

## **Library Commissioner Job Description**

The Boulder Library Commission is a voluntary citizen advisory board that serves to protect and promote the [mission of the Boulder Public Library](#). Library Commissioners, who are appointed by and are advisory to City Council, work closely with the Library and Arts Director and Library staff to develop a vision for the library and to continually review and provide advice on the everyday administration of the library.

The Library Commission is the voice of the public in library affairs, and commissioners serve to represent the public interest to the best of their abilities. Serving on the Boulder Library Commission is an exciting and rewarding way to be involved in one of our most important and vital civic institutions.

## **Role and Powers of the Library Commission**

The City Charter gives the Library Commission the following powers:

- Adopt bylaws, rules, and regulations for its guidance and governance;
- Provide advice to assist in preparation and revision of a master plan for the development and maintenance of a modern library system within the city;
- Review annually the library budget prepared by the library director prior to its submittal to the city manager and make recommendations regarding approval or modification of the same;
- Review periodically the director's operational service plans and make comments and recommendations;
- Make recommendations to the director and the city council on library facilities, including capital improvements, maintenance of existing facilities, and need for new facilities;
- Review the library director's annual report and make comments and recommendations; and
- Represent the library to the community and the community to the library with the goal of building awareness, understanding, and support
- Take steps as the Library Commission may deem feasible to encourage grants or gifts in support of the library.
- Oversee specific monies within the Library Fund that originate from gifts, bequests, or donations

## **Qualifications**

While the Library Commission is ideally made up of a diverse array of community members with different skills, experiences, and talents, some combination of the following qualifications are ideal:

- An understanding of and commitment to the fundamental services of a public library, and some familiarity with Boulder Public Library in particular
- A strong desire to preserve and promote the library as a public forum for the sharing of information and ideas without prejudice
- A willingness and ability to engage with the public and to understand and represent the views and opinions of diverse community members
- The ability to function well in committees and group discussions, and to work in a flexible way with others who have a diversity of opinions and interests.
- The ability to assess information and make important decisions
- Excellent communication skills
- A strong sense of legal and ethical conduct appropriate to the position

- The courage to state one's views on important issues and speak openly and directly, though always respectfully, with staff and other commission members
- Some basic understanding of the broader structures of city governance in Boulder, of the issues facing the city in its continuing development, and of the place of the library within those broader contexts

## **Requirements and Expectations**

Library Commissioners generally serve five-year terms. Member of the Library Commission must be willing and able to give time and talents. More specifically, members of the Library Commission are expected to:

- Read distributed materials before each meeting
- Participate actively in monthly meetings (usually three hours in length and generally scheduled on the first Wednesday evening of each month)
- Devote at least 10 hours per month, and often more, to Commission matters
- Serve on various committees or as one of the Library Commission's representatives on the Boulder Library Foundation Board
- Assume a leadership role on the commission at some point during one's term
- Attend BPL and other functions and community events, and generally be a public presence for the library within the community
- Provide feedback, advice, and encouragement to the Library and Art Director, to library staff, and to the public in meetings and emails
- Stay abreast of developments in the world of public libraries as technologies and service models change

Please read our FAQs about what it's like to be on the Library Commission:

### **FAQ:**

#### **What does a commissioner do?**

A library commissioner serves to *protect the mission of the public library.*

*The mission of the Boulder Public Library is to enhance the personal and professional growth of Boulder residents and contribute to the development and sustainability of an engaged community through free access to ideas, information, cultural experiences and educational opportunities.*

A commissioner is not necessarily a library patron or someone that 'just loves to read.' You must be active in the local community, willing and able to give time and talent to the library; at meetings, special library functions and other community events. A dedication to our community necessitates an interest in its people, recognizing their potential, understanding their problems, and respecting diversity no matter the origin, age, beliefs or background. Whether you have a life-long love of all things library, or are an activist for the civic good and public spaces, the Library commission wants dedicated members committed to giving back to the public arena.

#### **Who do we work with and who do we work for?**

The library commission is a voluntary board working for the City of Boulder and the Boulder Public Library. The commission works with the library director and staff providing feedback, advice and encouragement to director, to staff, to public in meetings

and emails. The commission also advises the City Council on matters pertaining to the library's budget, services and facilities.

**What is the range of hours per month one can expect to spend?**

Commissioners spend an average of 10-20 hours / month in their role, attending monthly meetings as well as involvement with library activities and events. Two commissioners also serve on the Library Foundation.

**What resources do I need to read through?**

The following materials are essential to the role of a Library Commissioner:

- Boulder Public Library Mission Statement
- The Library Charter
- Boulder Public Library's Master Plan

In addition, each Commissioner is expected to thoroughly review previous meeting minutes and the prepared packet of relevant topical materials in advance of each meeting. Commissioners also read and respond to feedback and concerns submitted by patrons and community members.

**What is the difference between a commissioner and a board member/trustee?**

Boulder Public Library commissioners are volunteers appointed by the City Council as an advisory body to the library director and the council. In some jurisdictions, a library board or a board of trustees governs the library system. In these jurisdictions, board members or trustees may either be appointed or elected, and the board has decision-making authority for that library.

**What is it like to be on an advisory commission?**

Advisory roles in the City of Boulder are essential positions that contribute to the stewardship of our community institutions and values. These are very political positions that require a depth and breadth of issues shaping Boulder. Advisors are an interface to the public for the institutions that they serve. These roles necessitate a willingness to advocate and be out in front. To be committed but not single minded. To work in a flexible way with others around a diversity of opinions, agendas and outcomes.