

TRUSTEE 201 – THE LIBRARY BOARD AS EMPLOYER

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TODAY'S TOPICS

- Who's in Charge?
- The Library Board's relationship with the Library Director
- Hiring and Evaluating the Director
- Disciplinary Issues
- Personnel Policies
- The Library Board and other Library Staff

WHO'S IN CHARGE?

Who has final authority over library staff?

WISCONSIN STATUTES

- **§43.58 Powers and duties.**
- **(1)** The library board shall have exclusive control of the expenditure of all moneys collected, donated or appropriated for the library fund,
- **(4)** ... the library board shall supervise the administration of the public library and shall appoint a librarian, who shall appoint such other assistants and employees as the library board deems necessary, and prescribe their duties and compensation.

THE DPI SAYS

- This charge from the legislature provides library boards ... with considerable discretion to operate libraries ... independent of direct control by other municipal players—city councils, town boards, mayors, village board presidents, etc

ON THE OTHER HAND...

- The League of Wisconsin Municipalities says,
 - ... library employees are municipal employees and therefore subject to the same terms or conditions of employment that apply to other municipal employees.
 - ... a library board cannot enact a rule for library employees which is inconsistent with the terms and conditions of employment established by the governing body for all municipal employees.
 - ...library employees are subject to the same rules concerning vacation schedules that apply to other municipal employees.

RESOURCES

- [DPI FAQs on the board's authority over library staff](#)
- [Trustee Essential 7: The Library Board and Library Personnel](#)
- [LWM FAQ on the relationship between the library board and the municipal board](#)

THE LIBRARY BOARD'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR

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- Primary role: Supervisor
 - Collectively as the Board of Trustees, not as an individual trustee
- Secondary roles
 - Coach, mentor, partner

LIBRARY BOARD'S SUPERVISORY ROLES:

- Hiring a director
- Setting director's duties & tasks
- Evaluating the director
- Disciplining the director, when necessary
- Firing the director, when necessary

THE LIBRARY BOARD AS COACH, MENTOR, AND PARTNER

- Encouragement
- Advice
- Information
- Support

HAVING A SUCCESSFUL WORKING RELATIONSHIP REQUIRES:

- Mutual trust and respect
- Clear, open communication
- Professional behavior

HIRING THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR

This is a singularly important task and will have far-reaching and often long-term effects.

Be prepared for a great deal of diligent effort-effort that will be worthwhile if you succeed in hiring the best person for the job.

GETTING STARTED

- Appoint a search and screen committee
 - May be the entire board or a committee
 - May include staff and community members
 - May include municipal staff
- Plan 12 – 14 weeks between starting the process and the new director's start date
- Remember, committees established by the library board are subject to provisions of the Open Meetings Law

OPEN AND CLOSED SESSION REQUIREMENTS

- Open session required
 - Job description & duties
 - Education, experience & other qualities desired
 - Pay scales or ranges
- Closed session permitted
 - Reviewing resumes
 - Interviewing candidates
 - Discussing candidates and choosing first choice
 - Specific salary to be paid

REVIEW AND UPDATE THE JOB DESCRIPTION

- Make sure it accurately reflects the Director's duties
- Consider the library's long-range plan
 - What are the library's goals?
 - What skills will be needed to help the library reach those goals?
- In other words...
 - Where do you want the library to be in 5 years?
 - What kind of leader will get you there?

CREATING THE JOB AD

“How can we attract a talented person to work for our library?”

- Opening paragraph:
 - List 3-5 selling points about the position, the library, and the community
- Specifics:
 - General scope of work
 - Job requirements (education and experience)
 - Tasks the new director will be expected to do that may be specific to your library
 - Salary range and benefits available
 - How to apply
 - Deadline for applications

EXAMPLES OF SELLING POINTS

The Wautoma Public Library Board of Trustees seeks a **vibrant leader** to direct the operations of our library. We serve a rural community of approximately 2,100, in the heart of Wisconsin. The City of Wautoma is a **recreational community**, built for all seasons, featuring **many year-round, outdoor activities**.

The Board of Trustees of the Public Library of Youngstown & Mahoning County, seeks a **dynamic, articulate administrator skilled in communicating, listening and responding** to lead the Library in providing quality programs and services for this **culturally rich and diverse community** of 229,000.

POST THE JOB AD

- Library, Municipal building
- Local newspapers
- Online
 - Library website
 - System website
 - System staff can advise on other appropriate places to advertise

WHAT TO ASK FOR

- Letter of application
- Resume
- References
- Application form

CREATE LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Tailor questions to the skills you want your new director to have
- Questions should relate to this central theme: *“How are you qualified to perform the job you are applying for?”*
- Open vs. Closed questions
- Consult with City/Village Attorney or HR Dept. to avoid legal pitfalls

QUESTIONS TO AVOID

- Not forbidden but discouraged
 - Age, date of birth, or graduation dates
 - Race, religion, national origin
 - Physical traits, handicaps, disabilities
 - Sex, marital, and family status
 - Education (if the job doesn't require a particular level of education).

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Ask yourself...
 - Is this information necessary to judge the individual's competence to perform this particular job?
 - Does this question tend to disproportionately screen out minorities and females?
 - Are there alternate nondiscriminatory ways to secure the necessary information?

EEOC recommendations

REVIEW APPLICATIONS

- Don't automatically look for someone just like the outgoing director
- Look for the "best fit"
 - No one candidate will be perfect or have everything you want
- Select candidates to interview
- Weed out and notify unqualified applicants

BACKGROUND CHECKS?

- Commonly done
- Can be fairly simple or more in-depth
- Both state & federal law regulate how this information may be used

CONDUCT INTERVIEWS

- Use the same set of pre-determined questions with every candidate
- Interview committee should be the same for all candidates
- Change interviewer every few questions so everyone has a chance to talk directly to candidates
- Library tour
- Community tour

CONDUCT INTERVIEWS

- Remember, you are selling the library and the community as a great place to work and live
- Check references
 - Go beyond just the references on the resume
 - Ask the same questions of each reference

FINAL STEPS

- Search & Screen Committee offers position contingent on Board's approval and receives acceptance
- Committee recommends candidate to full Board for approval
- Confirm appointment, salary, benefits, and starting date in writing
- Notify applicants not selected

CONTINGENCY PLANS

- The Search and Screen Committee may want to choose a second choice in case the top candidate doesn't accept
- If your choice(s) do not accept or if there are no suitable candidates it is probably better to begin again than to go with a poor choice
 - May need to re-evaluate the position or compensation

NEW DIRECTOR TRANSITION

- Begins with the departing director
- How can you help the new director make a successful transition?
- First day of work—paperwork and introductions
- What does the new director need to know right off the bat?

HIRING FROM WITHIN

- Even if you hire from within you should still conduct a full search process
 - You, the staff, and the community will be assured that the person chosen was the best available candidate
 - An individual may be excellent in a subordinate position but not have the qualities needed in a director
 - If you don't do a search you may miss out on a great candidate

HIRING FROM WITHIN – PROS

- Is a “known quantity”
- Probably gets along well with other staff
- May be inclined to maintain the “status quo” (this could also be a “con”)
- Less orientation needed
- An unsuccessful internal candidate may be resentful if an outsider is chosen

HIRING FROM WITHIN – CONS

- The move from co-worker to supervisor can be difficult for both the new director and other staff
- Hiring from outside more likely to bring in new ideas
- Possible perception that the board “took the easy way out” or that the new director had an unfair advantage

RESOURCES

- [Trustee Essential # 5: Hiring the Library Director](#)
- [A Library Board's practical guide to finding the right library director](#)
- [Trustee Tool kit on hiring a new director Library System staff](#)
- Municipal personnel or HR officer

QUESTIONS?



EVALUATING THE DIRECTOR

- Who?
 - Entire board or personnel committee?
- When?
 - Annually
 - Evaluate new director at 6 months
- Why?
 - To provide formal feedback on performance
 - To set goals for the future year
 - To address any problems or concerns
 - To ask what the director needs and how the board can help

EVALUATING THE DIRECTOR

The evaluation should be based on four factors:

1. The director's performance as it relates to the job description.
2. A list of objectives from the preceding year jointly written and agreed upon by the director & the board.
3. The success of the library in providing service to the public and the director's contribution to that success.
4. Any problems or issues that have come up.

EVALUATING THE DIRECTOR

The evaluation basic outline:

1. Update job description
2. Base the evaluation form on the description
3. Director self assessment
4. Committee created written evaluation (in closed session)
5. Conducts evaluation
6. Director signs evaluation
7. Evaluation placed in personnel file

EVALUATING THE DIRECTOR

- Tips for success
 - Have **SMART** expectations for performance
 - **S**pecific
 - **M**easurable
 - **A**chievable
 - **R**elevant
 - **T**ime-related
 - Consider outside factors that may adversely influence performance

RESOURCES

- [Examples of evaluation forms:](#)
- [Trustee Essential # 6: Evaluating the Library Director](#)
- [Library System staff](#)

QUESTIONS?



DEALING WITH PERFORMANCE ISSUES

- Deal with performance issues right away, don't wait until the next regular evaluation
- Have an established, systematic and documented procedure in place for how the library deals with discipline and termination issues.
- Communicate performance issues to the director and discuss actions needed to correct the problem

DEALING WITH PERFORMANCE ISSUES

- Connect discussion to specific behaviors
 - “On [date] you were seen to [behavior]” or “[name] reported you said [item] on [date]”
 - Never generalize or make vague charges
- Use written documentation
 - Job description
 - Goals and objectives from previous performance evaluations
 - Library’s strategic or long-range plan

DEALING WITH PERFORMANCE ISSUES

- Never meet one-on-one; always have third party present for disciplinary meetings
- Set goals for improvement or correction
 - Specific: what, when, why
 - Follow-up on a regular basis
- Document session with both parties signing goals statement

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

- Disciplinary action starts small and escalates if behavior continues
 1. Oral warning
 2. Written reprimand
 3. Three-day suspension
 4. Five-day suspension
 5. Termination
- However, any or all earlier steps may be omitted for sufficiently severe infractions
- In any case, always document disciplinary action

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

- Escalate disciplinary actions per your written procedure
 - When considering past disciplinary actions don't go back more than 2 – 3 years
- Get legal advice before terminating the director
- Document performance issue(s) and steps taken to address the issue.

RESOURCES

- [Resolving employee performance problems \(from the University of Connecticut\)](#)
- [How to Ensure Strong Employee Performance Management](#)
- [Managing Your Problem Employees](#)

QUESTIONS?



PERSONNEL POLICIES

PERSONNEL POLICIES ESTABLISH:

- General employment information
 - Conditions of employment
 - “At will” status
 - Employee status definitions: full-time, part-time, exempt, non-exempt
 - Staff conduct and ethical standards
- Wages
 - Pay periods
 - Payroll deductions
 - Overtime

PERSONNEL POLICIES ESTABLISH:

- Benefits
 - Insurance – health, dental, life...
 - Retirement plan
 - Earning leave: sick, funeral, personal
- Procedures for using vacation, sick leave, funeral leave, holidays, etc.
- Work rules and disciplinary procedure
- Grievance procedure
- Resignation and retirement procedure

PERSONNEL POLICIES MAY INCLUDE:

- Library mission statement
- Staff development and continuing education opportunities
- Use of library computers and internet
- Travel and meal allowances
- [Sample Policy from OWLS for small libraries](#)

THE BOARD CAN:

1. Adopt the municipality's personnel or grievance policy as is
 - Ensuring that the library board's control is not compromised

2. Write a new policy with referral to sections of the municipal policy
 - Have policy reviewed by municipal personnel officer or attorney

RESOURCES

- [Trustee Essential # 10—Developing essential library policies](#)
- [Wisconsin Public Library Policy Resources](#)
- Library System staff

QUESTIONS



THE LIBRARY BOARD AND LIBRARY STAFF

DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Board of Trustees:
 - Creates staff positions
 - Approves job descriptions
 - Establishes number of hours worked and compensation
 - Adopts a personnel policy
 - Supervises the library director
 - A trustee may, at the Director's request, be present at a disciplinary meeting
- The Board does not:
 - Hire, evaluate, or discipline staff
 - Schedule or supervise staff

*Other than the library director

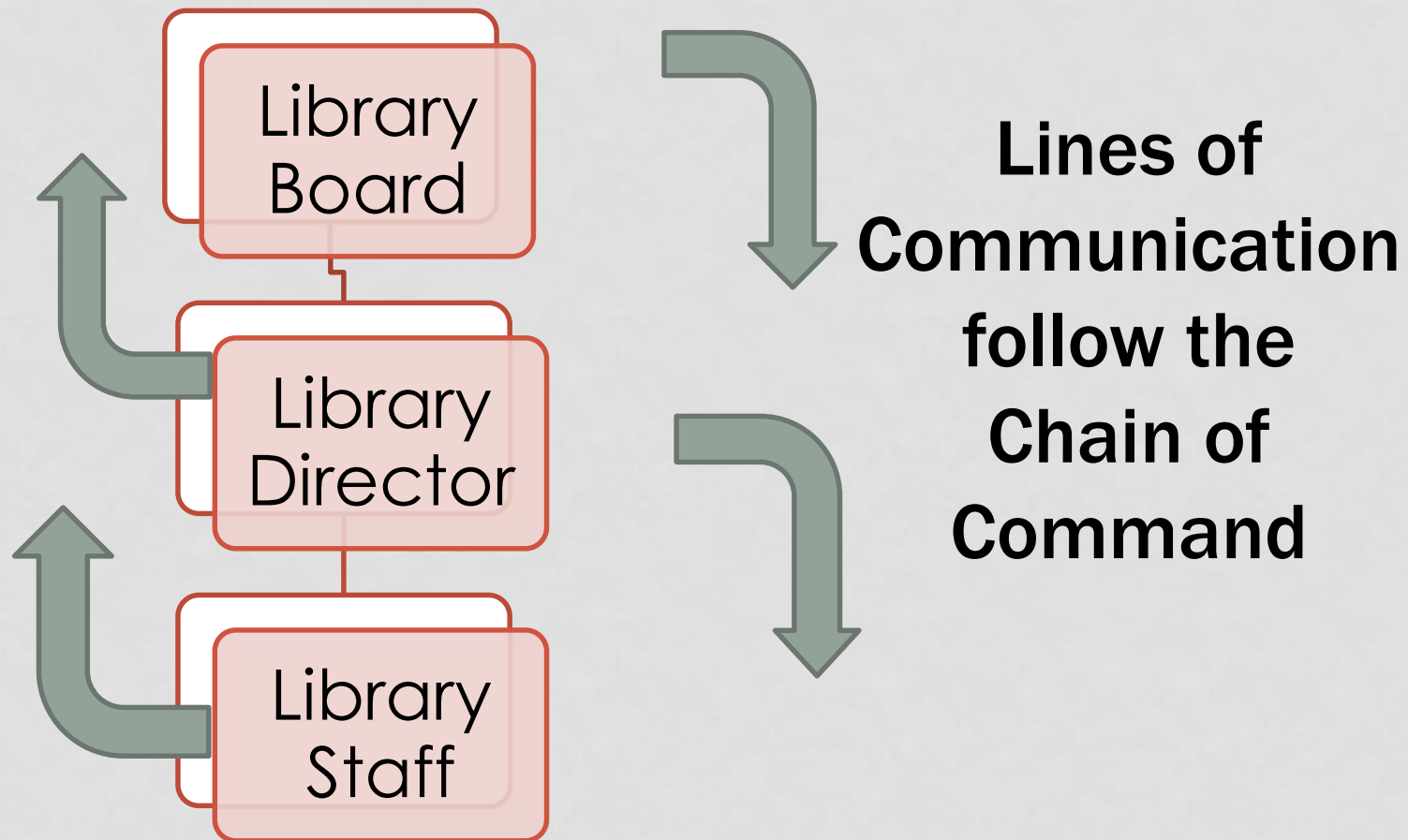
TRUSTEE INTERACTION WITH STAFF:

- As a library patron
- In committee meetings
- In the planning process
- When staff make reports at a board meeting
- If trustees volunteer at the library
- During library events
- In the wider community

WHAT TO DO IF A STAFF MEMBER HAS A COMPLAINT

- Refer the person to the library director (or supervisor, in a larger library)
- Not resolved?
 - Follow the Library's grievance procedure

CHAIN OF COMMAND



RESOURCES

- Your municipal personnel officer, clerk, and attorney
- Library System staff
- [Wisconsin Division for Libraries Public Library Development Staff](#)
- [Trustee Essential #7—The Library Board and Library Personnel](#)
- [FAQs on Library Personnel issues](#)

QUESTIONS?



TOPICS FROM THE FLOOR? FINAL QUESTIONS?





"That's all Folks!"