

# Boulder Public Library Trustee Handbook

## The Role of a Boulder Public Library Trustee

The Boulder Public Library District governing body is the Board of Trustees. Library District Trustees are volunteers, appointed by the Boulder City Council and the Boulder County Board of Commissioners.

The Board of Trustees manages the budget, conducts long-range planning, sets policies for the library district, and hires a Library Director to implement the policies, and manage the library system. The Trustees also establish guidelines for their own operations. A complete list of Trustee responsibilities is in the [Statutory Obligations of a Library District Board of Trustees](#).

The work of the Board of Trustees is also guided by the [Core Values of Librarianship](#) and the [Library Bill of Rights](#). The [Colorado Public Library website & Trustee Handbook](#) has more information and resources.

## Trustee Qualifications

Trustees are expected to be committed to the long-term financial and programmatic success of the library district. Library district trustees must be at least 18 years of age and [reside within the legal service area](#) of the library district.

While the Board of Trustees 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 familiarity with the 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 for the benefit of the community.
- 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 Board members.

## Expectations of Trustees

Trustees are generally appointed to serve five-year terms. Trustees must be willing and able to give time and talents for the benefit of the library and the community it serves. More specifically, Trustees are expected to:

- Read distributed materials before each meeting.

- Participate actively in regular and special meetings (usually two-three hours in length and generally scheduled on the third Tuesday evening of each month).
- Devote at least 10 hours per month, and often more, to Trustee matters
- Serve on various committees.
- Serve as one of the Trustees' representatives on the Boulder Public Library Foundation Board.
- Assume a leadership role on the Board at some point during one's term.
- Attend BPLD 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 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 changes.

## **Communications among trustees**

- Any two trustees are allowed to discuss library or trustee related topics.
- Even if a trustee has discussed a topic with other trustees, there is no limit on the conversation other than to avoid attempting to make a decision outside of a public meeting.
- A trustee should avoid representing another trustee's opinion to other trustees, staff, or the public.
- No votes or consensus should be gathered outside of a public meeting; the only exceptions are administrative decisions (i.e. deciding meeting day, time, place, etc.)
- Any or all trustees are permitted to gather outside of scheduled meetings as long as trustee business is not discussed.
- All trustee business communications involving more than TWO trustees or representing a trustee opinion to the public are a part of the public record and can be requested by the public at any time.

## **Trustee email communications**

- Any email sent to staff and/or one or more trustees, regarding trustee business (administrative business included) is subject to disclosure and considered public record.
- Any two trustees may exchange email on any topic; messages containing (non-administrative) trustee business shall not be forwarded to any other trustee.
- A trustee may send informational emails to the entire Board; such messages should include a reminder not to "reply all." If any trustee wants to respond or discuss the contents of the email, the topic should be added to the next meeting agenda; "reply all" only to ask for this agenda request.

Examples of all-trustee emails:

- 1) Comments on packet materials and informational topics to be discussed at the next meeting as "heads up"

- 2) Research or public communication to be shared with fellow trustees, not as a part of an ongoing discussion
  - 3) Questions being asked of staff
- Staff takes direction from the Library Director, and the Director should be copied on all staff requests for information.

## **Speaking with the public as a trustee**

Trustees should represent their ideas as personal (not as the Board) when expressing opinions, unless the Board has voted on that issue.

## **Overview of Library Operations**

There are five divisions in the Library.

### **Administration**

Foundational support for library operations including administrative personnel support, facilities, budget, communications Trustee support . It includes preservation and access to local history, and technology infrastructure and support.

### **Collection**

This program is library collection acquisitions supported by the Library Fund and the personnel who select, process, and maintain the library's books, media, periodicals and wide variety of electronic resources such as downloadable music, movies, audiobooks, ebooks, and information databases.

### **Community Literacy & Outreach**

This program leverages community volunteer support and partnerships to strengthen community ties, provide access to critical information resources, library programs and services, and conduct literacy-focused outreach to strengthen skills and improve equity and inclusion for everyone with a focus on reaching underserved or otherwise marginalized community members.

### **Library Public Services**

This program is customer-focused operations and facilities to connect community members of all ages with library services and resources.

### **Programs & Events**

This program leverages grant funding support to provide educational and recreational programs and opportunities for community connection at no cost to community members.

## **The Boulder Public Library Foundation**

The Boulder Public Library Foundation (BLF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization governed by a volunteer board of directors and supported by individual donors and community partners. The Foundation's purpose is to assist and aid the Library by raising funds from private sources for the benefit of the Library. This includes, without limitation, solicitation and receipt of private gifts, annual giving contributions, deferred gifts, devises and bequests, corporate gifts and foundation grants, and special events.

The Foundation is responsible for identifying and nurturing relationships with potential donors and other friends of the Library; soliciting cash, securities, real and intellectual property, and other private resources for the support of the Library; and acknowledging and stewarding such gifts in accordance with donor intent and its fiduciary responsibilities. The Foundation is responsible for the performance and oversight of all aspects of its operations based on a comprehensive set of bylaws

The Foundation Board of Directors is responsible for the control and management of all assets of the Foundation, including the prudent management of all gifts to it, consistent with donor intent and applicable laws. To ensure integration with Library goals and objectives, two Boulder Public Library Trustees should serve as Directors of the Foundation. To align with the Foundation's annual meeting, Trustee appointments to the Foundation Board should be made in April.

The Boulder Library Foundation website is <https://boulderlibraryfoundation.org/>.