

TRUSTEE TOPICS

Prepared by the
Kansas State Library and the
Kansas Library Trustee Association

BOARD ORGANIZATION

GOAL:

The goal of this article is to help trustees handle library business in a timely and efficient fashion by having good organization of board business.

BACKGROUND:

The public library is a wonderful place to access information and use materials for recreation, research and learning. But it is also a public institution that must deal with many issues that are socially sensitive.

A vital and progressive public library cannot avoid all problems but the board can minimize the impact of problems by having some effective protections in place. A library is best protected when communication is strong, documentation is complete and public law is followed.

ISSUES:

Section I - Bylaws

All library boards need to assure continuity and consistency for their legal, financial and policy making activities. Written bylaws are an accepted tool for doing this. Bylaws cover the basic structure under which the board does business.

The bylaws should include:

- Library name[s]
- Mission statement
- Service district
- Provision for selection and appointment of trustees
- Terms and offices
- Duties of standing committees
- Provision for special or ad hoc committees
- Definition of a quorum
- Time, place and responsibility for meetings
- Attendance requirements
- Provision for calling special meetings
- Parliamentary authority
- Procedure for amending the bylaws
- Dates of adoption and amendments

[Sample]

SAMPLE BYLAWS

Adopted _____(date)

ARTICLE I: This organization shall be called “The Board of Directors of the _____Public Library, “existing by virtue of the provisions of K.S.A. 12-1222, with powers and duties as provided in K.S.A. 12-1215 and K.S.A. 12-1225 of the laws of the State of Kansas.”

ARTICLE II: The mission of this public library is

_____.

ARTICLE III: The service area of this public library includes

_____.

ARTICLE IV: The officers of this Board shall consist of a chair, a vice-chair, a secretary and a treasurer, whose duties shall be those usually pertaining to these officers. They shall be elected at the annual meeting or serve until their successors are elected.

ARTICLE V: The regular meetings shall be held monthly on the third Wednesday of each month at 3:15 p.m., unless otherwise ordered by the Board. The regular meeting in May shall be the annual meeting. Unless waived, written notice of each regular meeting shall be mailed to each member of the Board not less than three (3) days prior to such meeting date. If unable to attend, members should notify the chair. Special meetings shall be called at any time by the Chairman or at the written request of a majority of the members. Written notice stating time and place of any special meeting and the purpose for which called shall, unless waived, be given each member of the Board at least two (2) days in advance of such meeting, and no business other than that stated in the notice shall be transcribed at such meeting.

ARTICLE VI: Four members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. In the absence of the chair and vice-chair of the Board, the members present shall elect a temporary chair. Members with more than two unexcused absences from meetings will be considered inactive and informed in writing that a replacement appointment to the Board will be sought.

ARTICLE VII: At the annual meeting or at the first regular meeting thereafter, the following standing committees shall be appointed by the chair and confirmed by the Board:

Building and Grounds Committee
Personnel Committee
Finance Committee
Publicity Committee
Planning Committee

Each committee shall consist of at least three members, and they shall hold their offices until the next meeting or until their successors are appointed. Their duties shall be such as usually pertain to their respective titles.

There also shall be an Executive Committee whose membership shall consist of the chair of the Board, who also shall be chair of the Executive Committee, and the chair of the several standing committees.

There also shall be such special committees as may be required. They shall be appointed by the chair of the Board, unless otherwise ordered, and shall perform such duties as may be assigned to them by motion or resolution adopted.

ARTICLE VIII: The Board has the responsibility of making and directing the policy of the library, in accordance at all times with the statutes of the State of Kansas. Its responsibilities include promotion of library interests, securing of adequate funds to carry on the work satisfactorily, and the administration and control of library funds, property, and equipment.

ARTICLE IX: The Board shall select a library director who shall be the administrative officer under the direction and review of the Board. He shall be responsible for the employment and direction of the staff in accordance with the personnel policy in the library's policy manual as adopted by the Board for the efficiency of the library's service to the public, for the operation of the library under the financial conditions set forth in the annual budget, and for such responsibilities as are delegated to the library director by the Board of Directors. The library director shall attend all regular and special board meetings.

ARTICLE X: These Bylaws may be repealed, amended, or revised at any regular meeting of the Board by a majority of a quorum, providing, however, that such proposed repeal, amendment, or revision shall first be submitted in writing at regular meeting of the Board and sent to those members not present. Such proposal shall not be acted upon prior to a subsequent regular meeting of the Board, and notice of intended repeal, amendment, or revision shall be included in the notice of such meeting.

ARTICLE XI: *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, shall govern the proceedings of the Board.

Section II - Library Board Meeting Minutes

The best protection the public library board can have, if their actions are ever questioned, is an excellent public record of their actions. The

minutes should be kept by the board secretary, not by the library director.

Because the secretary's minutes are the official record of Board action, they should include:

- The purpose of the meeting (whether regular or special), the time, the place, those in attendance and approval of the minutes of the last meeting.
- Complete record of any official action taken by the Board relative to the librarian's report, communications received, the treasurer's report and other business transacted.
- A record of all motions exactly as stated, with specifics on whether the motion was adopted or rejected. Only that information recorded in the minutes can be considered official. The following is a suggested format:

Mr. Jones moved and Mrs. Smith seconded that the board authorize the purchase of additional shelving as recommended by the librarian.

The yeas were Tarrant, Jones, Smith and Price. Nays were Archer and Thompson. The motion was carried.

- Record of adjournment. No business may be legally transacted following adjournment.

The secretary should also write the official letters of the Board and keep copies filed with other record.

Section III - Library Board Financial Reports

The board should review regularly scheduled financial reports. These reports should include current expenditures for each fund, year-to-date expenditures, balances remaining and an explanation of any fund transfers. Good budget reports can help the trustees know what the library is doing with its resources.

ACTION STEPS:

Once a year, the board should review the library's bylaws to see if any changes are needed.

Once a year, the board should review the library's minutes to see if they provide an effective record of board business.

When the library director's evaluation is done, the documentation provided by the librarian to the board should be assessed and needed improvements requested.