Muskoka Lakes Township Public Library
LIBRARY BOARD POLICY

Policy Type:	Governance	Policy Number:	GOV-03
Policy Title:	Purpose, Duties and Committees of the Board	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 seek to provide a comprehensive and efficient public library service that reflects the needs of the community. The purpose of the Board is to govern the affairs of the Muskoka Lakes Public Library (herein after referred to as the Library).

Legislative Framework:
The Board ensures that the Library is operated in accordance with the **Public Libraries Act** and the **Municipal Conflict of Interest Act.**

Operating Principles:
Section 1 - Purpose

The Board oversees the development of a comprehensive and efficient public library service by:

a) developing and expressing the Board's philosophy and values
b) articulating mission and short and long term service priorities including developing a strategic plan
c) setting policies on governance and service
d) planning for further Library development
e) hiring and dismissing, if necessary, the Chief Executive Officer (herein after referred to as the CEO)
f) delegating authority to the CEO for management of Library operations
g) providing direction to the CEO through Board motions, policies, and plans
h) ensuring that there is a clear accountable performance assessment structure for all staff and the Board, including providing feedback to the CEO through the performance appraisal process
i) working with the CEO to secure the necessary financial resources to achieve the intended results
j) exercising financial control
k) identifying and maintaining a strong relationship with stakeholders, including regularly reporting to them
l) advocating for the pivotal and important role of Library service in the community and with government decision-makers
m) evaluating results and assessing outcomes and impact

Section 2 – Duties of the Entire Board
The Board governs effectively by:

a) setting an annual Board plan that reflects current goals and strategic issues
b) conducting meetings properly and keeping full and correct minutes
c) holding all meetings in public unless closed for a special purpose within the framework of Section 16.1 of the ***Public Libraries Act***.
d) working proactively and making decisions that focus on the Library's future and place in the community, taking into account the interests of the community
e) providing opportunities for Board development and training
f) working as a well functioning team
g) working collaboratively with the CEO, the Township Council and other government bodies, including providing required reports and documents
h) evaluating the Board's performance
i) engaging the community in determining how to provide a responsive and dynamic Library service
j) behaving with integrity

Section 3 – Duties of Individual Board Member
Each Board member is expected to be a productive participant who understands the extent of their authority and uses it appropriately in exercising the duties of the Board. While an individual Board member may have several responsibilities outside of a meeting of the Board, he or she has no authority to make decisions on behalf of the Board.
Board members will review, sign and follow the Library Board Code of Conduct (see Appendix A)
Individual members of the Board are responsible for exercising:
Duty of Diligence as follows:

a) being informed of the legislation that governs the Library, the Board bylaws and policies, as well as the Library's Mission, Vision and Values statements
b) being informed about the activities of the Library and the community issues that affect the Library
c) attending Board meetings regularly and contributing to the work of the Board from personal, professional and life experiences
d) being prepared for all Board meetings and using meeting time productively

Duty of Loyalty as follows:

a) adhering to the regulations of the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act
b) acting in the best interest of the Library over and above other interest group involvement, membership on other boards, council or personal interests or declaring a conflict of interest
c) speaking with "one voice" once a decision is reached and a resolution is passed by the Board
d) representing the Library actively and positively in the community

Duty of Care as follows:

a) expecting and promoting a high level of Library service
b) considering all information gathered in preparation for decision making
c) offering personal perspective and opinions on issues that are subject to Board discussions and decisions
d) showing respect for the opinions of others
e) assuming no authority to make decisions outside of Board meetings

f) knowing and respecting the distinction in the roles of the Board for governance and the CEO and staff for operations
g) refraining from individually directing the CEO and staff
h) respecting the privacy of others and not disclosing any confidential information
i) respecting the confidential nature of Library service to users while being aware of, and complying with applicable laws governing Freedom of Information
j) resisting censorship of Library materials by groups or individuals

Section 4 – Board Committees
The Board may use committees to further its work. These committees may be a standing committee or an ad hoc committee that is set for a specific time frame.

1. The Board shall establish written terms of reference and specific duties for each Board committee, so that each committee member understands the work of said committee. (see Appendices B & C)
2. A committee that is established by the Board may include non-board members, who can provide expertise i.e. Library and/or Township Staff, OLS Consultant, other professionals, community members.
3. Standing Committees may be established at the first meeting of a new term and operate for the duration of the term of the Board. After 2 years, members have the option to remain on the same committee or to participate on a different one.
4. Ad hoc Committees may be established for a specific purpose, at any time during the term of the Board and operate for a defined period, as deemed necessary.
5. Committees report directly to the Board and have no authority other than to research a topic, draft recommendations or prepare alternatives for the Board's consideration and possible adoption.
6. Under the Public Libraries Act (Section 16.1), all meetings including regular, special committee or other meetings of the library board must be open to the public. By definition, a committee means any advisory or other committee, sub-committee, or similar entity of which at least 50 per cent of the members are also members of the library board. This applies to both standing and ad hoc committees.
7. At the first meeting of each committee or after a committee with new membership is formed, a Chairperson may be elected from the appointed committee members.
8. Meetings of committees may be called by the chair of the committee or by a majority of the members of a committee.
9. Committees shall not supervise or direct employees.

Related Documents:

MLPL GOV- BL 01 – Board Bylaws
MLPL GOV-01 – Policy Development
MLPL GOV-02 – Board Orientation, Training and Evaluation
MLPL GOV-04 – Board-CEO Partnership
MLPL GOV-06 – Financial Control and Oversight
MLPL GOV-07 – Board Advocacy
MLPL GOV-08 – Planning

Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M5

Appendix A: Board Code of Conduct

Within the framework of Policy GOV-03 (Purpose and Duties of the Board). It is the duty of Library Board members to maintain high ethical standards. This commitment includes the proper use of authority, appropriate decorum in group and individual behavior and respect for others and their contributions to the Library. As such:

Respect
Within the framework of the legislative and policy requirements of the Ontario Human Rights Code, and the Workplace Harassment and Discrimination and the Prevention of Workplace Violence Policies, members will fulfill their responsibilities in ensuring that the Library is free from discrimination and harassment. No member shall:

a. Speak disrespectfully of any member of the Board, staff or volunteers.
b. Use offensive words in meetings of the Board or against any member.
c. Speak in a manner that is discriminatory in nature based on an individual's age, colour, ancestry, race, citizenship, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, disability, family status, marital status, gender identity/expression, sex, or sexual orientation.

Board meetings
With the understanding that Library Board meetings are public and that their behavior affects the image of the Library, Board members shall:

a. Not speak on any subject other than the subject in debate.
b. Not disobey the decision of the Chair or of the Board on questions of order or procedure or upon the interpretation of the rules of the Board.

Use of Library Property and Resources
Members will only use Library facilities, equipment, supplies, services, or other resources for the business of the Library.

Privacy and Confidential Information
Members will respect the privacy of others and will not disclose or release by any means to any member of the public, any confidential information acquired by virtue of their position within the Library. Members will maintain this obligation even after leaving the Board.

Conflict of Interest
Within the legislative framework of the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, Board members will act in the public interest and not engage in conflicts of interest, either apparent or real. The duties and responsibilities to the Library should not compete with private interests, financial or otherwise and the interests of family, friends or associated organizations.
Members will not accept payments to make referrals or to act as a paid agent before the Board or Board Committee.

Political Neutrality
Members will not use Library facilities, equipment, supplies, services (including staff services) or any other resources for election campaign or campaign-related activities.
Members will not use a position of authority at the library to compel staff or volunteers to engage in partisan political activities.

Gifts
Members will not accept or provide any gift or benefit where it may be, or perceived to be, in exchange for favour or influence.
Exceptions:

- Small gifts (cards or edibles, such as chocolates or cookies)
- Advertising material (calendars, scratch pads, pens, t-shirts)
- Any hospitality or gift that has a monetary value under $100

Signed:
Date:

Appendix B
Policy Committee - Terms of Reference

Purpose
The committee will research, draft and recommend new policies or policy revisions as needed.
The committee will ensure that all policies align with the Library's Mission, Vision and Values statements and meet the requirements of the Ontario Public Library Guidelines.

Procedures
1. This committee will ensure that a work plan to review, revise and develop policies is in place and followed so that all policies are reviewed within the Board's four-year term.
2. The committee will access online resources i.e. OPLG and OLS sample policies, as required to audit and evaluate existing policies or to develop new policies.

Duration
1. The committee will meet as needed to develop new policies and to review and update existing policies based on the policy review work plan.

Appendix C
Strategic and Accreditation Planning Committee - Terms of Reference

Purpose
To monitor the current Strategic Plan and develop a subsequent Strategic Plan for the Board, when needed.
To support the CEO and staff as the Library continues to work towards maintaining accreditation.

Procedures
1. The Board's Strategic Plan will align with the Library's Mission, Vision and Value statements and meet the requirements of the OPLG.
2. Every 4 years, the Committee will develop a new Strategic Plan for consideration and approval by the Board, as a whole.
3. The Strategic Plan will be developed with the CEO with input from the Board, staff, Township representatives, Library users and the general public.
4. The Committee will monitor the progress of the Board's Strategic Plan.
5. The Committee will work with the CEO to maintain accreditation and prepare for reaccreditation.

Duration
1. The Committee will meet as needed to:
    - monitor the current strategic plan and to develop a subsequent strategic plan
    - assist the CEO to take required action to maintain accreditation and prepare for reaccreditation