

**Lopez Island Library District
Trustee Manual**

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Introduction

As a library trustee, you have been given both an honor and a major responsibility. With you rests ultimate accountability and liability for the library. You have responsibility for planning the direction of library services, complying with laws, and overseeing the library's expenditure of funds. You have signatory authority for the major actions and contracts which the library undertakes. These are important duties that require dedication, time, and preparation.

You represent the interests of your community and are appointed to serve as a steward of its money, knowledge, and culture. You are a voice for the community of users within the library and a voice for the library within the community. This is a serious trust, one that deserves diligence and discernment. But it is also work of great satisfaction and joy. Throughout our nation's history, the public library has offered free and equal access to the collected knowledge, information, and history of our culture. This unfettered access is one of the great traditions of our society. As a public library trustee, you have a crucial role in keeping this democratic tradition alive and vital.

The Lopez Island Library District (LILD) Board of Trustees' manual is designed to give you a basic understanding of the governing powers and duties of library trustees. The manual highlights information about library issues that all trustees must address, answers basic questions that trustees often ask, and summarizes the basic responsibilities of trustees of governing boards.

You have been selected as a library trustee because others believe you have wisdom, knowledge, and skill to provide to the library and your community. This introductory manual is designed to help you understand your responsibilities and carry them out effectively.

Washington Public Library Support Page for Trustees is available here:
<https://washstatelib.libguides.com/trusteesupport>

Section 1: Code of Ethics

As a trustee of the public library, you are a public servant. You are entrusted with public funds. The public expects, and laws require, that your performance will always be above question and for the public good, not for your own interest or another special interest. We significantly influence or control the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information. In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information. We have a special obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations. The principles of this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical decision making. These statements provide a framework; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover specific situations.

The Lopez Island Library District adopted the following code of ethics to guide the conduct of its members and then review it whenever a new board member is appointed. A written code of ethics will be signed by each new trustee upon appointment. Every trustee will sign a written code of ethics each September.

Lopez Island Library District Code of Ethics: Adopted September 27, 2024, is available here <https://lopezlibrary.org/trustees-code-of-ethics/>

Trustees must:

- Strive to provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources, equitable service policies, equitable access, and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.
- Uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.
- Protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted while being aware of and in compliance with applicable laws governing freedom of information.
- Recognize and respect intellectual property rights.
- Treat library staff, patrons and volunteers, members of the public and other trustees with respect, fairness and good faith.
- Advocate conditions of employment for library staff and volunteers that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.

- Refrain from advancing the Trustee's private interests at the expense of the library or its patrons.
- Disqualify themselves from any decision-making whenever a conflict of interest exists as defined in the Lopez Island Library District Board of Trustees Manual (see Section 12.7 of the Manual).
- Distinguish between personal convictions and professional duties and refrain from allowing personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.
- Strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of library staff and volunteers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the library sciences professions.

Section 2: Authority and Governing Law

The Lopez Island Library District Board of Trustees is a governing board which has policy and decision-making authority for the library. Trustees are appointed by San Juan County commissioners. Library boards have two kinds of duties: 1) legal powers invested by Washington law and 2) planning and policymaking required for setting the overall direction of library services.

Laws regulating public libraries and library boards are delineated in the *Revised Code of Washington* (RCW). Chapter 27.12 of the RCW relates specifically to public libraries. Other laws applicable to all governmental units such as the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA in RCW 42.30), and budget and finance laws (RCW Chapter 84 relating to property taxes) also govern library board actions.

Attorney General (AG) Opinions provide additional guidance in applying laws. AG's Memoranda and Opinions are written in response to specific issues.

2.1 Board Responsibilities – Overview

The library board is legally accountable for governing the library and complying with federal, state, and local laws. The board makes legal commitments for the library – approves legal contracts, approves expenditure of funds, approves grant applications, and enters into other agreements. The board may also delegate some signature authority to the library director accompanied by the requirement for appropriate reports and communications.

In Washington law the LILD Board of Trustees is charged with the following specific legal powers and duties:

- Employ the library director, prescribe duties, compensation, and remove for just cause.
- Submit an annual budget to the appropriate legislative body (San Juan County)
- Submit to San Juan County's Assessor's Office, Auditor's office and the County Council before November 30
 - an Ordinance/Resolution (RCW 84.55.120) signed by all trustees and
 - a Levy Certification (Form 64 0100) signed by the chair of the board of trustees
 - Cost of Living Adjustment ("COLA") resolution
- Supervise the care of all library property.
- Lease or purchase land for a library building.
- Lease, purchase, or construct a library building; acquire other property as needed for a building.
- Accept gifts of money or property for the library.
- Create and adopt bylaws, rules and regulations for board guidance and government of the library.
- Have control of the finances of the library, which can be delegated to the director or via our board meetings.
- Approve expenditures for books, periodicals, maps and supplies.
- Other acts necessary for orderly and efficient management of the library.

Beyond the strict legal description of powers cited in Washington law, the LILD Board of Trustees is entrusted with establishing the broad direction, planning, and policymaking for the library. The Board delegates management authority to the library director. Trustees have a delicate balance to keep – taking responsibility and liability for the library but leaving operational management to the director-and carefully avoid micromanaging the library.

Board members do not have authority as individuals. The power of a trustee is derived only through board action. A new board member has as much liability and responsibility as the previously appointed members of the board.

All board members are protected against individual liability through an errors and omissions insurance policy.

To oversee the management of the library and ensure its success the board of trustees has seven major tasks:

- Establish the library mission.
- Define the long-range strategic plan.
- Set policies that align with the library mission and support both library customers and staff of the library.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the library.
- Oversee the funding and approve the library budget or tax levy.
- Hire and annually evaluate the director.
- Advocate for the library.

A more detailed description of Trustee duties can be found in section 11.4 and Appendix 1.

Section 3: Role of Board and Library Director

The LILD Board and library director work as a team. A long-term, effective relationship between the board and director requires a clear understanding of their different roles and responsibilities and a willingness to negotiate differences of opinion when needed.

- The board establishes the library mission, long-range plan, and policies with the director's input.
- The director establishes service directions based on the mission, administers the policies, and accomplishes the long-range plan.
- The board develops an annual work plan with the director's participation.

Board members must always be aware of their special status in relation to the public and library staff. The board must not undermine the authority of the director. However, the board must also be sure that staff are well supported by appropriate policies, adequate resources, continuing education, and personal encouragement.

The following are the complementary duties of the board and the library director.

3.1 Board's duties:

- Know community needs, keep abreast of library trends, and actively participate in state and national library associations.
- Set up an organizational structure for the library board and adopt bylaws that meet Open Public Meetings laws.
- Assure that board minutes, library policies, plans, and other information or reports are available to the public as required by law.
- Once the board adopts a policy or plan all members support the decision and support staff who implement decisions.
- In coordination with the director, develop and adopt the library's mission statement, long-range, strategic and annual plans.
- Know local, state, and federal laws related to libraries.
- Employ a competent and qualified director, maintain a current job description, and evaluate the director annually on previously agreed upon criteria.
- Clearly delegate operations to library director avoiding procedural micromanaging.
- Discuss, adopt, and periodically review policies.
- Review and adopt the annual library budget or levy, assuring that long-range plan goals will be addressed by the budget priorities.
- Adopt a clear materials selection policy that supports the diverse needs and interests of the community.

- Plan for, secure, and maintain adequate funding for the library within legal limits of library funding.
- Adopt adequate salary scales, benefits, and continuing education opportunities for library staff within budget limits.
- Work with director to actively communicate and discuss library policy issues with the public.
- Support the library public relations program.

3.2 Director's duties:

- Develop and administer the library service program for the entire community based on board adopted mission, policies, and plans.
- Provide complete and regular reports about the library management, progress, and needs at board meetings.
- Serve as the board's technical advisor attending all regular and special board meetings, as well as executive meetings when invited by the board.
- Keep the board informed about emerging critical issues.
- Know local, state, and federal laws informing the board about pending legislation that may impact the library.
- Develop background information and recommend policies and plans for board action; carry out adopted policies and plans.
- Hire, supervise, and provide for continuing education and evaluation of library staff.
- Prepare the proposed annual library budget for board consideration.
- Administer the library budget, staying within fiscal restraints.
- Supervise maintenance, operation, remodeling or construction of library facilities.
- Communicate with the public about library related issues.
- Actively market the library and maintain a public relations program.
- Actively participate in state and national library organizations.

Section 4: Policy Making

A vital responsibility of the Board of Trustees is establishing library policies. A library's policies must support its mission statement.

Policies are carefully designed, broadly stated, written guidelines for decision-making that are formally adopted by the board. They are governing principles upon which the director and staff develop specific procedures and regulations for the operation of the library. Clear policies should:

- Meet local, state, and federal laws.
- Inform the community as well as the library director of the board's intent and priorities.
- Provide for consistent library services and procedures for the entire community served by the library.
- Guide decision-making in sensitive situations, particularly in the area of intellectual freedom and rules of conduct.

- Assure fair treatment and protection of the rights of all library customers and all staff members.

4.1 Policy manual

A policy manual includes all the board's adopted policies with the date of adoption or re-adoption. The director and each board member must have a copy of the manual. By law, library policies must be accessible to the public. Local needs and situations determine policy content, but policies also need to incorporate best library practices.

The following steps are helpful in developing new policies:

- **Identify the need**

The library director often initiates policy review when informing the board of current conditions that raise possible concerns. Try to anticipate potential crisis situations and discuss and adopt policies to avoid emotional and/or hasty decision-making.

- **Gather the facts**

Once the need for the policy has been established the director usually presents to the board, or the policy sub-committee of the board:

- Summary of researched information including policies of other libraries, library practices, and opinions.
- Identification of budget, staff, legal and/or service impacts.
- Options to consider.
- Draft text of recommended policy or policies.

- **Discuss the issue**

The impact of a proposed policy should be discussed in detail from many perspectives. How will it affect the entire community served by the library, library users of all ages, library staff, the library budget and other resources? Is the proposed policy:

- Consistent with mission statement and long-range plans.
- Consistent with other internal library policies.
- Consistent with local, state, and federal laws.
- Necessary, practical, affordable, and fair to all affected.
- Broad enough to cover the subject but stated clearly so staff can implement direction without contradictions

- **Write the policy**

The library director or a sub-committee may be asked to draft a policy statement for review. The board evaluates the likely impact of the policy, revises the proposed policy until it clearly reflects the position of the board, and places the policy on the agenda for a regular meeting to hear public comment.

- **Adopt and implement the policy**

Policies must be formally adopted by vote at a legally constituted board meeting. The policy is usually identified by a number and includes the date of adoption and/or revision and is added to the policy manual. The library director implements the policy, assigning staff to develop operational procedures and action plans, if necessary. The director and staff continue to monitor the policy and report to the board on the evaluation of effectiveness of the policy or unexpected results.

Types of library policies

Library operations should be broadly covered by a policy. Policies which every library should have are:

- *Board operations.* Rules under which the board will operate including 1) board by-laws that describe selection of officers and their responsibilities, attendance requirements, and rules for regular, special, executive, and emergency meetings that meet Open Public Meeting laws; 2) a code of ethics including a statement identifying trustee conflict of interest and legal liability of the board; 3) conduct of meetings that includes rules for public testimony; and 4) any other permanent guidelines for the board itself, including hiring and evaluating the director. All boards need to be covered by errors and omissions insurance.
- *Personnel.* The board hires only the library director, but it approves position classifications, salaries and benefits schedules, and procedures for assuring that staff are evaluated and disciplined fairly and legally.
- *Other personnel issues:*
 - Staff continuing education and training.
 - Use of volunteers.
 - Procedures that support federal and state mandated civil rights of employees.
 - Procedures for handling grievances.
 - Dismissal or reduction in force.
 - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
 - Other personnel issues
- *Library operations and services.* The library director is responsible for making specific operational decisions based on board-adopted policies that describe in general:
 - Eligibility for borrowing and library services.
 - Collection development goals.
 - Intellectual freedom and process for handling censorship challenges.
 - Circulation policies, including confidentiality of library user records, fines, use of special collections, etc.

- Reference services policy
- Facilities and equipment availability to community.
- Community relations.
- Participation in cooperative state and local library programs.
- Relationship with Friends of Library groups.
- Management authority and controls.
- Personnel, as noted previously.
- Facility maintenance, ownership, insurance, etc.

We have adopted the following policies of the American Library Association:

- Library Bill of Rights
- Freedom to Read Statement
- Internet filtering
- Statement on Governmental Intimidation

Section 5: Planning

Planning is a key responsibility of the board of trustees that sets the direction for the library and its services to the community. Planning and policymaking build on each other. Library boards guide, shape, and build library services for their community as they make policies that address library collections, buildings, services, and staff. The challenge is to make these decisions based on a carefully considered written plan.

The purpose of planning is to:

- Focus attention on attainable goals and objectives based on customer need.
- Establish priorities for allocating fiscal and staff resources.
- Determine and maintain accountability.
- Monitor the needs of library customers.
- Encourage creative thinking about library programs and services.
- Evaluate and then identify the next opportunities that the library will undertake to accomplish.

A library should have both a long-range plan and an annual work plan. The annual plan's objectives are based on the long-range plan. The library's budget should be prioritized to support achieving the most important goals of the long-range plan.

Planning should take place on a regular schedule as a part of an ongoing process, three-to-five-year intervals for a long-range plan, annually for short-range planning and the review of the long-range plan.

Section 6: Funding

Obtaining adequate funding to support library programs and services is one of the board's important responsibilities. To be successful, board members must understand how funds

are levied by the district, as well as legal limitations imposed by state laws, and the potential impact of proposed initiatives and referendums.

Trustees must be advocates for adequate library funding within their community, and with state elected officials. Trustees must also consider investigating additional sources of revenue, especially for one-time projects. Garnering support for the library is critically important. It is a task which requires each board member's personal commitment:

- Understand the laws that govern public finance and the implications of proposed laws, initiatives or referenda that will impact library finance and budget processes.
- Explore the options for better support of library services in the community, from supporting Friends of the Library to establishing a library foundation.
- Promote the board's vision and long-range plans for the library and ask citizens for their support in a variety of venues in addition to library board meetings.
- Plan ahead for community needs, such as constructing or remodeling library facilities.
- Regularly ask citizens and library users what the community wants and actively work to achieve their priorities.
- Seek other sources of funds in addition to public money, such as endowments, trusts, gifts and donations or grants for one-time projects. Establish policies for receiving such funds.

It is the trustee's responsibility and duty to understand the details of their library's funding situation, the sources of their funds, and the district library budget process. State laws define the budget schedule, and the limitations established in the constitution and various initiatives.

6.1 Rural, Intercounty Rural, Island, and Partial-County Library Districts

Rural county library districts, intercounty rural library districts, island library districts, and partial-county library districts are supported by direct taxes levied annually on properties in the district or region specifically for the purpose of supporting libraries. Some other taxes, such as the Timber tax, may contribute to the library but differ from area to area, and are not reliable sources for regular library operations.

Our funding is governed by Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 27.12.420. The complete RCW governing libraries is available here <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=27.12>

Levy rates are established by the board of trustees, within the constraints of state law, and are expressed as a ratio of cents per thousand dollars of taxable property in the district.

Section 7: Budgeting

The library board is legally obligated to adopt an annual budget on a schedule set by law and to monitor finances of the library. The board maintains a broad perspective on the operation of the library, represents the community's interest in the budget, and ensures that the budget reflects the mission statement, planning goals, and objectives of the library.

The budget outlines the library's financial limitations and indicates the priorities that the board and staff plan to accomplish during a fiscal period to attain its mission and planning goals.

The role of the board in the finance and budgeting process includes:

- Supervising the library's finances (see 2.1).
- Adopting the budget and levy by November 30 for San Juan County

7.1 Preparing the Budget

The board of trustees and the library director have distinct and separate roles in the budget process. The library director prepares the budget based on the present and anticipated needs of the library and the potential revenue. After a thorough discussion, review, opportunity for public comment and revisions, the board adopts the budget.

7.2 Administering the Budget

Once the budget is adopted by the board, the director has the authority to allocate funds within the budget allotment to accomplish the plan, though it is the responsibility of the director to discuss with the board any significant budget revisions that may be necessary.

The budget is the mechanism by which the board ensures oversight of the library finances. The library must have an effective accounting system that is regularly audited. The board monitors the finances by:

- Informed discussion and adoption of the budget.
- Review of financial statements.
- Careful attention to financial audits.

To oversee the finances adequately the board must read materials thoroughly, ask questions, look for variances, make comparisons, and ensure there are adequate reasons for any apparent contradictions. In watching the financial statements, the board is monitoring how well the library is staying on track. In paying attention to the audit and attendant recommendations, the board maintains its own and the library's fiscal integrity.

To facilitate the board's monitoring of the finances, the director must present financial statements that the library board and other constituencies can understand. The library director may delegate the responsibility for preparing monthly financial reports which include:

- Year-to-date revenues and expenditures compared to initial projections.
- Total budget delineated by BARS categories, or as otherwise required.
- Balance of budgeted funds remaining for fiscal year.
- Explanation of significant changes.

Trustees are legally responsible for the finances of the library. To carry out that responsibility they both monitor the broad financial picture and authorize payment of funds that have been approved for library purposes.

Section 8: Hiring the Director

The entire board of trustees should be involved in hiring the library director. Because the director is the board's only employee, it is important for trustees to work as a team and reach consensus as they develop the job description, as well as determine the interview method, the hiring criteria, and other procedures and decisions.

The public expects a smooth transition to new leadership, that the board will hire the best possible candidate for the job, and that the board will use public funds responsibly to secure a candidate.

Follow these steps when preparing to select a library director:

- Assess the library and its current needs.
- Draft a job description and establish salary and benefits.
- Establish and fund a search committee.
- Advertise the position.
- Interview candidates, requesting input from staff and the community.
- Select the new library director based on agreed upon criteria in a public board meeting.
- Orient the new director.

Once the selection of a new director has been made, the board needs to develop a written contractual agreement that spells out the relationship and expectations of the board and director. Legally, Washington libraries are not "at will" employers. This means that the library director cannot be dismissed without just cause. The written contract, accompanied by an annual work plan, is an essential document that carefully establishes measurable expectations that form the basis for evaluations.

To ensure a smooth transition and clarity of direction, the board should try to evaluate a new director within the first three to six months of employment.

Section 9: Evaluating the Director

Evaluation should be a positive experience, a time when the board can officially

recognize the talents and skills of the director. Since evaluation is a constant process, suggestions for improvement can be offered by the board as part of a continuing effort towards a shared and dynamic future.

The Board will provide a written evaluation annually that will:

- Clearly state and review expectations.
- Strengthen the relationship of the board and director.
- Address problems as they arise
- Provide criteria to reward positive performance.
- Reaffirm the board's role as the employer.
- Communicate to the director the board's satisfaction or dissatisfaction and vice versa.
- Review conditions and terms of employment and adjust as necessary.
- Provide an opportunity for the director to submit a self-evaluation that includes, at a minimum, action items, goals, and support needed.

An annual written evaluation provides the director with a clear understanding of board expectations and whether expectations were met, and a way to identify concerns that need to be addressed.

9.1 Preparing for the Evaluation.

Prior to the evaluation, the board should discuss and take action on the following:

- Adopt, with the director's input, a measurable annual workplan which forms the basis for evaluation.
- Develop an evaluation process in cooperation with the director.
- Select a general evaluation method, criteria, and rating system.
- Share and negotiate the evaluation method with the director.

Neither the evaluation process, nor the content of an evaluation should be a surprise to the director. The director should know the expectations of work and the criteria that will be used to measure success. In addition, discussion of concerns with the director's performance between evaluation periods will help solve misunderstandings or problems sooner, rather than later.

9.2 Evaluation Criteria

When it is time for the formal evaluation, the board prepares the written evaluation. Evaluation of the performance of a director is firmly tied to success in achieving the annual library workplan.

When the trustees have reached consensus, they meet with the director to discuss the evaluation. The director should have the benefit of clear direction from the board as a whole—not individual assessments of performance. During that meeting the director must have the opportunity to respond to the evaluation.

Below are some indicators of a director's effectiveness: (Note: the *Reference Manual* includes an extensive list.)

- Fulfillment of job description.
- Evidence of fiscal responsibility.
- Budgeting and financial planning.
- Accuracy of financial reports.
- Financial stability of the library.
- Progress towards achieving long-range and annual plans.
- Good flow of information to the board.
- Assistance to the board.
- Good customer/staff/community relations.
- Accomplishment of personal measurable objectives.
- Correction of any previous performance problems.

The board's ultimate concern is how well the library accomplishes its mission. It is important for the board to get feedback from the community on the effectiveness of library service. The bottom line is delivering service of optimum quality. The director is accountable for the goals and outcomes of the library's long-range plan.

Section 10: Advocating

The trustee is a link between the library and its community. The library board represents the needs and wishes of the community to the library director and represents the needs of the library to the community. The community consists of many overlapping constituent groups. However, it is useful for the board to consider their needs separately:

- Taxpayers and voters.
- Library users and non-library users.
- Friends of the Library.
- Educational institutions, home schoolers.
- Residents of the library neighborhood.
- News media.
- Businesses.
- Community organizations.
- Local and state elected and appointed officials.

The library board defines the overall policy for public relations and marketing activities to be carried out by staff. It is important for the library to proactively inform the public about its services and policies. This is both a responsibility and a necessity to maintain public support and assure that people know the services and resources offered by their library.

10.1 Ballot issues

When the library is contemplating a special levy or bond issue, it is wise to measure the opinions of the entire community. This is important because to achieve passage of such measures, the library needs the approval of voters who may not be library users. *The*

board and library staff must carefully follow the Public Disclosure Commission rules and regulations concerning distribution of information about the issue and strictly avoid using public resources to campaign for ballot issues.

10.2 Advocacy with governing officials and legislators

Local, state and federal laws affect the library in many ways, including the availability of funding, hiring employees, and assuring that people with disabilities have access to the library and its services. Trustees must stay informed on these matters and become involved in the political process to support the library's ability to provide excellent services.

This means getting to know county commissioners, state and federal legislators. It means providing clear and accurate information to help them understand the library's needs and the potential impact of proposed legislation. It also means encouraging others to express opinions on matters in which the library has an interest. It may require letter writing, phoning, or visiting officials in person. Already-established relationships are invaluable when an important issue comes up for a vote.

10.3 Friends of the Library

Many Friends of Library groups are strong library advocates and frequently raise funds to assist the library to improve its resources and services. Formed to support, promote, and improve their local library, they can be one of the most important citizen groups in the library community.

There is a written agreement (Memorandum of Understanding) between the Friends and the library board identifying their separate roles and responsibilities, available in Appendix 2. It is important to establish a clear pattern of control with agreement from the board and the Friends regarding funds and other related matters.

Section 11: Trustee Term of Office, Recruitment, Election, Training, and Removal

11.1 Terms of Office

Appointment, election, removal, and compensation of trustees are governed by RCW 27.12.190.

San Juan County commissioners appoint LILD board members-upon recommendation by the board. Library board terms are deliberately limited by law to allow the broadest possible representation of community interests and viewpoints. Board members who are unable or unwilling to fulfill the duties prescribed by law may be removed from office by the appointing authority.

11.2 Five Member Board

By state law, the LILD Board of Trustees is a five-member board. A trustee is limited to no more than two, full five-year consecutive terms. However, a trustee who fills an unexpired term of another trustee is still eligible for two additional terms. Additional terms are not automatic but must be approved by a majority of the board. All terms end with the regular September meeting, and any renewals will be voted on at that meeting.

11.3 Recruitment

The LILD Board of Trustees recruits new board members through public notices and requests for letters of interest. After interviews with qualified applicants, the Board sends its recommendation to the San Juan County commissioners with the county committee application form filled out by the applicant.

11.4 Description of Duties and Responsibilities

A written description of the duties and responsibilities of a trustee will be given to candidates to allow an informed consent to fulfill those duties if appointed.

11.5 New Trustee Orientation

The LILD board chair and another experienced trustee will take responsibility for orientation and education of new trustees. Experienced board members should meet with new board members to review basic materials, introduce meeting procedures, and answer questions. It is important to clearly delineate expectations and responsibilities of trustees.

The board will provide the new trustee with basic information about the library, the role of trustees, and related resources, including copies of and/or links to:

- The code of ethics adopted by the board.
- List of current board members names, addresses, and phone numbers, as well as current committee rosters.
- Board bylaws.
- Schedule of board meetings.
- Schedule of library opening hours and tour of library facilities.
- Organizational chart for the library accompanied with a list of key staff and positions.
- Copies of all board policies and dates when current policies are scheduled for review
- Library long-range plan and annual workplan.
- Most recent library annual report and audit.
- Recent board meeting minutes.
- Library budget and current financial reports.
- Membership information for Washington Library Association (WLA), Pacific Northwest Library Association (PNLA), and American Library Association (ALA).

Additional Resources: Public Library Trustee Reference Manual. Two web sites are available <https://wiki.sos.wa.gov/trustees/>;

<https://washstatelib.libguides.com/trusteesupport>.

In the Trustee Support section of the Washington State Library website, there are links to the Trustee LibGuide, the basics of the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) from the MRSC, and the link to the Open Public Meetings training.

NOTE: OPMA training within 90 days after appointment to the board of trustees is mandatory (RCW42.30.205(1)).

After the first scheduled board meeting, the director and board president will arrange a time to review the meeting with the new board member to answer questions and to help prepare the trustee for the next meeting.

11.6 Trustee Education and Development

Several local and national organizations and agencies provide continuing education programs for library trustees and offer opportunities for trustees to share experiences with each other. These organizations and agencies are:

- Washington Library Association (WLA)
- Washington Library Friends and Trustees Association (WLFTA)
- Washington State Library (WSL)
- Pacific Northwest Library Association (PNLA)
- American Library Association (ALA)
- Association of Library Trustees and Advocates (ALTA)
- Public Library Association (PLA)

Many resources exist to help library boards. Trustees should take advantage of the workshops available for continuing education, especially the Workshop in Library Leadership (WILL) sponsored by the Washington State Library, and the programs offered at the annual Washington Library Association Conference, ALTA conferences, and PLA conferences. The Washington State Library offers consultation and facilitation on issues facing library boards.

If possible, a board should allocate funds in their budget to spend on their own education and development. Library directors should alert trustees to continuing education opportunities and assist them in arranging to attend.

Section 12: Board Meetings

All meetings of the Board of Trustees will follow Robert's Rules of Order, and conform with the Open Public Meetings Law (RCW 42.30).

All trustees must undergo OPMA [training](https://www.atg.wa.gov/lesson-3-open-public-meetings-act-rcw-4230) (<https://www.atg.wa.gov/lesson-3-open-public-meetings-act-rcw-4230>) when first joining the board and at a minimum of each four years thereafter (RCW42.30.205(2)).

There are three meeting types for the full board (Regular, Special and Emergency). Executive sessions may be held within each type of meeting.

12.1 Regular Meetings

The Board of Trustees holds regular meetings monthly at a time established by its members during the regular meeting in November. Day and time are posted on the LILD website. A quorum must be present, either in person or via teleconference (such as Zoom). Meetings generally last about two hours. Meetings are open to the public. Public notice of the meeting must follow OPMA rules.

Also during the regular meeting in November, the Board will hold elections for officers.

A separate meeting (“hearing”) must be held in November on the final LILD budget for the coming year. (RCW 85.55.120). Notice of the hearing must be posted once a week for two consecutive weeks in local media (currently LopezRocks and the Journal of the San Juans).

12.1.1 Agenda

An agenda for each meeting will be prepared jointly by the chair and the library director with input from other board members. The agenda must include a time for public comment (RCW 42.30.240, 12.3.9). The agenda must be posted at least 24 hours ahead of the meeting if the population is greater than 3,000. The agenda can be modified by the board before or during the meeting.

A board packet of information must be sent to members at least three days prior to the meeting. The board packet usually contains:

- Agenda with concise notations explaining each item, with supporting documents and explanatory materials.
- Minutes from the previous meeting.
- Financial reports.
- Services report.
- Director's report.

Explanatory notations on the agenda help board members handle minor items quickly and save time for in-depth discussion of important events and/or plans.

The board establishes a yearly calendar that may include dates to review policies, hold budget hearings, approve the budget, evaluate the director, review the long-range plan, attend library conferences, and other significant events.

12.2 Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by the Chair or a quorum as necessary at times convenient to members, so long as such meetings comply with Open Public Meetings

laws (RCW 42.17). Examples include: detailed analysis of proposed budget; training sessions; a need to examine an issue before the next scheduled regular meeting.

Public notice is required no later than 24 hours in advance and must include the business to be transacted. Notice must be prominently displayed at the main entrance of the meeting location and online. No other business can be discussed or actions taken outside of what is posted on the notice.

An executive session cannot be added during the meeting. If an executive session is needed, it must be in the posted agenda.

12.3 Committee Meetings

Since all the information that the board needs to operate effectively cannot be acquired during regular meetings, committee work is required. If a quorum is present, Open Public Meeting rules apply.

- *Standing committees:* The LILD Board of Trustees standing committees are:
 - Budget and finance (chair and treasurer)
 - Personnel: organize annual evaluation of the director, recommend other personnel decisions regarding the director
- *Subcommittees:* Temporary subcommittees may be named to investigate particular aspects of an issue. Examples include those for developing specific policies, facilities needs or special circumstances. At the discretion of the board, the chair may appoint non-board members who have knowledge to support the committee or task force charges. These meetings are open to the public if a quorum of trustees is present.

The goals and timelines for committees must be clearly stated and understood. Committees must prepare reports and present them to the full board, and these reports are public documents. The committees' report is a recommendation, however, and not binding. It is up to the entire board to adopt final decisions.

12.4 Meeting Minutes

Minutes of Board of Trustee meetings, both regular and special, must be publicly posted and sent to the San Juan County Council.

Minutes are the official record of a board's actions and must be accurately kept, held on file, and made available for public inspection. The board secretary is responsible for preparing the official minutes.

Because minutes are the legal reference of board decisions and activity, they must be in writing, circulated for reading and comment, and adopted by a formal motion at the next regular meeting. They are public documents as are other working documents or reports.

As well as documenting the business conducted at the meeting, minutes should include:

- Text of motions.
- List of members present and absent.
- Convening and adjournment times to show a quorum and the beginning and end of formal business.

12.5 Executive Sessions; Exemptions from Public Meetings Laws

The Open Public Meetings Law allows the board to call an executive session during regular or special meetings. Before convening an executive session, the presiding officer must announce the purpose for excluding the public from the meeting, and the approximate time when the executive session will conclude and the regular session will reconvene. The same information should be in the agenda and in the minutes of the meeting. The session can be extended with a public announcement at the time denoted.

RCW 42.30.110 (revised July 2024) confirms that executive sessions are not public and may be held only:

- To consider matters affecting national security.
- To consider information regarding the infrastructure and security of computer and telecommunications networks, recovery plans, and other information *that if made public may increase the risk to security or to information technology infrastructure or assets.*
- To discuss site selection, acquisition, or sale of real estate *if public knowledge would result in increased price.*
- To evaluate the qualifications of applicants for library director. *However, any interview of such candidate and final action appointing a candidate to elective office shall be in a meeting open to the public.*
- To conduct a performance review of the library director.
- To review contract negotiations when public knowledge regarding such consideration would cause a likelihood of increased costs.
- To receive and evaluate complaints or charges brought against a trustee or an employee, *unless the employee requests a public meeting.*

Note: If a complaint concerns a patron, use of the last four digits of the patron's library card can preserve privacy.

Final decisions regarding the complaint must be public and conducted after the executive session has ended.

- **To discuss litigation or potential litigation with legal counsel**, defined as “matters relating to agency enforcement actions [i.e. legal action brought by the library against a third party], or to discuss with legal counsel representing the agency litigation or potential litigation to which the library, the trustees, or any trustee acting in an official capacity is, or is likely to become, a party, when public knowledge regarding the discussion is likely to result in an adverse legal or financial consequence to the library.

Note: *A lawyer must be present to call an executive session* under this exception, however, “This subsection . . . does not permit a governing body to hold an executive session solely because an attorney representing the agency is present.”

Also Note: “Potential litigation” refers to legal action by or against the library, the Board of Trustee, and/or a Board member “acting in an official capacity,” and is defined as:

- Litigation that has been specifically threatened;
 - Litigation that the Board of Trustees *reasonably believes* may be commenced; or
 - Litigation or legal risks of a proposed action or current practice that the agency has identified, *when public discussion of the litigation or legal risks is likely to result in an adverse legal or financial consequence to the agency*;
- To consider greenhouse gas allowance auction bidding information that is prohibited from release or disclosure under RCW 70A.65.100(8).

If at any time the library staff adopts or considers adopting a collective bargaining agreement (i.e. union representation), Board discussions related to collective bargaining can be made in private, though this is not considered an “executive session,” but rather an exemption to the Public Meetings Act. Note that final Board votes on any collective bargaining agreement must be made in a public meeting.

12.6 Decision-making

The board is a team and should act as one. All motions and resolutions must be conducted in a legally noticed meeting. In making decisions, the board strives to reach consensus but must speak with one voice to the public and to the press. This requires that each member be able to accept the decision. While on the board, a trustee has an obligation to support a decision after it is made by the whole board.

It is appropriate for trustees to state their opposition during board discussion of an issue, but not outside the board meeting. A board member who loses an issue can say they voted against it but that they support the decision of the board. If a board member feels so strongly about an issue that they cannot support the decision, it is time for the member to resign.

12.7 Conflict of Interest

When an issue arises that may result in financial or other gain that benefits an individual trustee, a family member, or an organization connected with a trustee, the situation may pose a conflict of interest. In such a case, state laws require that the trustee refrain from discussing the issue and abstain from voting.

Library board members represent the community. It is important to vote on what is best for the whole community, not just one segment of it. Although members may represent certain perspectives or areas within the community, decisions should be based on what is best for everyone.

12.8 Library Director's Role in Trustee Meetings

In order to make recommendations, develop policy and plans, boards need sufficient information. Trustees supply ideas from their community contacts and the library director supplies evaluation, analysis, options, and recommendations to assist in making decisions. The library director must:

- Supply information about the library's status and activities. Routine figures, like circulation data and financial records, should be standardized in format, presented promptly, and interpreted by the library director.
- Propose policies and make recommendations. Provide background facts and figures for all options being considered, accompanied by potential impact on library.
- Raise questions and expose problems promptly.
- Make the board aware of trustee workshops and professional programs.
- Keep board members updated on library services, activities and/or problems.
- Ask trustees to serve as community representatives in gathering information on what users think, what needs are not being met, and how well the library is performing.

12.9 Public participation at board meetings

Although a board meeting is held in public, it is not a public hearing. It is the responsibility of the board to complete its business and include the public at the appropriate time. The public must be allowed to speak, though the board can set the time limits, the place, and the manner in which the public will be called upon to speak. The chair will announce the policy for public participation at the beginning of the meeting. If the board wishes public comment will be limited to five minutes per person. In compliance with the law executive sessions from which the public is excluded, will be announced with the times of beginning and ending in order for the public to return.

12.10 Communication outside of meetings

Email communication to the full board must also follow the Open Public Meetings Act. Passive receipt of information is permissible, thus sending documents for review prior to the meeting is permissible. However, discussion of the documents in email traffic is not. To prevent inadvertent responses, either post 'DO NOT USE REPLY ALL' at the beginning of the message or use BCC which does not allow a 'reply all'.

The trustees@lopezlibrary.org email account serves as the archive of all traffic. Personal emails should not be used for communication about library business.

Section 13. Bylaws

To conduct the business of the library in an efficient and responsible manner, it is essential that trustees build and maintain good working relationships and adopt responsible guidelines to govern themselves, including bylaws, rules, and regulations for their own guidance and for the governance of the library. [RCW 27.12.210\(1\)](#)

Bylaws are procedures by which the board transacts its business.

13.1 Officers

The LILD Board of Trustees has established the board officers and their duties, powers, and terms of office as below. Officers are elected at the regular November meeting. Additional details of officer duties are contained in Appendix 1.

1. Chair. 3-year term. Duties:

- a. Agendas. Prepares agenda for regular and special meetings, working with the Library Director, with input from other Board members, on the day before sending out packet of information for upcoming meeting.
- b. Information Packets. Sends packet of information to the Board at least 3 days prior to the meeting, and also sends packet to the Friends of the Library representative.

- c. Conducts Meetings. Conducts regular and special meetings according to Robert's Rules of Order, and Open Public Meetings Law, and establishes time and reason for executive sessions.
- d. Documents. Executes (signs) all documents authorized by the LILD Board.
- e. Committees. Serves as ex-officio voting member of all committees

2. Vice-Chair

- a. In the absence of the Chair, assumes chair's duties.
- b. Shadows chair in last year of chair's term to prepare to become Chair.
- c. Maintains LILD records in paper and electronic format for archive and public records request purposes, and coordinates handoff of documents to incoming Vice-Chair.

3. Treasurer (No term limits)

- a. Oversees the library's financial health, budgeting, and fiscal accountability.
- b. Monitors the library's financial status, including revenues, expenditures, and fund balances.
- c. Presents financial summaries to the board at regular meetings.
- d. Serves as a liaison between the board and the library's financial staff to provide answers or clarification when trustees request more information.

4. Secretary (No term limits)

- a. Takes Minutes during regular and special meetings.
- b. Sends draft Minutes to Director and Chair for preliminary review the week before the regular meeting before being sent to full board for approval.
- c. Sends amended and approved Minutes to Assistant Director for public posting and sending to San Juan County Council.

5. Liaison to Friends of the Library

- a. Attends regular meetings of the Friends of the Library and reports to both the Board of Trustees and the Friends.

13.2 Quorum and Attendance

For a board of five, the quorum is three. Regular attendance is encouraged in order to have a quorum to conduct business.

13.3 Cause for Removal from the Board

A violation of the ethics code or excessive absences from meetings (e.g. three times in a year) may result in removal from the Board by a majority vote. Other misconduct may lead to removal, if the Board deems appropriate.

The Chair will notify the County Council of vacancies and by direction of the Board recommend candidates to fill the position.

13.4 Records Retention

The LILD Board will establish methods for preserving all records in both paper and electronic form, in order to comply with public records laws.

In addition to records that must be publicly available, trustees should also retain in a location accessible only to trustees documents that should remain private, such as the director's reviews.

13.5 Amending Bylaws

These Bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting with a quorum by unanimous vote, as long as the proposed amendments have been presented for action at a previous meeting and included in the agenda of the current meeting.

13.6 Board Self-Evaluation

An annual review of board effectiveness should be part of the board calendar. Self-evaluation can increase awareness of strengths and weaknesses as well as provide the basis for a planned approach to improving board performance.

The board can use the following criteria in annually evaluating its own effectiveness as a board:

- Review code of ethics.
- Review board member job descriptions.
- Evaluate committee operations.
- Evaluate meetings and accomplishments.
- Review progress on the long-range and annual work plan.

The following questions may serve as a guide:

- Do all Board members have an equal opportunity to contribute ideas, opinions, and concerns?
- Do individual Board members support the action of the Board as a whole and refrain from making promises and taking action on their own?
- Are executive session discussions held in confidence?
- Do committees function to assist the Board effectively?
- Are Board meetings run in a businesslike manner?
- Do Board members respect each other's rights to disagree, work through differences of opinion, and treat each other with respect?
- Do new Board members come up to speed as quickly as possible? Are provisions made for the continuing education of all board members?
- Is there good communication between the Library Director and the Board, between the presiding officer and the Board members, between the board and public groups?
- Does the Board act in accordance with the library's current mission, goals, and objectives?

Individual Board members should also evaluate their own performance and identify areas for improvement and/or training:

- Regular attendance at board and committee meetings.
- Preparation for board and committee meetings.
- General knowledge of the library issues and trends obtained from reading library magazines, newsletters, and professional publications, and discussing issues with others.

- Awareness of local, state, and national laws, as well as proposed legislation.
- Advocacy for the general health of libraries in the community, state, and nation.
- Attendance at local, state, and national meetings that offer educational workshops for trustees and librarians.
- Attendance at local group meetings and community events to build awareness of the library.
- Contribution to the evaluation of the board's effectiveness, the library's plan, and the director's performance on an annual basis.
- Membership in professional associations, contacts with trustees who serve in areas other than your own.

Each board member is accountable for his/her own actions. The board is responsible for disciplining its members if they are not meeting their responsibilities.

If a board member is not fulfilling their responsibilities, the board chair should address the member directly about the board's concerns over their performance. However, only the appointing authorities can remove a trustee before the completion of their term.

Appendix 1. Details of Officer Duties

Chair

1. Agenda for regular and special meetings: prepare agenda jointly with the library Director with input from other Board members on the day before sending out the packet of information for upcoming meeting.
2. Information packet: send the Board packet of information at least three days prior to the meeting to all Trustees, Director and Assistant Director (to ensure Assistant Director knows what documents to prepare for approval); also send the agenda, Director's report, minutes to approve and financial summary to the Friends of the Library representative.
 - a. Agenda with notations explaining any supporting documents
 - b. Minutes from previous meeting for approval
 - c. Financial report - the following documents are sent to the Chair and the Treasurer
 - i. invoices with description, cost and BARS codes
 - ii. personnel update
 - iii. leave balances
 - iv. account activity
 - v. budget vs actual expenses
 - vi. revenue for the month with YTD
 - vii. budget summary
 - viii. summary of payroll and benefits amounts
 - ix. summary of revenue detail (tax and noni-tax)(See source of information below)
 - d. Director's Report
 - e. Services Report (figures in the Director's report)
 - f. Documents pertaining to other items on the agenda
3. Utilize the Yearly Calendar to ensure timely execution of annual events.

- a. Annual Budget cycle
 - i. Director and staff initiate budget activity in September
 - ii. Board of Trustees reviews the draft and discusses it in regular Board meeting in October
 - iii. Special meeting is conducted in the first week of November to discuss and review any changes
 - iv. A separate budget meeting is scheduled in November (usually on the same day but before the month regular Board meeting) to approve the budget and approve the forms to meet November 30 deadline (see Section 3.1 in the Trustee's Manual). The Chair downloads two forms from the San Juan County website (www.sanjuancountywa.gov/documentcenter/view/21274) and completes the following forms for the Board's review at the Budget meeting:
 - 1. Annual budget (to County Legislative Authority and cc to County Assessor to comply with RCW 84.52.020)
 - 2. Ordinance Resolution Number (the number is chronological for the Library for the year) to county assessor to comply with RCW 84.55.120
 - 3. Levy Certification REV 64 0100 (to County Legislative Authority and cc to County Assessor to comply with RCW 84.52.020)
 - 4. Any COLA (need not be a resolution, but is voted on separately from the budget during the Budget meeting)
- b. Annual review of the Director's performance - initiated in September
- c. End of year salary adjustments for staff and the Director - the Director brings their recommendations to Board of Trustees in December
- 4. Chair regular and special meetings in compliance with the Public Meeting requirements and the need for MSP (motions/seconds/passed) of agenda, previous meeting's minutes, invoices, payroll and benefits and surplus; conduct executive sessions according to the RCW.
- 5. Meet with the Director to review contracts and grants

6. Sign any contracts on behalf of the Board of Trustees
7. Sign the monthly authorization to transfer funds from San Juan County treasurer to the Lopez Library bank account
8. Resolutions - used to implement any ministerial or administrative acts that are not ordinance. Examples are:
 - a. COLA (need separate document signed by BoT) - The COLA is generally not a resolution. It just needs to be voted on separately in the budget meeting but have also done as a resolution
 - b. Director's additional vacation
 - c. Possible Other Resolutions
 - i. A separate approval of the budget, appointing auditing officers, custodians of checking account, credit cards, petty cash signers and any changes to the beginning balance or changes to the budget or specific line items
9. Recruitment of new trustees - after the Board of Trustees has interviewed applicants and decided on recommendations, send the recommendation with a completed committee application form to the County Council Clerk and a Commissioner (Lopez resident if possible); inform new Trustees of the need to do the Public Meeting Training

Source of information:

1. Vouchers - Invoice Accounting Report: The Assistant Director sends the Excel spreadsheet with tabs for each group of invoices, payments are sent out twice a month so there are usually two tabs
2. Request for money transfer from San Juan Treasurer to Banner Bank for Lopez Library also sent to the Chair by the Assistant Director
3. Payroll and Benefits - Personnel Update: Library's accountant sends a PDF of the QuickBooks document. There are two pay periods each month as seen in the line "Total Personnel Expense" shaded blue
4. Surplus - Director's Report: Director sends report containing the surplus number of books to the Chair
5. Operation Cash Balance - two sources

- a. Custom Report Runner for 6331.00: San Juan County Treasurer sends to the Assistant Director who then forwards to the Chair. The report shows the Cash Balance.
 - b. Custom Report Runner for 6337.00: San Juan County Treasurer sends to the Assistant Director who then forwards to the Chair. The report on p. 2 shows the balance in Capital Improvement.
 - c. Mo Yr Account Activity for #4078: Accountant sends to the Chair. The balance is at the far right of the report.
- 6. Revenue
 - a. glRevDetailRept: San Juan County Treasurer sends to the Assistant Director who then forwards to the Chair. This file shows the month's property tax revenue and YTD. It includes leasehold and timber tax revenue and revenue deposited by the Assistant Director (titled "Custodial Type Deposit")
 - b. Revenue Detail mo year: Assistant Director sends this report to the Chair. The Excel file shows the deposits sent by the Assistant Director to the San Juan County treasurer. Deposits are identified by type and date deposited, along with YTD for each type of revenue (i.e. lost books, printing, etc.). Can match deposit dates in San Juan Treasurer to sum of individual BARS code items for that date.

Vice-Chair

1. In the absence of the Chair, assumes chair's duties.
2. Shadows chair in last year of chair's term to prepare to become Chair.
3. Maintains Trustee records in paper and electronic format and maintains a GoogleDocs or similar account for holding electronic documents.
4. Record keeping: Maintains digital and paper copies of documents for archival purposes. Record keeping duties includes maintaining documents that are confidential by law and are accessible only by Board of Trustees members. (i.e. Director's annual review).
5. Facilitates handoff of electronic and paper copies of documents to the incoming Vice Chair.

Secretary

1. Takes minutes at both regular and special meetings, including as detailed in the Trustee Manual Section 14.1.
2. Sends draft of minutes to the Chair and the Library Director no later than the Wednesday before the regular meeting.
3. After the minutes are approved, sends to the Assistant Director for posting on the Board of Trustees Library webpage.

Treasurer

1. Reviews reports (list of invoices, bank statements, financial) in preparation for the monthly Board of Trustees meeting. Individual invoices over \$5,000 should be examined, initialed and dated. The documents include:
 - a. Monthly reports sent to Chair and Treasurer from
 - i. San Juan County Treasurer (forwarded by Assistant Director)
 1. CustomReportRunner for account 6331 (Cash Balance)
 2. CustomReportRunner for account 6337 (Capital Improvement)
 3. glRevDetailRpt for account 6331 (Cash Balance)
 4. glRevDetailRpt for account 6337 (Capital Improvement)
 - ii. Assistant Director
 1. Invoice Accounting Report yyyy
 2. Revenue Detail mm yyyy
 - iii. Accountant
 1. Mm yy Account Activity #4078 for Banner Bank account
 2. Mm yy Budget vs Actual
 3. Mm yy Leave Balances
 4. Mm yy Personnel Update
 - b. Quarterly reports sent to Chair and Treasurer by Assistant Director
 1. Friends of the Lopez Library (invoiced quarterly)
 2. Seattle Foundation – quarterly report sent to Chair
2. Provides information to the rest of the Board at regular Board of Trustees meetings regarding financial reports, e.g.
 - a. unusual/unexpected expenditures,
 - b. anticipated large expenses,
 - c. changes in revenues, and
 - d. other significant changes in revenues and/or expenses

3. Ensures financial docu-signs match what was approved in regular and special meetings.
4. Monitors tax revenue received to compare to anticipated, calculate percent received to date each month.
5. Monitor expenses vs budgeted to detect any unanticipated increase or decrease in an expense category. Expenses that occur on an annual basis can cause confusion.
6. Monitor leave balances to ensure compliance with policy.