

Tennessee Public Library Trustee Workshop

September 2006



Trustee Tool Kit

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for the

2006 Tennessee Public Library Trustee Workshop

A Training Workshop of the Tennessee State Library and Archives
developed as

A Pilot Program for the Institute of Museum and Library Services



Responsibilities of Trustees

1. To employ a competent and qualified library director; to provide an adequate and qualified staff; to establish conditions of employment and provide for the staff's welfare; to cooperate with the director in planning the library program and support its implementation; to avoid participation in the administrative or operational aspects of the library.
2. To attend all board meetings and see that accurate records are kept on file at the library. To see that the board meets at least six times a year at a time and place that is convenient to the public. Individual absences from board meetings require justification and are noted in the minutes.
3. To know the appropriate local and state laws and to support actively local, state and national library legislation which would improve and extend library service.
4. To subscribe to the *Ethics Statement for Public Library Trustees*, the local board Code of Ethics, the *Library Bill of Rights*, the *Freedom to Read*, and the *Freedom to View* statements.
5. To determine the mission, short-range and long-range goals and objectives of the library (reexamining them annually); to adopt written bylaws, policies, rules and regulations to govern the operations, program, and use of the library. To establish clear library policies and procedures for dealing with collection development and censorship.
6. To determine the program and needs of the library in relation to the community by keeping informed about community changes, trends, needs, and interests; to keep aware of public library standards and library trends.
7. To assist in the preparation of the annual budget and approve the final document.
8. To help secure adequate funds from appropriating agencies and other sources, if necessary, to carry out the library's programs, to provide for building and space needs, to maintain library property, and to provide indemnity insurance for board members and the library director.
9. To conduct board meetings that are open to the public and abide by the Tennessee Open Meeting Law (*Tennessee Code Annotated*, Section 8-44-101 through Section 8-44-108). To conduct meetings with dignity and treat each trustee fairly.
10. To review the board meeting agenda in advance. The library board chair and the library director should prepare the agenda and background material at least one week prior to a meeting.
11. To conduct all meetings efficiently, seeing that each member shares in leadership, fully participating in and contributing to the effectiveness of all board and committee meetings.
12. To accept that the board acts as a unit. All members are equal; officers only expedite the work. Differences of opinion are worked out in amicable discussion leading to final decisions. Once decisions are made and approved, the full board should speak as one voice. Individual trustees act and speak for the library and/or the board ONLY when specifically authorized to do so by the full board.
13. To expect the library director (who does not vote) to participate. The trustees (who do not manage the library) determine policy.
14. To be aware of and use services available through the regional library and state library.
15. To establish, support, and participate in a planned marketing and public relations program. Encourage the establishment of a "Friends of the Library" group.
16. To report regularly to the governing officials and the general public.
17. To attend regional, state, and national trustee meetings and workshops, and to affiliate with appropriate professional organizations, providing funds in the budget for involvement by trustees and staff.
18. To follow legal, professional, and ethical practices when making decisions and carrying out responsibilities.

Responsibilities of Library Directors

1. To act as technical advisor to the board and to recommend employment of all personnel and supervise their work.
2. To attend all board meetings, serving as secretary of the board if required; to keep board meeting records on file at the library.
3. To know the appropriate local and state laws and to support actively local, state and national library legislation which would improve and extend library service.
4. To subscribe to the *Ethics Statement for Public Library Trustees*, the local board Code of Ethics, the *Library Bill of Rights*, the *Freedom to Read*, and the *Freedom to View* statements.
5. To carry out the policies of the library as adopted by the board; to recommend needed policies for board action; to recommend short-range and long-range goals and objectives for the library. To select and order all books, materials, and equipment according to board policy.
6. To keep informed about community changes, trends, needs, and interests; to recommend program and needs of the library in relation to the community; to carry out plans for extending services of the library; to keep aware of public library standards and library trends.
7. To prepare an annual budget for the library in consultation with the board and to give a current report of actual expenditures against the budget at each meeting.
8. To prepare regular reports detailing current progress and future needs of the library.
9. To see that board meetings are open to the public and abide by the Tennessee Open Meeting Law (*Tennessee Code Annotated*, Section 8-44-101 through Section 8-44-108). To conduct meetings with dignity and treat each trustee fairly.
10. To work with the library board chair to prepare the agenda and background material to send to board members at least one week prior to a meeting.
11. To help the board chair conduct all meetings efficiently, seeing that each member shares in leadership, fully participating in and contributing to the effectiveness of all board and committee meetings.
12. To help the board act as a unit.
13. To be an active participant (although not voting) at each board meeting.
14. To make full use of the regional library services and to utilize the services of the state library.
15. To maintain an active marketing and public relations program; to encourage the establishment of a "Friends of the Library" group to support and promote the library; to act as a guide and liaison with the Friends' group; to provide direction to the Friends group about ways it can support the library's programs and services.
16. To report regularly to the library board and, in cooperation with the board, to the officials of local government and the general public.
17. To affiliate with state and national professional organizations, attend professional meetings and workshops, and provide professional development opportunities for the staff.
18. To follow legal, professional, and ethical practices when making decisions and carrying out responsibilities.