

Alberta Library Trustees

Role and Responsibilities: Boards and Trustees

BOARD ROLE

The library Board is an autonomous legal entity, deriving its authority as a corporation from the municipal bylaw which established it and The Alberta Libraries Act. It may or may not actually own the physical library it operates, but it does own and govern the organization it has put in place to achieve the library's goals and objectives.

BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board is responsible for:

- Establishing the purpose of the library, and seeing that it is implemented through a vision and mission, and self-governance and operational policies.
- Planning for the future and setting the rate of progress towards achievement of the library's purpose through goals and objectives – with timelines – by ensuring sufficient funds to achieve the budget, and by overseeing the budget and funding allocation.
- Providing continuity in the library through bylaws, policy, records, and reports of Board activity.
- Creating and confirming the library's identity in the community through advocacy and lobbying.
- Hiring, monitoring, and evaluating one senior staff position.

TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Trustees are appointed to the Board by their municipal council for a term of up to three years, and may be reappointed in accordance with The Libraries Act. By consenting to serve as a trustee, you are consenting to assume the following responsibilities:

- Believing and supporting the vision and mission of your library.
- Being aware of your legal responsibilities as a trustee.
- Contributing your knowledge, experience, or expertise in a major management area: finance, personnel, program, policy, or advocacy.
- Becoming aware of issues affecting your library.
- Handling Board business effectively and fairly.
- Maintaining an active library membership.
- Participating in the development of framework, governance, and operational policies.
- Helping to develop goals and objectives congruent with the library's vision and mission.
- Regularly evaluating and reviewing bylaws, policies, and goals and objectives, and amending as required.
- Ensuring adequate funds from government and other sources to carry out the goals and objectives.
- Participating in the financial management of the library.
- Developing awareness of the difference between Board and staff roles.
- Participating in lobbying all levels of government for positive action for libraries.
- Increasing your own and other trustees' knowledge of library matters through discussion, ongoing orientation, and attendance at workshops and conferences.

- Serving on at least one Board committee.
- Participating in the organization and implementation of marketing plans and activities.
- Assisting in the formation of partnerships with other community organizations.
- Complying with the Alberta Libraries Act and Regulation.
- Embracing the Alberta Library Trustees' Association Code of Ethics and Canadian Library Association Statement of Intellectual Freedom.

As a trustee, you will always be perceived as representing the library in your community. Even though you may personally disagree with a Board decision and are free to debate it during Board meetings, the Board speaks with one voice, and what you say in public should always endorse Board decisions.

TRUSTEE TIME COMMITMENT (10-12 Hours per month + TPL Events/Fundraisers)

- Regular Board Meetings are held monthly-- the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 5:15 p.m.
- Agenda packages must be reviewed prior to the monthly meetings
- Emails regarding board topics should be checked and responded to regularly (usually within 1-2 days)
- Committees and Executive positions require additional time commitments and/or meetings

<https://librarytrustees.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/alta-handbook-final-august-2016-fixed.pdf>