

## Board Recruitment

“Do you want to be more involved in your community? Becoming a Library Trustee with the Surrey Libraries can be a rewarding way to help shape this valued community service. This package offers information about Surrey Libraries, the role of the Board of Trustees and how to become involved.

Surrey is a diverse community where 102 different languages are spoken and a third of the population is under the age of 19. To put that into perspective, Surrey has more young people than the entire population of Delta. Surrey is a growing community with around 1,000 new residents arriving each month and Surrey Libraries is working hard to meet that growing demand.”

*Surrey Libraries, Information Package for Prospective Library Trustees*

## Board Discussion

Trustees bring a diversity of experiences, skills, knowledge, and questions to public library board work. Board policies and practices vary across the province and 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 and their role in supporting BC public libraries.

Note that this Discussion Starter will be of most use for municipal and public library association (PLA) boards.

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

- The role and responsibilities of the board, of individual trustees, of the board chair, and of the library director for successful governance. Know the role of the board before talking about it with others.

- Trends in public library strategic directions, policies, and governance practices. You will want to share with others in the community, including local government, what the current issues and potential areas of growth are for the board to generate interest in public library governance. (See BCLTA Discussion Starter regarding [Equity](#), [Diversity and Inclusion](#), [Reconciliation](#), and [Intellectual Freedom](#)).
- The legislative framework (beginning with the Library Act) for governance context and what that might mean for any possible recruitment initiatives, such as how you communicate with the membership (PLA) or with local government about the role and responsibilities of the board.
- Current and future board needs and strengths. This discussion is richer if it moves beyond recruiting for learned skills, such as financial acumen, to including how the board can develop a more inclusive and diverse board that is reflective of the community it serves and is stronger by having a broader range of thinking, ideas, and experience.
- 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.
- Board responsibility for the stewardship of the public library and accountability to the community for the continuity of the public library. Even if the board is appointed by the municipality, the board has a responsibility for identifying board composition needs for the governance of the public library.
- The important role of your library director in the process.

Consider board recruitment as an ongoing initiative. Don’t wait for the month before your AGM or for the municipal announcement for applications. Instead see it as an opportunity to engage your community and local government in the value of the public library and the value of your volunteer governance work.

## Resources

### Board Roles and Responsibilities

The more trustees understand their role and responsibilities in governing the public library the more success they will have in demonstrating the importance of the public library board and in engaging others to consider being a trustee.

#### [BC Public Library Governance: A Quick Guide for Library Trustees](#)

- This four-page guide is a starting point for learning about BC public library governance.

#### [BCLTA Trustee Orientation Checklist](#)

- A template developed with the input of boards and library directors that can be easily tailored for your board's specific orientation needs.

#### Gibsons and District Public Library Association, [Governance Policies](#)

- Includes many useful governance documents such as service agreements. For this discussion their [Bylaws](#) (board roles and responsibilities, trustee eligibility, elections and the AGM), [Board Chair Description](#), and [Governance Policies](#) (the manual has clear language and direction regarding principles board roles, working relationship with the library directors, annual agenda, and more).

#### North Vancouver District Public Library, [Duties and Responsibilities of the Library Board](#)

- A guiding principles approach to establishing the boards governance and oversight roles and responsibilities and the library director's operational management role and responsibilities.

#### Rossland Public Library

- [Information package](#) about the role of the board and the duties of the trustee
- [Rossland Public Library Trustee Application](#)

#### West Vancouver Memorial Library, [WVML Library Board](#)

- Clear description of municipal library board governance.
- Useful links such as the one-pager [Governance of West Vancouver Memorial Library Board](#).

## Succession Planning: know what you are recruiting for

Succession planning is connected to board evaluation and development. Knowing how and what your board needs for successful governance, including having trustees with a diversity of life experiences, thinking, and ideas is key for building a sustainable and highly functioning board.

A strong and credible public library board candidate is someone who broadens and strengthens the board's development and governance work. They are open and curious about the unique role of the public library in their community and about commonly held public library values and principles such as intellectual freedom, equity, inclusion, diversity, access, privacy, and reconciliation. They understand or are keen to learn about the moral and legal importance of governance principles such as transparency, accountability, fiduciary responsibility, and duty of care.

For boards that are appointed, rather than elected, succession planning has its own unique set of challenges, but 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](#), Southern Ontario Library Services, 2010.

- Use with caution as this resource is designed to be compliant with the Ontario Library Act
- Contains useful board exercises and planning sheets

### [The Power of 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](#), 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

### [Nonprofit Board Diversity isn't a Checklist](#), Boardable, August 2, 2019

- The difference between recruiting for an inclusive board and “checking a box for diversity”

## Recruitment and Communication

All public library boards increase the likelihood of having a breadth of candidates for successful elections or appointments by sharing appropriate information about the board and board work through a variety of communication channels.

These channels include speaking with local government and community partners, making use of traditional media, having information available at the library, and through wise use of social media.

A key communication channel is the board section on the library's website. The board section on the website, which is a tool for demonstrating transparency and accountability, should at the very least include:

- Names of current trustees and the board chair (if possible individual photos or a group photo) ([Stewart Public Library](#), [Smithers Public Library](#), [Nelson Public Library](#), and [Burnaby Public Library](#))
- Methods for contacting the board chair (email: boardchair@publiclibrary or phone: library administrative number)
- Roles and responsibilities of the board ([North Vancouver District Public Library](#))
- Process for being a delegate to board meetings ([Fraser Valley Regional Library](#))
- Meeting schedules ([Creston Valley Public Library](#))
- Meeting agendas ([Fort St. John Public Library](#))
- Meeting minutes, including AGM minutes ([Salt Spring Public Library](#))
- Up-to-date strategic plan ([Elkford Public Library, 2018 – 2022](#), [North Vancouver City Library, 2018 – 2021](#)) and recent annual reports ([Kitimat Public Library](#) and [Squamish Public Library](#))

Additionally, all public libraries should have information on their website as to how trustees come to be on the board. An open and transparent process executed with integrity will give the community, local government, and funders reason to view the board as having credibility and the authority to govern.

### Municipal Library Boards

- Cranbrook Public Library, [Library Board Applicant Information Package](#)
- Squamish Public Library, [Trustee Recruitment Information Package](#)
- Surrey Libraries, [Information Package for Prospective Library Trustees](#)

## Public Library Associations (PLAs) Boards

- [Pender Island Public Library Board Trustee Application Package](#)
- Hazelton Public Library, [Board of Trustees](#)
- Grand Forks and District Public Library, [Board Members](#)

Email Babs Kelly, BCLTA Director for Learning and Development, with any questions about or suggestions for BCLTA Discussion Starters.