

003 - OPLB Trustee Orientation and Continuing Education

Guiding Principles

It is important for new Trustees appointed to the Ottawa Public Library (the Library) Board to quickly gain an understanding the organization, the functioning of the Board, their responsibilities, and the relationship with the City of Ottawa. Trustees should also learn about developments in governance and the library sector to be effective in their role as stewards of the Library.

The Board, working closely with the CEO, is responsible for developing and implementing processes to orient new Trustees, as well as an ongoing program of continuing education.

Trustee Orientation

The new Trustee orientation program shall be provided as soon in the new term of the Board as is practical.

All new Trustees are required to attend and participate in the orientation(s). Every effort will be made to schedule the orientation(s) at a date and time that accommodates the schedules of Trustees and may be phased over several days if deemed appropriate.

The types of material to be provided or subject matter discussed during the orientation is detailed in the New Trustee Orientation Framework provided in Appendix A. Any questions Trustees may have regarding these documents or their interpretation are to be directed to either the Chair of the Board or the CEO.

Continuing Education Practice and Process

The Board recognizes the need for, and benefit of, a continuing education program for all Trustees. This program shall have two components:

- a continuing education program structured and delivered for the benefit of all Trustees; and,
- an individual Trustee development plan tailored to meet the needs of each Trustee.

Board Continuing Education Program

The purpose of this program is to ensure that all Trustees are provided with information and insights regarding:

- the current developments, trends, and issues for libraries;
- the changing information needs of the community and the role the Library might appropriately take in addressing these needs; and,
- developing and maintaining essential skills to participate and contribute as effective members of the Board.

The Board Chair or person delegated with this responsibility, working with the CEO, shall plan and ensure delivery of the annual continuing education program for the Board. Some of the key steps in the process shall include:

- the development of a list of potential topics for consideration by the Board;
- the Board reviewing, discussing, and finalizing the subjects or topics for the program, including any preferred speakers that might be appropriate;
- the CEO providing the proposed continuing education annual program, including anticipated timings and budget, for Board approval as part of the annual calendar of Board meetings [OPLB-014];
- arranging for delivery of each continuing education session; and,
- a discussion by the Trustees regarding the value of each session, and ideas and suggestions for future improvement.

The delivery method of the program may vary from year-to-year, and will include a variety of adult education methodologies (e.g. online, in person, etc.)

Individual Trustee Continuing Education Programs

Ongoing education for individual Trustees is a collaborative effort between the CEO and Trustees. The CEO, or staff, shall communicate opportunities for development and Trustees shall consider what staff identified development would be appropriate for their needs as well as identify additional specific development opportunities as may be appropriate.

Any professional development activities proposed by a Trustee shall be directly relevant to fulfilling their role as a Trustee of the Library Board and/or the delivery of services and programs by the Library.

Trustees are encouraged to attend relevant library conferences, seminars, and workshops, as well as participate in provincial and national associations. The number of Trustees who are approved to attend library conferences will be governed by the principle that each Trustee should have the opportunity to attend a minimum of one library conference during the four-year term, while recognizing that attendance is also governed by the Library budget. Seminars and workshops of interest to Trustees, such as those offered by the Southern Ontario Library Service, are also important learning opportunities.

Trustee attendance or participation at conferences, seminars, and workshops, and the level of reimbursement of associated expenses, must be approved by the Board in keeping with the Delegation of Authority and Reimbursement of Trustee Expenses policies, and the City of Ottawa Travel Guidelines.

Specific practices for determining participation in individual trustee continuing education shall include:

- preference in selecting Board members to attend library conferences, seminars and workshops will be given to those who will play an active role in the conference, for example as a presenter, convener or panellist, or as the Board's representative on an external body. Board members who wish to speak on behalf of, or about their involvement with, the Board or Library, should submit a copy of the proposal with an official request to the Board for consideration.
- Board members who wish to attend library specific conferences (for example the Ontario Library Association (OLA), Canadian Library Association (CLA), and the bi-annual Public Library Association (PLA) conferences) should make their request to the Board Chair and the CEO's office, including any particular factors, such as duties as a presenter.
- Trustees may be approved by the Board to attend relevant library conferences/workshops/seminars other than the above conferences, or relevant library workshops and seminars. Factors to be considered in Board approval will be any commitments that the member might have associated with the event, previous conferences attended by the member, and availability of funds to support this request.

Library staff shall be responsible for conference, workshop, or seminar registration for approved Board members. The Trustee attending the event will be responsible for making travel arrangements with the Board Assistant and will submit receipts for these expenses in keeping with the City of Ottawa Travel Guidelines.

Trustees attending any library conference, seminar, or workshop of more than 24 hours will be required to provide a written report to the Board. Such report shall be made available for distribution within two (2) Board meetings immediately following the conference, seminar, or workshop.

Board members attending any library conference, seminar, or workshop of less than 24 hours will be required to provide a verbal report to the Board at the board meeting immediately following the conference, seminar, or workshop.

Effective Date:	Last Review Date:
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Goals

The goal of the Trustee Orientation (the Orientation) is to assist Trustees in quickly becoming effective in their new role by:

- providing a comprehensive overview of the organization, its current situation, future direction and key issues; and,
- explaining the governance system and practical functioning of the Board.

Approach to the Orientation

Orientation is a Board responsibility and is organized by the Board Chair, CEO, and Manager of Planning and Board Support. Orientation will typically be scheduled once the Trustees have been appointed to the Library Board. All new Trustees are expected to attend and returning Trustees are encouraged to participate.

The session provides a unique opportunity for Trustees to:

- build a personal link with fellow Trustees;
- meet key members of Library staff;
- obtain practical insights on the Library and the Board;
- visit some of the key facilities; and,
- ask questions in a private and informal setting.

The Orientation is positioned as a structured learning opportunity given the amount of material to be covered. The session(s) will be led by presenters (internal or external) who are primarily responsible for, or are well qualified and experienced in the subject matter. Interaction and questions are encouraged to ensure all participants obtain the greatest benefit.

Pre-Reading Materials

The following pre- reading materials will be provided to each Trustee for their review:

- the Public Libraries Act;
- the Rules of Procedure By-laws of the Library;
- the Roles and Responsibilities of the Board and Trustees policy;
- the Roles and Responsibilities of the CEO policy;
- the Strategic Directions and Priorities document;

- the current Corporate Plan and Budget.

These subjects will be discussed during the session with the purpose of answering questions, and providing interpretations where appropriate.

Orientation Subject Matter

The Orientation shall be comprised of two main components: Library overview and Board governance and operations.

Library Overview

- Vision, Mission and Values;
- relationship with the City of Ottawa;
- Strategic Plan and key long term objectives;
- Corporate and Board Work Plans, Budget and current financial situation;
- Performance Measurement and Key Performance Indicators;
- status of major initiatives, including Key Capital Projects (technology and facilities);
- trends and developments for libraries;
- key issues and risk management;
- organization structure;
- labour relations;
- administrative practices and electronic access to information; and,
- other material as appropriate.

Board Governance and Operations

- key insights from the Public Libraries Act;
- roles and responsibilities of the Board and Trustees;
- roles and responsibilities of the CEO;
- delegation of Authority from the Board to the CEO;
- key points of other Board policies;
- Board calendar for the current year;
- overview of the Rules of Procedure By-laws;
- practical insights into Board meeting procedures; and,
- other material as appropriate.