and continually plan. This is a never-ending cycle.

A governing board should be most active in evaluating results and planning. The library manager should be most involved in implementation, operation and measurement.
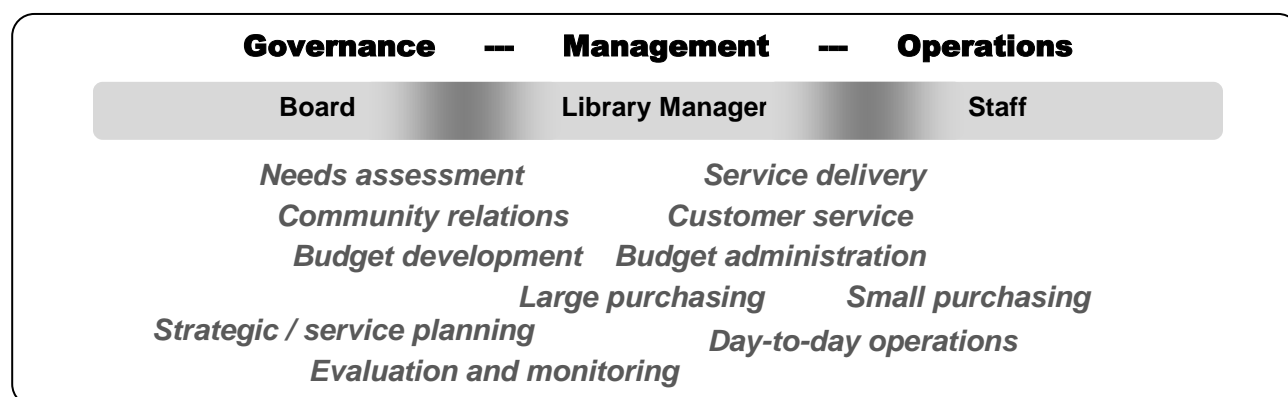
> " *Noses in, fingers out.*
>
> *- An Alberta library trustee*
> *on how boards should operate* "

Board and Staff: Who Does What

Board and staff have different roles. The board should concentrate on governance and advocacy, while operations and staff supervision should be delegated to the library manager.

Board	Library Manager	Other Staff & Volunteers
Accountable and legally responsible for the library	Manages day-to-day operation of the library	Carry out daily procedures
Assesses community's needs	Helps board clarify patron needs; develops programs and services	Provide patron service; suggest and help develop new programs
Sets policies	Assists with policy development; implements policies.	Identify policy gaps and implementation issues
Sets budget and ensures sufficient funds to achieve it	Prepares budget in consultation with board; manages expenditures	Identify needs; account for expenditures
Hires, instructs, monitors, and evaluates senior staff position	Hires, supervises, and evaluates staff and volunteers	Work as members of a professional team
Develops plan of service	Assists board in plan development; implements plan.	Provide information for planning process; helps implement plan.
Monitors and evaluates library's operation	Evaluates operations; reports to the board	Maintain required records and reports; provide feedback on programs and services
Advocates for value of libraries; builds community relationships	Promotes library activities; seeks community support	Provide service; represent the library to the community
Establish board committees, officers, other board structure	Supports board function; usually attends board and committee meetings	Provide information and assistance to board as needed via library manager

Governance --- Management --- Operations

Board   **Library Manager**   **Staff**

Needs assessment   *Service delivery*
Community relations   *Customer service*
Budget development   *Budget administration*
Large purchasing   *Small purchasing*
Strategic / service planning
Day-to-day operations
Evaluation and monitoring

Effective supervision of the library manager

- Supervise only the library manager. Staff and volunteers are the manager's responsibility.
- Be sure you clearly define how the board will supervise the library manager. Will it be done through the Board Chair, a Personnel Committee, or some other way?
- All employees (managers included) deserve clear expectations, feedback and evaluation, a safe environment, and every chance to succeed and thrive.
- If you volunteer, act as one and expect to be told what to do – on that day anyway.
- Work with the manager as a board – not as individual trustees.

Rules of Order and holding effective board meetings

- Meetings are most productive when they are held for a reason, controlled as they happen, and remembered after the fact. There are various techniques for making meetings effective, including Rules of Order.
- Rules of Order (also known as parliamentary procedure or law) are rules that define how issues are discussed and decisions are made. They originally come from legislative parliaments, but they are also used by boards and other organizations because they help keep meetings structured and fair.
- It is recommended each library board review the various rules of order that exist. Boards do not have to adopt any rules of order in their entirety, but they should adopt specific meeting rules to help keep meeting procedures consistent. Sample rules are given below.
- A quorum is the minimum number of members that must be present for decisions to be made at a meeting. The *Interpretation Act* of Alberta states that quorum for a library board must be at least 50% of its membership (*Interpretation Act* 17(2)(a))

Some basic Rules of Order, from Roberts Rules of Order
(Numbers following each note show the corresponding section from Newly Revised 10th Ed.)

- The board can conduct business only at a proper meeting, with members meeting together, prior notice given to all members and a quorum present. (49)
  - Emergency decisions and actions may be undertaken but they must be ratified at the next meeting.
- Each board selects officers who have additional responsibilities. (3)
  - The chair runs meetings by starting them (stating "The meeting will come to order"), recognizing motions and requests to take the floor (speak), initiating votes and otherwise moving things along.
  - A secretary typically records meeting minutes.
  - A treasurer typically administers finances.
  - Members with signing authority are authorized to make expenditures.
- There is a structure and order to what gets discussed at each meeting. (3)
  - The order of business is normally:
    - Approval of agenda
    - Reading and approval of minutes
    - Committee and officer reports (if any)
    - Special priority items (matters previously assigned a special priority)
    - Unfinished business (from previous meetings)
    - New business.
  - The agenda lists specific items in the above categories and can allot time periods to each item.

- Items of business are brought up via a motion made by a board member, i.e. when a member takes the floor and states "I move that [the board takes an action, makes a decision, etc.]".
- Only one motion can be active at a time (except for "subsidiary" motions that relate to the "main" active motion, e.g. amendments).
- A motion can be removed from active discussion in a number of ways including:
  - Being voted on and approved or rejected
  - Being tabled, i.e. set aside for the moment to be taken up later.
- Strictly speaking, discussion is only supposed to happen after a motion is made. In practice, however, library boards often discuss issues informally and only make a motion when they are ready to vote.
- With a maximum of 10 members, Alberta library boards are small enough that some rules of order can be relaxed, unless local custom or rules prevent this. (49)
  - It is not necessary for any motions to be seconded.
  - It is not generally necessary to close or limit discussions and debate.
  - The chair can speak in discussions, make motions and vote.
- A board cannot delegate authority, i.e. it can't empower a subordinate group to act in its name.
  - A board can establish committees to work on particular issues; the committee must report back to the board for decision making and action.

Some common motions

To do this:	Say this:	Can you interrupt?	Is it debatable?	Vote needed
Make a motion	I move that …	No	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	I move that the motion be amended by …	No	Yes	Majority
Send motion to committee for study	I move that we refer this matter to committee	No	Yes	Majority
End discussion and initiate vote	I call the question	No	No	2/3
Suspend (set aside) motion	I move that we table this motion	No	No	Majority
Recess meeting	I move that we recess until …	No	Only if no other motion is active	Majority
Adjourn meeting	I move we adjourn	No	No	Majority
Complain re. noise, temperature etc.	Point of privilege	Yes	Yes	Majority
Make a procedural objection	Point of order	Yes	Yes	Chair decides
Request clarification	Point of information	Yes	No	No vote
Object to undiplomatic motion	I object to consideration of this question	Yes, before another has begun to speak about the motion	No	2/3
Take up previously tabled motion	I move to take from the table	No	No	Majority

Some tips for effective meetings

- Create an agenda, distribute it before the meeting and follow it during the meeting.
- If your meetings tend to go long, put times in the agenda and designate a timekeeper.
- Be aware of the different types of issues that can be discussed in a meeting:
  - Information items do not require action, and may not require discussion (e.g. a listing of last month's library program attendance).
  - Action items require a decision (a vote in the case of a library board) (e.g. motion to pursue a grant for new library programs).
  - Review items require more discussion and consideration than information items, but no approval or action (e.g. report on library programming).
  - Development items require input and consideration from the board but no immediate decisions or action (e.g. a discussion on library programming and how it relates to the plan of service).
- Distribute an information package with the agenda a week or so before a meeting, and expect board members to review it. Background information in the package doesn't have to be discussed at the meeting.
- Break down complex issues using specific questions tied to your Plan of Service. For example, you might use the following questions during a review of library programming:
  - What are our main strategic goals?
  - How do existing programs support our goals?
  - How could programming changes support our goals more effectively?
- Begin your agenda with simple easy items and deal with complex difficult issues last.
- The chair should encourage participation of all board members, perhaps prompting a quiet member to contribute their thoughts.
- Capture decisions in meeting minutes and assign individuals to follow up on tasks.
- The board can meet as a committee of the whole and can have an informal discussion with no rules – but no decisions can be made until a proper board meeting is held.
- Have a policy on delegations and public presentations at board meetings, including if and how they are able to present questions to the board.

> ***Ten Steps to a Successful Board Meeting***
>
> *1) Ask: Do we really need to meet about this? 2) Put the meeting objectives in writing. 3) Don't try to do too much. 4) Set the agenda. 5) Establish time limits. 6) Brief the members before the meeting. 7) Keep the meeting on track. 8) Remember, every trustee has a role to play. 9) Close the meeting with the next step. 10) Follow up with minutes.*
>
> *(From the Southern Ontario Library Service)*

Library board meeting agenda sample

Agenda for Board Meeting – [Date]

6:30	Call to order
	Approval of agenda
	Reading and approval of minutes
7:00	Library manager's report
7:30	Committee reports
8:00	Outstanding business
8:30	New business
9:00	Adjourn

Possible agenda items:

Report from library manager (library news, use statistics such as circulation, program attendance, visitor count)

Budget review and financial status report

Review of policies - pick one per meeting to review? Have a board member review and present a report?

Plan of Service progress report

Public delegations and/or guest presentations

Currently active issues

Meeting minutes sample

Meeting minutes: [board name] board meeting [date and time][location]
Attendees: [Attendees present] [Attendees absent, with or without regrets]
Acting chair: [Name]   Minute taker: [Name}

Approval of agenda: *Approved with no changes.*

Reading and approval of minutes: *Approved with no changes.*

Library manager's report: *Report filed. Discussion of circulation statistics. Discussion of financial report, particularly collections budget.*

Plan of Service committee report: *Community focus group has been selected. Jane Doe asked why no representative from school, John Smith responded no one was available on meeting date. Joe Thompson moved that the committee be approved by the Board – CARRIED.*

Meeting adjourned 8:45.

A sample calendar for a library board

January	• Adjust budget to fit local appropriation (if necessary)	BOARD MEETING
February	• Submit annual report to province	
	• Complete statement of receipts and disbursements for last year and forward to municipality	
March	• Review library Plan of Service: if final year, prepare for new plan. Don't forget to use plan when presenting budget request to council!	
April		BOARD MEETING
May		
June		
	• Deadline for provincial grant application forms	
July		
August		BOARD MEETING
September	• Develop next year's budget and presentation for municipal council	
October		
November		BOARD MEETING
December	• Present budget to municipal council	

Conclusion and Next Steps

Thank you for attending our Board Basics workshop. We hope the information and activities have been useful and relevant.

Did you learn anything today? What was most important to you? Is there anything you want to do or to change as a result of today's workshop? Perhaps you could take a moment and jot down your big realizations and plans while they are fresh in your mind.

What I learned and what I am going to do

> **Thank You**
> for being a library trustee.
> You are the foundation of
> public library service in Alberta.

LIBRARIES ARE
NOT MADE;
THEY GROW
(BIRRELL)