



Information for Prospective Library Board Members

Board Membership

The Blue Mountains Public Library is governed by a seven-member board appointed by The Town of the Blue Mountains Council within the first 60 days of their term. One member is an elected councillor appointed by Council and the other six members are selected through an appointment process established by Council. The Board serves without remuneration for a four-year term concurrent with Municipal Council.

Eligibility

To be eligible to sit on the Board, you must be:

- at least eighteen years old;
- a Canadian citizen or permanent resident;
- a resident of the Town of the Blue Mountains;
- not employed by the Board or by the Municipality.

Role of the Board

The Board:

- has governance responsibility and bears legal responsibility for the Blue Mountains Public Library;
- appoints the CEO/Secretary/Treasurer to manage the library, museum and gallery, directs the CEO via policy and plans, and monitors and evaluates performance;
- develops policy to govern the GLAM (Gallery, Library, Archives & Museum) in accordance with applicable legislation and standards;
- ensures that the Board's assets are cared for and managed in a responsible, efficient and effective manner;
- researches the library, museum and heritage-related needs of the community, sets long and short-term goals and objectives and publishes a strategic plan every four years;
- works with the CEO in the development of a budget in accordance with the TBM-BMPL Funding Agreement and ensures adequate funding is in place for the BMPL to deliver services and fulfill its mandate;
- ensures that the community is aware of the importance of the BMPL, and that funding bodies fully understand the important role the system plays in the community; and
- monitors its own effectiveness in fulfilling its major responsibilities and achieving strategic goals.

Meetings

The Board is required to hold at least seven regular monthly meetings each year, but typically holds closer to ten. Meetings for the 2022-2026 Board are on the third Thursday of the month. They usually run about three hours, are scheduled sometime between 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., and are live streamed as well as recorded for later viewing. The exact start time will be determined by the Board at their first meeting of the cycle. The Board also schedules special meetings as needed to address issues in a timely manner, or to conduct orientation and training.

From time to time, the Board strikes standing or ad hoc committees to help advance its work. Board members are asked to volunteer for committees which set their own meeting dates and times.

The Board also sends a representative to Board Assembly meetings held twice a year and hosted by Ontario Library Service.

Meeting agenda packages are released one week in advance of meetings which will members are required to review prior to the meeting.

Expectations

Given the Board's legal responsibilities, board members are expected to become familiar with applicable legislation. Chief among these are the [Public Libraries Act](#), [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#), [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#) and [Municipal Conflict of Interest Act](#). Training on such legislation will be provided at the board orientation. Attendance at this session is mandatory for all Board members and will be noted on the [Board Information Night](#) site.

In addition, Board members need to be familiar with governance roles, the Board's by-laws, governance policies, the strategic plan and budget. These and other topics will be covered at the board orientation session. Board members are encouraged to participate in further training opportunities throughout their term on relevant legislation, effective governance, planning, advocacy, and community building.

Board members are expected to agree to the Board's [Code of Ethics](#) which covers accountability, loyalty and unity. Board members must also sign an *Oath of Confidentiality* to not disclose any confidential information that comes to their attention through their position on the Board, both while a Board member and following their term.

Major Projects in the Next Board Term

The Board has spent much of 2021 & 2022 developing a strategic plan which identifies the strategic direction, major pillars and goals for the GLAM over the next four years. The incoming Board will have the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of this plan and later, towards the end of its own term, the development of the next four-year plan.

The Town is also working towards an East End hub which is slated to include library services. As this project progresses, the Board will be called upon for input.

The Board has also developed a Legacy document to help with the orientation of the incoming Board as it commits to its work over the next four years.

Appointment Process

The process for applying will be outlined and advertised by the Town.

Additionally, Board members must submit a Criminal Records Check to the Board Secretary as a final requirement for appointment to the Board prior to the orientation meeting. Members are further required to notify the Board Chair of any new charges.

Applicants are encouraged to attend the Information Session scheduled for [November 8th](#), view recent [Board meetings](#) and their [packages](#), and visit [Board Information Night](#) for links to other relevant information and documents.

Choosing An Effective Public Library Board

The legal requirements

The Public Libraries Act and its Regulations, not the Municipal Act, outline the powers and duties of public library boards in Ontario.

Municipal Council is responsible for determining the composition of library boards and for appointing library board trustees immediately following municipal elections and when vacancies occur.

Public library board positions are for four years, concurrent with the term of Municipal Council. Public library boards can be composed of a minimum of five members. Although there is no maximum number, most municipalities have appointed boards of between seven and nine members.

Municipal Council can appoint its own members to the public library board, up to one less than 50% of the total number of library board members. The majority of a library board must be comprised of citizens appointed from the community. County Council has the option of appointing a bare majority of its Councillors.

An advertisement must appear in local newspapers soliciting applicants who are:

- At least 18 years old
- A Canadian citizen
- A resident of the municipality within which the library operates
- Not employed by the library or the municipality



An effective public library board will

- Develop a Strategic Plan to establish goals and objectives for the library system.
- Support ongoing professional development opportunities for its staff and its board members.
- Ensure delivery of significant programs and services that reflect the diversity of the community.
- Provide leadership through supporting the identification and development of emerging local programs.
- Measure the impact of existing community programs and provide library resources and services that will enhance community results.
- Present a budget to the Municipal Council that reflects the library's Strategic Plan and identified community needs.
- Evaluate the performance of the library within the community and adjust its goals and objectives where the needs are not being met.
- Ensure excellent management of the library on behalf of the community within the budget approved by the municipality.

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- Hire the library's Chief Executive Officer and evaluate their performance within the management goals set by the Board.
- Ensure adherence to the Public Libraries Act, its Regulations, and any other legislation affecting the operation of the library within the community.

The qualities needed in a Library Board Member (also referred to as "trustee")

As a potential trustee, you should be:

- Interested in making a difference in the future success of your community.
- Available to attend board and committee meetings and to come prepared to contribute to discussions and decisions.
- Willing to become more aware of the bigger picture by learning about public library issues and concerns at both the provincial and the national levels.
- Prepared to represent the interests, concerns, and attitudes of your community.
- Open to learning about library programs and services that give your community the level of access to information and enrichment that it needs.
- Enthusiastic about working with other board members and the Chief Executive Officer in a team process designed to provide programs and services that meet the greatest number of needs in your community.

- Committed to being an active participant in Board leadership activities in your community.

The selection process

It is recommended that a municipality pass a bylaw to formalize selection procedures for:

- Advertising vacancies.
- Requiring all candidates to attend a mandatory information session.
- Developing criteria for selection of candidates.
- Establishing a selection committee.
- Developing a structured interview process.

Important considerations include:

- Consultation with the existing library board Chair and the Chief Executive Officer to determine the current needs of your community and gaps which may exist in the current board composition.
- Developing a set of questions that all candidates will be asked during the interview to ensure fairness and meaningful comparison of candidates. Your library's Chief Executive Officer is a valuable resource for helping Council develop interview questions.

For more information about effective public library boards visit the Leadership by Design program on Ontario Library Board Association's website.

Contact Us

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Recruiting New Public Library Board Members

Municipal Council is responsible for determining the composition of library boards and for appointing library board trustees immediately following municipal elections and when vacancies occur and in compliance with the Public Libraries Act.

Public Library Boards and CEO's can actively support the appointment process to ensure strong governance leadership for this important community service. The level of communication between municipal council and public library boards may vary across the province. This checklist is intended as a guideline.

Checklist

Task	Responsibility
May - July	
Contact Municipal Clerk: Library CEO or current Board chair speaks to municipal clerk about the library trustee recruitment process. Establish a selection process that will be used for all candidates for the library board, including the confirmation of number of trustees required. This may include the establishment of a selection committee.	Library CEO/Board Chair connects with Municipal or County Staff
Collect necessary background information about the library and the position, such as mission statement, general trustee duties and responsibilities.	CEO
Conduct a board evaluation and create a legacy document intended for the next board outlining opportunities and challenges and determine required skills according to anticipated governance needs for the upcoming term.	Board
Create a Board vacancy posting	CEO/Board or Municipal or County staff
August - October	
Advertise vacancies in local newspaper in English (and French as required) and relevant websites (the municipal web site, the public library web site). This should happen before the municipal election so	Municipal Clerk/CEO

appointments can be made promptly. Ensure the CEO is a contact to answer any questions from the public.	
Notify those who have expressed interest, or would make a significant contribution to the board, that applications should be mailed to the municipal office. Schedule a briefing/information session regarding library service and the role of the board for prospective board members. Consider hosting the briefing section before the regular board meeting and inviting candidates to stay for the board meeting.	CEO/Board Chairperson
Create a transition plan for the new board.	Board
Post election (October – January)	
Review requirements and process for first meeting of the new board.	CEO
Appoint new Board (at first meeting of the council or within 60 days of first meeting).	Municipal Council
Plan a comprehensive orientation for the new board.	CEO
Establish date and time of first board meeting.	Board
Contact all board appointees as soon as possible regarding date and time of the first board meeting.	CEO
Compose brief biographical sketch of each trustee for board package for the first board meeting.	CEO
Prepare agenda for first Board meeting.	CEO
Elect at the first meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library Board Chairperson • Vice-Chair • Standing Committees 	Board

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