



**Manitoba
Library Association**

Public Library Board Trustee Handbook

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I Introduction

Welcome to the [Manitoba Library Association](#) (MLA) Trustees Handbook!

This handbook is intended for newly appointed Trustees to public library boards, but we hope that it will also serve as a useful resource for experienced Trustees, Library Administrators, and others in the public library community. Public library trustees have a unique role in the library system; while you are interested in, and supporters of, core library values such as literacy, accessibility and community, you are also stewards of your local library.

What does a public library trustee do?

As a newly appointed trustee for your local or regional library you are required to provide governance, leadership and advocacy to the best of your abilities. Your attendance at meetings on a regular basis is imperative to maintaining a working relationship with the library staff and with each other on the Board. You are responsible for the establishment, acceptance and continued supervision of public library service. You shall develop sound, clear policies to give clear direction to the Library Staff. You should match the library's goals and objectives with the needs of the community.

There are many resources available to Library Administrators and Trustees, and the object of this Handbook is not to simply restate, list or enumerate all this information; instead, we hope that this will provide a useful map of the public library system in Manitoba, with understandable directions how to find specific information or people, and a handy toolbox of resources that could be of assistance.

This 4th edition represents further revisions of the original Trustee Handbook last updated in 2008 by the former Manitoba Library Trustee Association (MLTA). There are many further resources that could (and should) be added, and revisions will be necessary as public library services continues to evolve. Indeed this should be viewed as an 'evergreen' document.

Thanks are owed to many people involved with these revisions, including former Trustees who created and updated the original handbook, MLA members and allies, particularly including Public Library Services Branch, each of whom took the time and interest to review, comment and assist with format and contribute.

Finally, thank-you to all Library Trustees for taking on (and continuing) your important role!

Andrew Robert, MLA Director - Trustees (MLTA) Division
March 1, 2021

II Who is a Trustee?

As an appointed trustee for your municipal or regional library you are required to provide governance leadership and advocacy to the best of your abilities. Your attendance at meetings on a regular basis is imperative to maintaining a working relationship with the library staff and each other on the Board.

Trustees are typically either a municipal councillor assigned to the library board (among other responsibilities on council), or a citizen representative, appointed by a municipal council. Library Boards will have different compositions depending on whether it is a single municipality library or a regional library consisting of a multitude of municipalities. The Winnipeg Public Library Board has a different role than most public library boards and consequently is not comprised the same. Some larger library boards may have local library 'boards' or 'committees' comprised of municipal councillors and citizen representatives which deal with the operation of the local branch, which is distinct from the governance board.

Public Library Boards are governing boards, legal corporations with the authority to make policy and to govern the library's affairs under [The Public Libraries Act](#), 1997; Part II of the Act deals with Municipal Libraries; Part III deals with Regional Libraries.

By agreeing to be a public library trustee, you have agreed to undertake various legal obligations, including:

- a fiduciary duty to act honestly; in good faith; and in the best interests of the library;
- a responsibility of supervising library's finances ;
- to carry out your duties with the same care and attention that would reasonably be expected from someone of your knowledge or experience;
- obey and act within the applicable legislation and regulations;
- avoid conflicts of interest;
- to keep up to date with the Board's activities and business;
- to keep confidential any private information you learn during as Trustee.

As a Trustee you may have personal liability if you act negligently or outside your authority as a Trustee.

See also PLSB publication, [Governance at a Glance](#).

Some Questions a Trustee should be able to answer:

- When is the library in your community open?
- What branches does your library have? (a bookmobile would also be a branch)
- What services are available at the library?
- How many ratepayers does the library serve? (the population of the municipality(ies))
- What percentage of those people are actual library users?
- Is that high or low? (Compared to other parts of the province)
- What provincial agency is responsible for library service?
- What percentage of the library budget is provided by provincial vs. municipal?
- What is the *per capita* funding provided by my municipality?
- Compared to other libraries, is that high or low?
- Does the Board have any development plans for the library?

HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE BOARD MEMBER

(reproduced with permission of [Alberta Library Trustees Association](#)
from their [Alberta Library Trustees Handbook](#))

- Arrive at meetings on time prepared to actively participate.
- Prepare reports, motions, etc., in writing if possible, and submit to the Board Secretary in sufficient time for distribution before the meeting.
- Read Board material in advance of meetings, noting comments and questions.
- Follow through on assigned activities.
- Notify the Chair in plenty of time about items for the agenda.
- Develop a working knowledge of the Board manual and applicable legislation.
- Maintain friendly, positive relationships with other Board members and staff.
- Ask questions!
- Participate in discussion and decision making, ensuring that you offer your relevant comments and suggestions prior to the Board's decisions.
- If you disagree, disagree with ideas and motions rather than individuals.
- Understand the rules of order and rules of the table chosen by the Board to facilitate meetings.
- Calendar Board and committee meetings and events, to allow time for advance preparation.
- Notify the Chair in advance if unable to attend a meeting.
- Keep your own copy of the Board Manual current, including agendas, minutes, and other materials; discard outdated materials.
- When your term is up or when you resign, pass your up-to-date Board Manual to the trustee who replaces you.
- Always speak positively of the library to the public.

III Introduction to Public Libraries in Manitoba

A. Responsibility for Public Libraries

The *Constitution Act* of Canada divides responsibility for various activities in Canada between the Federal and Provincial governments; responsibility for Public Libraries is within the jurisdiction of the Province. The Province of Manitoba has enacted the *Public Libraries Act* to regulate all public libraries in Manitoba, except in the City of Winnipeg which is regulated by *The City of Winnipeg Act*. NOTE: for the purposes of this handbook, the following information is dealing only with public libraries under the *Public Libraries Act*, unless indicated otherwise.

As a Trustee you should be familiar with the relevant legislation as it provides direction and restrictions about library operations and the role of Trustee. Some of the provisions include:

- how a public library may be created (sections 9 and 22)
- the composition of library boards (sections 15 and 24)
- the term of a library board member (sections 17 and 24)
- the frequency that library boards must meet (sections 20 and 26)

***The Public Libraries Act* places responsibility on local municipalities to create and fund public libraries.** A municipality may create its own public library, or may join with other municipalities to create a Regional public library.

B. Funding of Public Libraries

Public libraries are funded by their municipality or partner municipalities and the Province.

A municipality funds public libraries through tax dollars. It is the role of the library board to submit a budget to the municipality that will meet the services and needs of the community. Regional public libraries are funded by their partner municipalities based upon the agreement between the municipalities; not all regional libraries are funded in the same manner.

The Province provides annual funding through its [Rural Library Operating Grant](#) for the annual costs of operating libraries based on population and municipal contribution to a maximum of \$8.50 *per capita*.

According to the Public Library Services Branch website,

“the grant consists of:

1. *A basic grant to match municipal funding for the library to a maximum of \$8.50 per capita based on the population of the municipality on May 31 of the preceding year.*
2. *A development grant for purchasing library collection materials equal to \$5,500 for each branch or bookmobile or \$6,500 for each bilingual or northern branch or bookmobile that meets the following program criteria:*

- *Public access for a minimum 10 hours weekly at each branch or bookmobile*
- *Sharing of resources with other libraries in the province*

Note: *For this program, annual operating costs include those related to staff, library materials, utilities, maintenance, stationery, postage, programs, shelving, computers, equipment and furniture. The acquisition, construction or installation of physical assets related to the structure of a library and the purchase of vehicles and bookmobiles are not included.”*

The Manitoba Library Association continues to advocate for an increase in the per capita formula including correspondence of [February 14, 2020 Letter to Ministers Cliff Cullen and Cathy Cox](#) and [October 10, 2018 to Minister Cathy Cox](#). The Association of Manitoba Municipalities has also been a vocal advocate of library funding, including their [Position Paper of February 10, 2021](#).

The Province also provides funding to public libraries by way of other grants, including:

- The [Rural Library Establishment Grant](#) is for any municipality establishing library service for the first time.
- The [Rural Library Technology Grant](#) is ongoing financial assistance toward current library technology.
- The [Rural Library Cooperative Technology Grant](#) is financial assistance toward innovative library technology partnerships.

C. Library Partners and Allies

There are many other organizations involved or collaborating with public libraries in Manitoba and Canada.

The [Public Library Services Branch \(PLSB\)](#) is part of Manitoba Sport, Culture and Heritage. The branch is responsible to the minister to ensure libraries are following related laws and standards. Its goals are designed to foster and strengthen the network of community-based public library services in Manitoba. While public libraries are managed and operated by local governments, the province supports the delivery of province-wide services through municipal and regional public library systems to enhance local service delivery province-wide.

The [Manitoba Library Association \(MLA\)](#) provides leadership in the promotion, development, and support of library and information services in Manitoba for the benefit of MLA members, the library and information community and the citizens of Manitoba. In 2018 the Manitoba Library Association, the Manitoba Library Trustees Association (MLTA) and the Manitoba Association of Library Technicians (MALT) merged into the MLA.

Every 2 years MLA presents the **Manitoba Libraries Conference (MLC)**, which provides opportunities for discussion, education and exhibitors.

The [Canadian Federation of Library Associations \(CFLA-FCAB\)](#) is an association of Library Associations (including MLA) across Canada.

Municipalities across Manitoba have a vested interest in public libraries, being responsible for the delivery of library services to its citizens and a major funder. The [Association of Manitoba Municipalities \(AMM\)](#) regularly brings issues and concerns of its members on library issues to the Province, including its [February 10, 2021 Position Paper](#) specifically on *Library Funding and Universal Access*.

D. Winnipeg Public Library (WPL)

The 16-member [Winnipeg Library Board](#) includes 12 citizen members appointed by the City Council, two City Councillors, the Manager of Library Services and one non-voting representative from the Province of Manitoba. The Board's mandate is to make recommendations about library policy and budget, deal with administrative matters with significant policy or service implications for the library system, and develop long range plans for the library system, including public involvement. The Board works in consultation with the



Manager of Library Services and reports to the City Council's Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services.

Each of Winnipeg's five Community Committees has appointed a Library Advisory Committee (LAC) comprised of citizen members and 2 representatives from the WPL Board. Library Advisory Committees advise and report to the Library Board on public library services within their communities.

E. Economic Impact of Public Libraries

As a Trustee, you should have an understanding of the economic benefits of the public library in your community. This will allow you to effectively advocate on behalf of the library and to assist you in assessing and finalizing the library budget.

The Manitoba Library Trustees Association (now Division of the Manitoba Library Association) submitted a relevant article to the AMM's *Municipal Leader* in Fall 2016 (pp. 34-36) on this topic, entitled: [*The economics of public libraries*](#):

"The economic impact to communities is now being quantified. The Toronto Public Library commissioned a study in 2013 So Much More: The Economic Impact of the Toronto Public Library on the City of Toronto. Among its conclusions:

- *the public library delivers \$5.63 of economic impact for every \$1.00 spent; and*
- *for the 72% of Torontonians using their Library, the direct benefit to each person was \$500.00*

At the 2016 Manitoba Libraries Conference, Bibliothèque Allard Regional Library reported on perhaps the only economic impact study of a public library in Manitoba. Using similar principles as the Toronto study, it was calculated that Allard's annual economic impact to their region included:

- *For every dollar invested in library services, area residents received \$5.82 in value.*
- *The average benefit of being open 1 hour is \$409."*

The Winnipeg Public Library has a [Library Value Calculator](#) on its website which allows patrons to calculate the economic benefit to their family over the year obtained from utilizing the library's services.

F. Protection From Discriminatory Speech And the Right Of Freedom Of Expression

Issues that have always arisen in respect of public libraries include censorship, the right of freedom of expression, and protection from discriminatory or hateful speech. Library boards should be aware of these difficult issues and provide guidance through policies which take into account the current state of the law in Canada, including in their own policies such as collection development and on the use of library meeting rooms.

The Canadian Library Association has asserted a statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries, based upon the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and the United Nation *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* that, in part:

“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 [MLA issued a statement in 2019](#) which addressed the necessary balance between these issues, which read in part:

“The concepts of protection from discriminatory or hateful speech and the right of freedom of expression are not isolated; they affect all public libraries.

The MLA board reiterates its support for all Manitobans to have fair, equitable and barrier-free access to the widest possible variety of expressive content — a core tenet of intellectual freedom. As part of a helping profession, our role as library professionals is to be there for our diverse communities. We are particularly invested in supporting historically marginalized communities such as the 2SLGBTQ+ community, Indigenous people, visible minorities and those with disabilities. We believe in and support inclusion and acceptance of all people and in providing safe spaces where everyone feels welcome to use library resources and spaces.”

G. Universality of Service/Access

“In December 2013, Manitoba passed *the Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)*. The purpose of the Act is to prevent and remove barriers that impede persons with disabilities from accessing public and private sector services, buildings and information. This is achievable for every public library in Manitoba through a collaborative, community-led approach that seeks to identify and remove barriers to universal library access. As sites of learning, creation and interaction in communities, libraries are uniquely positioned to



meet the changing needs of community members by providing access to information, technology and programming – all supported by the best customer service possible. “

From Public Libraries Services Branch: [Universal Access: Customer Services Toolkit](#)

H. Facts about Public Libraries in Manitoba

There are [54 public libraries](#) in Manitoba, which locations can be found on the following [map of the Province](#), **Public Library Services Branch** shares [statistics about public libraries across Manitoba](#), including provincial and municipal funding, expenses, circulation and other information.

II Role of Board

A. Governance vs Operation: The Board and Library Administrator have different roles

It is important to recognize (and respect) that the board and the library administrator have different roles, but are on the same team. As with any organization, great things can happen when efforts are in sync to reach goals, however difficulties arise when either of the two stray into the others' responsibilities.

Library Board	Library Administrator
Determine objectives and goals of the library according to the needs of the community and review these objectives periodically.	Implement the Library's objectives and goals in the delivery of library services, and report to the Board on the progress and difficulties.
Determine and adopt written policies that will govern the operation, use and program of the library and policy for Board procedures.	Follow the policies and make recommendations to the Board about new or revised policies.
Hire and employ a competent and qualified librarian and provide continuing evaluation of Librarian/Administrators performance.	Hire competent and qualified staff and provide continuing evaluation of their performance.
Secure adequate funds to carry on the library's program. Approve the budget and control the expenditure of funds.	Carry out the library administration within the approved budget, and report to the Board about future and existing needs.
Adopt a policy dealing with book and material selection. This includes a published policy for "Challenged Material"	Implement a policy for "Challenged Material".

An individual Board member does not act alone, or on behalf of the Board, unless specifically given authority by the Board to do so. The Board is the legal authority, not individual members. Similarly, individuals serving as library Board trustees must endorse the mission of the library, and care about the library.

Some Boards will create and abide by a **Code of Ethics**, which is an expression of the Board's agreement to perform business in a particular manner. As such, it is a useful preparation toward handling the many unexpected issues affecting Boards, particularly those where responses are not addressed through specific legislation. Examples of such issues may include Conflict of Interest, confidentiality, or limits on a Board member's actions.

Committees are one of the means through which Boards organize their members to accomplish specific goals. Committees should have a specific purpose, and limited time-span, although many Boards use "Standing committees", i.e. "Personnel" or "Finance". Sub committees should report on a regular basis to the main Board.

For an excellent examination of public library board governance see again PLSB's publication, [Governance at a Glance](#).

B. Positions on the Board

A library board must elect and authorize certain positions on the board, particularly the Chair and Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary (many Library boards have the Library Administrator fill the roles of Secretary and Treasurer). All other members are Members at Large.

C. The Budget

The budgeting process is a joint effort of the Library Administrator and the Board. Often a Board will create a Finance or Budget Committee, and this is often comprised of the elected municipal councillors.

Expenses related to supplies, collection development, building maintenance, and salary increases are recommendations presented by the Library Administrator. It is the Board's responsibility to review, revise, and adopt the budget in consultation with the Library Administrator.

Library Trustees will review the budget at monthly trustee meetings. By monitoring the fiscal activities of the library, the Board will ensure that funds are being managed efficiently and in accordance with standard accounting procedures, and assets are safeguarded. However, the daily financial transactions of the library will be left to the Library Administrator or Board Treasurer.

Trustees need to be able to support, defend, and clarify library expenditures. As there are many other worthy and necessary projects and facilities that local governments must fund, the library trustee must be aware of the library's priorities, needs and financial challenges.

Public Library Services Board requires the library budget, audited financial statement, and annual report and grant applications in order to process the next years' grant application (Contact PLSB at PLS@gov.mb.ca for applicable deadlines). Similarly, funding municipalities will require such information.

C. Developing Policy



Every library board should have policies on important issues affecting the operation of their library, and which will provide guidance to the Library Administrator in managing the library and implementing the Board's vision.

"Policies are important to ensure consistent service, provide continuity of service and to provide accountability and transparency. But in addition to having policies, it's necessary to dust them off on a regular basis and consider whether updates are necessary.

Finally, remember that policies are intended to guide the 'why' and 'what'; they can't and shouldn't cover everything including the 'who', 'when' and the 'how' – those are procedures. "

Michael Dawber, CEO & Librarian at the Rainy River Public Library, Presenter at the 2016 & 2018 Manitoba Libraries Conferences '**What's the So-What-Ness of it All? Conducting a Library Policy Audit**'.

With Michael Dawber's kind permission, please see his presentation materials:

[How to Create Policies](#)

[How to Audit Policies](#)

The following are Major Policies which most public libraries should address:

Foundational Policies

Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Guiding principles

Purpose

Planning

Governance Policies

Board operation and administration

Finance

Personnel Policies

Service Policies

Materials Selection

Circulation

Rental of Library Space (meeting rooms)

Internet Policy

Building and Grounds

Emergency Preparedness/Business Continuity (**NOTE:** in MLA's [2020 COVID-19 Survey](#), only 7 of the 44 participating public libraries in Manitoba indicated they had a Business Continuity Policy!)

Once a policy is in place, it is important to revisit and review. Michael Dawber provided the following 3 reasons for an audit are to:

Current to March 1, 2021 [insert date of last revisions]

1. Keep your library relevant and modern;
2. Match your library operations to strategic goals (something else to consider);
3. Give your Board (and Municipalities) a full picture of how a library works.

See PLSB's publication, *Municipal and Regional Public Library [Standards and Guidelines](#)*.

D. Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is medium to long term planning based upon the principles of an organizations' mission statement. The purpose is to design a course of action for the organization or business to determine the appropriate services to offer and a marketing plan to promote the services. Designing library services based on quality customer satisfaction is a goal of the strategic planning process.

1. Needs Assessment
2. Reaching Out to the Community
3. Survey Instruments
4. Compiling the information
4. Disseminate the information
5. Implementation
6. Adapted from the Canadian Library Association

Public libraries in rural and northern Manitoba can obtain assistance in strategic planning from local [Communities Futures](#) offices:

"There are 16 Community Futures organizations (CFs) established throughout rural and northern Manitoba. The goal of each CF is to assist the communities in their region to develop their economic potential. To this end, CFs work with communities and their agencies and organizations to:

- Develop long term community economic development strategies and plans
- Coordinate resources to implement development plans" (from CF website)

An important source for strategic planning is patron feedback. Some public libraries may survey their patrons periodically which can be most helpful, particularly when the right questions are asked and people are engaged.

PLSB requires that each public library's website has a survey assessing the importance, satisfaction and extent they would recommend the library on a variety of services provided. You will find the following graphic on your Library website which will allow patrons to provide valuable input on library services (to access the [survey](#)):



E. Advocacy and Lobbying

The library trustee and the political process are inseparable. Library trustees, representing the public library as a special interest group, must be involved in interplay with the political leadership and the public in general in order to achieve the specific purposes and goals of public libraries.

To be effective advocates for public libraries, trustees are encouraged to:

- Be familiar with the laws and regulations governing and affecting the library.
- Maintain cordial non-partisan relationships with all three levels of government.
- Present clear, realistic, and honest requests to governments and agencies according to the proper procedures.
- Be aware of the strengths of competing agencies and services that seek government funding.
- Maintain a continuing public relations program as the strongest public support comes from citizens with knowledge and appreciation of the public library system.
- Participate in the Manitoba Library Association

One of the best ways to advocate on behalf of the library is to **be a library user yourself!** This will allow you to be well acquainted with the operation, programming and services of their local library

Lobbying

Lobbying is the dissemination of library information, needs, trends, and issues to the public and politicians at all levels of government.

A successful lobbying effort will:

- Be ongoing and maintain library issues at the forefront of the council's consciousness.
- Maintain cordial contacts with all levels of government - mayors, councillors, secretary-treasurers, Members of the Legislative Assembly and Members of Parliament.
- Provide sound and justifiable reasons for the library's need or concerns ranging from finances and tax levies to legislative issues, both provincial and national.

F. Hiring And Evaluating the Library Administrator



Having a successful job description and evaluation procedure will make searching for a new library administrator easier when that is necessary. Start by reviewing the existing job description. Are the basic requirements and qualifications listed still valid? The time to revise the job description is prior to advertising the opening, and the new job description may also offer wording for a clear, direct advertisement.

Having an appropriate job description is essential to understand what qualities and qualifications the library needs and is seeking, and will attract the right candidate.

PLSB shared an email entitled [Succession Planning for Your Library](#) in November 2019, which provided useful discussion and resources about succession planning for staff and trustees. PLSB's publication [Standards and Guidelines](#) provides useful resource material for job descriptions (subsection 8.2).

V Effective Board meetings

A. Board Meetings

The Public Libraries Act requires that library Boards meet at least 6 times each year, with one to two months elapsing between regular meetings. As only the entire Board has the authority to act, as opposed to individual members, the Board meeting is the major opportunity for the Board to review correspondence, discuss and solve problems, inform Board members, plan for the future and review material submitted by the Library Administrator and ultimately make decisions.

B. Role of the Chair

The Board members will annually elect a person from the Board (other than the Library Administrator) to act as the Board Chair; it is useful to also elect a Vice-Chair to act when the Chair is unavailable. The role of the Chair is very important to the operation of the Board, and the conduct of the Board meetings. The Chair's duties will be set out within the Board's Constitution, but essentially the Chair will be expected to show leadership, speak on behalf of and be the face of the Board and public library in the community, and where Library Board representation or attendance is appropriate or necessary. She or he should be someone familiar with the operation of the library and familiar with (or will learn) the rules of order for the conduct of meetings. The Chair will also work closely with the Library Administrator, and the entire board. The Chair will also lead with orientation of new trustees and board development.

The Board Chair is also the driving force behind an effective Board meeting. The Chair has an obligation to understand rules of order and to be able to effectively conduct a meeting without being too brusque nor to let the meeting stray into long debates or discussions. The Chair is responsible (sometimes along with the Library Administrator) to set the Agenda (including deciding what could be placed on a Consent Agenda – see below for a description), and should determine beforehand a sense of the time required for each topic (some agendas will have a corresponding time duration to guide the meeting), and be able to end a discussion, or table, when appropriate.

C. Agendas

There are different types of agendas for different types of actions.

Meeting Agenda

It is important to plan meetings in advance, providing information to members so that they can be prepared and run the meeting in a manner that the work is accomplished efficiently and effectively. In this regard, the agenda is the ideal tool for meeting planning. More than simply a list of business items to be considered, the agenda is an invaluable tool for focusing discussion and using time productively.

The agenda is essentially the plan for the Board's work. While the Board and staff work together on an effective long-term meeting plan for the Board's term, the Chair and Library Administrator will typically produce the agenda for specific Board meetings. As the Library Administrator is always *Ex Officio* to the Board, their ongoing experience can be a valuable resource for the Board.

To focus Board meeting agendas on Board work and avoid administrative activities, it is important to always keep in mind the unique function of the Board:

The Library Administrator is responsible for the day to day operation of the library. The Board focuses on broader strategies essential to the overall success of the library.

Consent Agenda

A consent agenda is a practice which would place routine business and reports into one agenda item. Certain reports or actions which may or may not require board approval, but in any event not needing discussion, can be voted upon in one motion saving time. Should an item on a consent agenda be identified during the approval of the meeting agenda as requiring discussion, it can be moved from the Consent Agenda to the Meeting Agenda.

Three rules for Consent Agendas:

1. Care must be exercised in placing a matter on the Consent Agenda; if it needs discussion it should be a separate item.
2. All Board members must read the Consent Agenda; its essential that the Board receive and review the consent agenda and the documents associated with it before the meeting;
3. If a Board member wants to discuss the item, the Chair must move the item to the Meeting Agenda for individual review and discussion.

A Consent Agenda can be an efficient way to conduct a meeting, but can be abused if matters that need discussion are passed without examination.

Annual Agenda

Agendas should move the Board business forward, as their work is largely strategic and directed towards the future. For this reason, an Annual Agenda to move Board work from month to month can be very effective in ensuring the Board has time to accomplish all of the necessary tasks over the course of the year. The Board should be aware, well in advance, when budget discussions, key community events or recruitment plans must take place. The Annual Agenda leads the Board through its term, enabling it to handle both the expected, and unexpected, business of library governance.

Ideally, the Annual Agenda should also reflect the current goals and objectives the Board is seeking to achieve as part of its strategic plan. Relating the Annual Agenda directly to the results the Board is seeking to achieve, focuses Board work on the future and on moving ahead.

Similarly, it provides a means of tracking and evaluating the Board's progress in meeting community needs.

D. Rules of order

Rules of order help standardize the procedures for running meetings, and are essential in ensuring every trustee has been heard, and has had an opportunity to vote on all issues. The Board may wish to adopt one of the rules of order, such as Robert's, Bourinot, or Kerr and King as specified in the Constitution. All of these Rules of order describe the formal meeting process, including how to present motions, conduct debate and vote on issues, as well as nominations and elections.

E. Meeting Minutes

Minutes are the permanent record of the proceedings of a Board or committee meeting. Minutes do not record every single comment, but rather note the general meaning of the discussion in enough detail to provide an accurate review of what occurred. The agenda itself provides the framework for items to be included in the minutes of the meeting, which constitute a legal record of the proceedings and are considered public documents. Minutes are prepared by the secretary.

F. Preparation for Meetings

Board members are responsible for arriving on time and being prepared for Board meetings. The Minutes of the last meeting (which would be on the agenda for approval) should be reviewed, in advance. In order for Board members to prepare effectively, meeting information should be distributed well in advance.

The Board package should include:

- Agenda (including separate Consent Agenda, if applicable)
- Location/date/time
- Draft Minutes of last meeting
- Assigned reading or documents for preparation.

Meetings should begin and finish on time. Board members are responsible for what happens at Board meetings, even if they are not in attendance. In this regard attendance at meetings is not only a responsibility, but also a protection for Board members.

If a Trustee misses a meeting, then she or he should follow up with the Library Administrator or Chair and obtain the draft minutes to keep abreast of the conduct of the meeting.

G. Increase efficiency of meetings

Board Trustees will often sit on other committees or have other obligations such that it is important to have an efficient meeting, which may either allow the meetings to be short, or to

allow sufficient time for discussion on important broader and important issues – or both. The following are some methods:

- set a time limit, being no longer than 2 hours in length, including *in camera*
- all materials (Minutes, Agendas and Reports) should be distributed and read ahead of time;
- Trustees should come prepared with questions, comments
- speak only once on an issue
- highlight reports, do not read them aloud. Focus on analysis, what learned, and next steps.
- the Chair has a role to keep things moving;
- utilize a Consent Agenda
- don't fall prey to hidden agendas – stay focused

VI Trustee Education & Development

Few persons become Library Trustees with all the skills and knowledge that is necessary to effectively deliver the needs of the role. Trustees are chosen for a variety of reasons, but typically because they have shown interest or skills that would allow them to develop into a steward of the library.

Like most roles, library trustees are encouraged to learn new skills and expand their knowledge. Development can occur through experience on the board, involvement with the library, attending learning opportunities and participating in library organizations.

A. Phase 1: Orientation for New Trustees

A vital development priority is ensuring that new Board members have a firm grasp of their role, and their library. A good way to accomplish this is through a “Trustee Orientation Kit” including such items as:

- copy of *The Public Libraries Act*;
- MLA Trustee Handbook;
- information about the Library Programs and Branches

B. Phase 2: Continuing Development

As the landscape of libraries is continually changing, there is always something new to learn, even for the most experienced Board member. Fortunately opportunities abound, including:

- PLSB has ongoing education and development sessions, often focused on Trustee learning including access to the [Education Institute](#), [library toolshed](#), [Email Campaign Archive](#) and its [Library Training Calendar](#)
- Attending the Manitoba Libraries Conference
- Inviting guests or experts to speak at Board meetings or workshops;
- Becoming involved with the [Manitoba Library Association](#), including reading MLA News, joining MLA, attending a Trustee Division (MLTA) teleconference, participating in learning provided;
- Meeting or partnering with other library Boards on mutually beneficial projects

C. Phase 3: Succession Planning

Succession is a vital component of Board development, where outgoing members are replaced with new, adequately oriented trustees. Succession can be a genuine challenge in smaller communities, where the limited number of residents may have many different functions.

Rather than attempting to attract potential Trustees through the usual advertisement, Trustees should consider personally contacting people in the community who either have shown an interest in the public library, and/or have the personality and background who would be considered a good fit.

PLSB has regularly shared articles on Board Succession Planning with public libraries, and has access to reference material or consultants to assist in Trustee recruitment. PLSB shared an email entitled [Succession Planning for Your Library](#) in November 2019, which provided useful discussion and resources about succession planning for staff and trustees

Don't wait until someone retires; succession planning should be an ongoing activity, and will have the added benefit of beginning and continuing conversations with people interested in public libraries.

The library toolshed posted sample [poster and brochure](#) material for trustee recruitment.