

Division of Responsibilities Policy

Under the Illinois Public Library Law (75 ILCS) the Board of Library Trustees is, among other functions, empowered to formulate “reasonable rules and regulations... in order to render the use of the library of the greatest benefit to the greatest number” and to “appoint a competent librarian, to remove such appointees, to set the budget with input from the director and to retain professional consultants as needed.” Thus, in defining and delineating the division of responsibility between the Board and the librarian, the Board recognizes that the ultimate responsibility to the community to provide “the greatest benefit to the greatest number” rests with the Board. Policy determination is the Board’s power and duty. Management is the administrative librarian’s responsibility, for which he or she is responsible to the Board. The division and sharing of these responsibilities fall into various categories.

Governance and Policy Making

1. Goals and Objectives for the Library

Board responsibility

It shall be the duty of the Board to support the goals and objectives of the library and the methods of meeting them, to review the goals and objectives, and to check progress.

Librarian responsibility

The Librarian shall provide assistance and direction in setting goals and objectives and in determining means of evaluation.

Joint responsibility

The Board shall relate the library and its program to the community and its needs through systematic study of the community and through systematic analysis of library service with the assistance of the Librarian, who shall participate fully and prepare regular reports on current progress and future needs.

2. Written Policies

Board responsibility

The Board shall determine and adopt written policies to govern operation, use, and programs of the library and shall adopt bylaws for Board procedures.

Librarian responsibility

The Librarian shall recommend needed policies to the Board and supply samples and sources of information. The Librarian shall carry out the policies as adopted by the Board with recommendations and materials for study and administer the library within the framework of the library’s goals, objectives, policies, and budget.

Joint responsibility

Both the Board and the Librarian shall know local, state, and national laws which affect libraries and play an active role in initiating and supporting beneficial library legislation; shall participate fully in the library system and make use of the consultants of the Illinois State Library; shall attend regional, state, and national library association meetings and workshops when possible and join appropriate organizations working for improved libraries; and shall study library publications.

3. Governance

Board responsibility

The Board shall cooperate with other local government officials, keeping in mind the special legal responsibilities of a library board. Board members shall attend all Board meetings and committee meetings to which they are assigned and shall carry out all special assignments promptly.

Librarian responsibility

The Librarian shall prepare all needed library reports to the government, the system, and the Illinois State Library and shall provide copies to the Board. The Librarian shall attend all Board and committee meetings.

Finance

4. Financial Status of the Library

Board responsibility

The Board shall keep aware of the financial status of the library.

Librarian responsibility

The Librarian shall provide a report of budget status and expenditure at each Board meeting. The Librarian shall supply facts and figures to the Board to aid in interpreting the library's financial need.

Joint responsibility

The Librarian shall prepare two annual budgets in consultation with staff and Board; first, the appropriation ordinance form which anticipates the needs for the coming year, and second, an operating budget, once the available revenues are determined. The Board shall work with the Librarian to formulate these budgets, adequate to carry out the library's goals and objectives, within any limitations of the state law.

5. Budget Presentation

Board responsibility

The Board shall present the budget to the general public, shall explain and defend it, shall help to secure adequate funds, staff, and services, and shall explore all ways of increasing the library's income through tapping other sources and taking advantage of all available means of cooperating with other libraries.

Librarian responsibility

The Librarian shall assist the Board in cooperating with other libraries and shall call the Board's attention to ways of stretching the budget.

Joint responsibility

The Librarian shall work with the Board in interpreting budget and financial needs to public officials and the public. The Board and the Librarian shall see that complete and accurate records concerning finances, personnel, property inventory, and annual reports are on file at the library.