

## Muskoka Lakes Township Public Library LIBRARY BOARD POLICY

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| Policy Type: Governance      | Policy Number: GOV-07          |
| Policy Title: Board Advocacy | Policy Approval Date: 09/21/26 |
| Chairperson: V. Duke         | Policy Review Date: 09/30      |

### Intent:

The Muskoka Lakes Public Library Board (herein after referred to as the Board) shall be an effective advocate for the provision of excellent library service by ensuring that the community is aware of the importance of the Muskoka Lakes Public Library (herein after referred to as the Library) and that funding bodies and government decision-makers at all levels understand the pivotal role that libraries play in the community especially in promoting literacy and the love of reading. This policy sets out the advocacy responsibilities of the Board and the role of staff in this work.

### Regulatory Context:

Section 5 of Ontario Public Library Guidelines outlines that the Board shall ensure that the community is aware of the importance of the Library and that funding bodies fully understand the important role which the Library plays in the community.

### Operating Principles:

Advocacy efforts will be done in a thoughtful way that strengthens the depth and breadth of support for the Library taking into consideration key points identified in Appendix A.

In pursuing its advocacy activities, the Board shall ensure that:

- a) issues, concerns and government policies that may directly or indirectly affect the Library are identified and responded to
- b) government decision-makers at all levels are aware of the value of the Library and its benefit to individuals and to the community
- c) advocacy issues are identified on the Board's annual plan and are in harmony with the Library's current Vision, Mission and Values Statements
- d) there is regular communication with Township Council and senior administration, including meeting at least annually with Council to review the Library's resources, services, plans and achievements
- e) the Library regularly participates in activities:
- f) to increase community awareness of the variety and importance of Library services
- g) to build relationships with individuals and organizations that share interests with the Library

### Roles and Responsibilities:

1. The Board chair (or delegate) shall be the official spokesperson for the Library on issues approved by the Board, including being a media spokesperson.
2. All Board members:

- are encouraged to promote the value of the Library and its impact on the community. Suggested strategies are outlined in Appendix A.
- when requested, assist the Board Chair in officially representing the Library at meetings or other events.
- will respect the confidentiality appropriate to any issues of a sensitive nature and understand that it is the Chair's role to represent and speak on behalf of the Board.
- if contacted by the media, will redirect them to the Board Chair and/or Library CEO to ensure appropriate information is shared.

### 3. The Library CEO:

- may speak on behalf of the Library in matters relating to the operation and procedures of the Library and may speak on behalf of the Board, with the approval of the Board Chair.
- shall identify and maintain effective relationships with appropriate stakeholders such as other libraries, governments, agencies, businesses, media, non-governmental organizations, and community leaders.
- will periodically report to the Board on the status of advocacy efforts undertaken by staff, especially those which support the overall advocacy activities of the Board.

### Related Documents:

Ontario Public Library Guidelines  
 MLPL GF-01- Mission Statement  
 MLPL GF-02 – Vision Statement  
 MLPL GF-03 – Statement of Values  
 MLPL OP-19 – The Library and Political Elections

## **Appendix A**

### **Advocacy Principles**

1. The goal of advocacy is to promote awareness of the impact and value of public libraries.
2. In the process of advocating for the Library, the focus will be on the positive merits of the Library's values.
3. Where appropriate, the Library will participate in advocacy efforts with provincial and national library organizations, for example to support independent research that improves the understanding about the impact of libraries and the best practices to achieve that impact.
4. The timing and nature of library advocacy will be careful to avoid the appearance that specific candidates or political parties are being endorsed.
5. In general, the Library's formal advocacy efforts will focus on issues that are related to the Library's mission as a public library. For example, efforts to influence the provincial and federal governments will focus on funding or legislation that impact public libraries or libraries in general. This does not preclude the Library from participating in or supporting awareness campaigns on issues consistent with the Library's values of respect and inclusion, or, in general, support of issues related to health and wellness and democratic participation.

### **Advocacy Strategies**

1. Sharing stories and relevant information about Library programs, services and impact.
2. Sharing information about the Board's values, vision, mission and strategic plans.
3. Being an ambassador for the Library and advocating consistent with this policy.