

Board Discussion Starter

**Board Recruitment and Succession Planning**

Trustees bring a diversity of experiences, skills, knowledge, and questions to public library board work. Board policies and practices vary across the province and BCLTA is focused on common issues of common concern for board development. Your board chair, your library director, and BCLTA all have a role in helping you find further resources specific to your needs. The Libraries Branch staff are available for all questions regarding the Library Act.

Your board recruitment and succession planning discussions might cover a wide range of topics such as:

* Identifying the role and responsibilities of the board, of individual trustees, of the board chair, and of the library director for successful governance.
* Reviewing strategic directions, policies, and legislative framework (beginning with the Library Act) for governance context and for identifying upcoming board needs.
* Identifying current and future board needs and strengths.
* How to strategize for your library type, particularly for municipal and regional library boards.
* The unique recruitment and succession planning challenges for your board such as local socio-economics or demographics, level of board or community engagement, and the library’s relationship with influencers and decision makers such as local government.
* The important role of your library director in the process.

**Resources**

**Board Roles and Responsibilities**

Knowing and communicating your board’s roles and responsibilities is a key component for recruitment and succession planning.

[*Duties and Responsibilities of the Library Board*](https://nvdpl.ca/sites/default/files/BG-GOV-01.4_DutiesAndResponsibilitiesOfTheBoard.pdf), North Vancouver District Public Library, 2016.

* Concise and easy to understand.
* Provides a guiding principles approach to establishing the boards governance and oversight roles and responsibilities and the library director’s operational management role and responsibilities.

[“Ontario Public Library Governance at a Glance”](http://accessola.com/olba/pdf/cut_to_the_chase.pdf), *Cut to the Chase*. Ontario Library Board Association, 2007.

* Highly accessible, useful and applicable information regarding the role and responsibilities of the board.
* Explicit and useful points for clarifying governance versus operations, such as that board financial oversight does mean ensuring that financial policies are in place and does not mean challenging a miniscule amount on a budget line.

West Vancouver Memorial Library, [WVML Library Board](https://westvanlibrary.ca/about-us/wvml-library-board)

* Clear description of municipal library board governance.
* Useful links such as the one-pager [Governance of West Vancouver Memorial Library Board.](https://westvanlibrary.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/board/GOVERNANCE_OF_WVML.pdf)

[Board Roles and Responsibilities Checklist,](https://boardsource.org/board-roles-and-responsibilities-checklist/?utm_content=80947489&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter&hss_channel=tw-14982854) Board Source. (n.d.)

**Succession Planning**

Succession planning is connected to board evaluation and development. Knowing how and what your board needs for successful governance, including skills and knowledge for strategic and financial planning and oversight, is key for building a sustainable and highly functioning board.

For boards that are appointed, rather than elected, succession planning has its own unique set of challenges. The principle for succession planning remains the same; know what your board needs for successful governance and communicate that to potential trustees and to those who participate in the process of recruitment and appointment.

[Board Appointments and Board Succession Management Clinic](http://www.sols.org/files/docs/develop/training/clinics/clinicsboard_appointments_succession.pdf), Southern Ontario Library Services, 2010.

* Use with caution as this resource is designed to be compliant with the Ontario Library Act.
* Very useful board exercises and planning sheets!

[Board Succession Planning](http://ottwatch.ca/meetings/file/313846), Ottawa Public Library, (n.d.)

* Governance document that addresses municipal appointed board succession planning through identifying board needs and communicating these needs to the City.

[The Power of Board Succession Planning](https://www.boardeffect.com/blog/board-succession-planning/), Board Effect

* Sonia J. Stamm, July 8, 2016
* Stresses the impact of board leadership and abilities for setting and sustaining the culture of the organization.

[Succession Planning for Nonprofits - Managing Leadership Transitions](https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/succession-planning-nonprofits-managing-leadership-transitions), National Council of Non-Profits (n.d.).

* 10 Planning Tips for Leadership Transition – quick bulleted points and adaptable to BC public libraries.
* Importance of being intentional with, and prepared for, board and staff leadership changes.

**Recruitment**

A strong and credible public library board is inclusive and reflects the diversity of the community. It is critically important that board work demonstrates public library values such as intellectual freedom, equity, inclusivity, access, and privacy along with commonly held governance principles such as transparency, accountability, openness, community engagement, and reconciliation. These values and principles guide board work such as strategic planning, policy development, financial oversight, and the hiring and professional development of the library director.

See BCLTA Board Discussion Starter: [Diversity and Inclusivity](https://www.bclta.ca/resources-links/board-discussion-starters/).

The more the board reaches out to the community, the higher the profile of the board, and the greater the interest in serving on the board.

*The Creston Valley Public Library Board of Trustees is committed to accountability and transparency in dealings with the public, supporting open data and open governance through strong planning, and effective measurement and clear reporting of outcomes for library programs and services.* ([Creston Public Library Association](http://crestonlibrary.com/about-us/library-board/))

All public library boards increase the likelihood of successful elections or appointments by sharing appropriate information about the board and board work. This information at the very least should include:

* The names of current trustees and the board chair (if possible individual photos or a group photo) ([Prince George Public Library Board](http://www.pgpl.ca/board) and [Squamish Public Library Board](https://squamish.bc.libraries.coop/about-us/library-information/library-board/))
* Method for contacting the board chair (email: boardchair@publiclibrary or phone: library administrative number)
* The roles and responsibilities of the board ([North Vancouver District Public Library)](https://nvdpl.ca/sites/default/files/BG-GOV-01.4_DutiesAndResponsibilitiesOfTheBoard.pdf)
* Process for being a delegate to board meetings ([Fraser Valley Regional Library](https://www.fvrl.bc.ca/board_fvrl.php))
* The process for expressing interest in joining the public library board ([Surrey Libraries](https://www.surreylibraries.ca/board-trustees))
* Meeting schedules ([Creston Valley Public Library](http://crestonlibrary.com/about-us/))
* Meeting agendas ([Vancouver Public Library](https://www.vpl.ca/about/board/meetings))
* Meeting minutes, including AGM minutes ([Salt Spring Public Library Association](https://saltspring.bc.libraries.coop/about-us/library-information/board-minutes/))
* Up-to-date strategic plan [(Elkford Public Library, 2018 – 2022](https://elkford.bc.libraries.coop/files/2018/03/Elkford-Public-Library-2018-2022-Strategic-Plan-PDF.pdf)) and recent annual reports ([Chetwynd 2017 Annual Report](https://chetwynd.bc.libraries.coop/files/2013/05/Library-Director-Annual-Report-2017.pdf))

Municipal library boards and public library association boards can strengthen their transparency and accountability in the recruitment process by posting trustee recruitment information to their websites.

Cranbrook Public Library, [Library Board Applicant Information Package](https://www.cranbrookpubliclibrary.ca/files/2018/10/Board-Applicant-Package.pdf).

Squamish Public Library, [Trustee Recruitment Information Package](https://squamish.bc.libraries.coop/files/2014/11/FULL-Trustee-Recruitment-Package_2014.pdf).

Surrey Libraries, [Information Package for Prospective Library Trustees](https://www.surreylibraries.ca/board-trustees).

* While municipal library trustees are appointed through the municipal process, there is much the public library can do to encourage strong candidates to apply and to convey to local government the governance needs of the organization.

Fort St. John Public Library Association, [FSJPLA Policies and Procedures Manual](https://www.fsjpl.ca/media/95054/fsjpla-policy-digital-version-updated-with-rwp.pdf)

* Includes up-to-date and thorough language on the role, responsibilities and process of the board.
* The easily found [FSJPLA board member names, meeting minutes and agendas](https://www.fsjpl.ca/about-us/board-of-trustees/) also support an effective board recruitment message.

Gibsons and District Public Library Association, [Governance Policies](https://gibsons.bc.libraries.coop/about-us/library-information/library-board-manual/).

* Includes many useful governance documents such as service agreements. For this discussion their [Bylaws](https://gibsons.bc.libraries.coop/files/2013/12/GDPL-Revd-Bylaws-draft-revised-Nov-2018.pdf) (board roles and responsibilities, trustee eligibility, elections and the AGM), [Board Chair Description](https://gibsons.bc.libraries.coop/files/2013/12/Chair-description-2013.pdf), and [Governance Policies](https://gibsons.bc.libraries.coop/about-us/library-information/library-board-manual/) (the manual has clear language and direction regarding principles board roles, working relationship with the library directors, annual agenda, and so much more that

Contact BCLTA to add your resources, templates, or policies to this Discussion Starter.