



016 - OPLB Board Succession Planning

Guiding Principles

The Ottawa Public Library (OPL) Board (“the Board” or “OPLB”) operates according to the *Public Libraries Act, RSO 1990, c.P.44* (“the Act” or “the PLA”), as well as other applicable legislation. In Accordance with the PLA, the Board is responsible for providing a comprehensive and efficient public library service that reflects the community’s unique needs (PLA Section 20(a)).

To successfully achieve its mandate of providing sound governance and oversight to OPL, Board members must collectively possess strategic leadership skills, experience in a wide range of subjects, and the personal attributes necessary to function as part of a consensus-driven group. Board members must also be representative of the community they serve.

Board Member Selection Process and Practices

The Board recognizes that in keeping with the PLA, Ottawa City Council (Council) is solely responsible for determining the constitution and membership of the Board. The clerk of the appointing municipality typically manages the recruitment process, in accordance with the PLA Section 11 (1).

To support this, the Board provides Council with their insights regarding the necessary skills, qualifications, and experience for individual members to best support the Library, via the Library Board Representation and Competency Profile (the Profile).

The Board shall review and update the Profile in the final year of the Board’s term, to assist Council in its deliberations regarding member appointments for the next term. In addition to information provided in the Profile, the Board may include in its recommendations to Council considerations such as the number of citizen trustees, and / or the continuity of representation by some members from one term to another.

The Office of the City Clerk manages the recruitment process for local boards, including OPL. OPLB, via the CEO as Secretary, shall ensure that all recommendations are provided to City Council (via the Office of the City Clerk) no later than Q3 of the final

year of the Board’s term. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall promote their participation in the selection process to provide practical insights for the Council’s consideration.

Should a position become vacant during the term of the Board, the Board shall discuss any gaps and communicate details to the Office of the City Clerk (via the CEO) of both the vacancy and the preferred representation and competency considerations of any new members to be appointed. While the *PLA* allows library board members to be reappointed for unspecified additional terms (*PLA*, Section 10(3)), the City of Ottawa Appointment Policy – Council-Appointed Public Members of Committees, Boards and other External Authorities stipulates that Board members are generally eligible to serve up to eight consecutive years on the same committee or board, per Section B, Term of Office.

Library Board Representation and Competency Profile

As a general principle, prospective Board members will have a commitment to OPL’s core values and ideally have knowledge of the public library as an institution. OPL recognises, respects, and appreciates individual differences, and welcomes unique contributions to make the Board stronger.

Appendix A, the Library Board Representation and Competency Profile, sets out both the mandatory attributes required of each member and the preferred combination of skills and experience necessary to ensure a complementary balance of expertise across the Board. It is recognized and expected that individuals will have lived experience and skills in multiple areas without formal designations.

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Library Board Representation and Competency Profile Appendix A

The Ottawa Public Library (OPL) Board is responsible for governing and overseeing a responsive and efficient public library system that meets community needs, guided by legislation and good governance practices. To do so effectively, the Board should collectively offer broad expertise, strategic leadership, collaborative skills, and reflect the diversity of the community they serve. Ensuring a range of skills and experience, and diverse representation on the Board supports fair and respectful decision-making.

All Board members shall demonstrate:

1. Commitment to OPL's vision, mission, values, strategic priorities, and brand, which shape how OPL serves Ottawa residents and how the Board governs with integrity and purpose;
2. Strong communications and decision-making abilities, including the ability to listen actively, exercise discretion, objectivity, and good judgement, analyse a high volume of information quickly to support timely decision-making, and act as a facilitator and consensus-builder in group discussions, fostering both constructive inquiry and positive collaboration;
3. A public service orientation, placing the public good at the centre of their work; and,
4. A commitment to lifelong learning, including their own self- guided learning and ongoing professional development as a Board member.

Additionally, members of the group must bring together a balance of complementary skills, ensuring the Board has specific expertise among its membership in:

1. Governance: familiarity with the principles of good governance including the fiduciary responsibilities of members of a board and the accountability of the CEO to the board;
2. Strategic leadership: the ability to set vision and purpose, build consensus, oversee risks, identify strategic opportunities, and build relationships; and,
3. Demonstrated expertise in key portfolios commonly found in large organizations such as finance (familiarity with financial and funding models, stewardship of resources), workforce management, public relations, client service delivery, and technological innovation.