Selecting System Board Members

Municipal council has the prerogative to decide who is appointed to the library system board. Often, councillors are chosen for appointment to the system board but this is not required. Council may appoint any resident of the jurisdiction as a representative. It may be useful if the individual appointed to the system board has some ties to their local municipal or intermunicipal board. This is to ensure the system representative is familiar with local board issues, as well as the functionality of the local library service points. An individual can serve on both the local and the system boards should council desire, but each appointment must be made separately. As representatives of the member jurisdiction, system board members are expected to attend all meetings of the library system board and be familiar with the work of the board.

**System Board Member Responsibilities**

Upon appointment, a board member becomes part of a legal entity responsible for governing the delivery of system library service throughout the region. Board members have a fiduciary responsibility to act in the best interest of the library system. They must act with competence, diligence, loyalty, and employ the same duty and care for the system they would when conducting their own affairs.

Just some of the duties of system board members include:

* Developing a Plan of Service (strategic plan) to establish goals and objectives for the library system
* Supporting ongoing professional development opportunities for its staff and its board members
* Ensure delivery of significant programs and services to member libraries
* Present a budget to the municipal council that reflects the system’s Plan of Service
* Evaluate the performance of the system and adjust its goals and objectives where needs are not being met
* Ensure excellent management of the system within the budget
* Ensure adherence to the Libraries Act, its Regulation, and any other legislation affecting the operation of the system
* Support the core value of intellectual freedom
* Be able to set aside personal biases in the interests of what best serves the system in the areas of collections, programs, and services.
* Given the significant responsibilities and demands placed on library board members, potential trustees should exhibit the following characteristics. They should be:
* Interested in making a positive difference to library service throughout the system’s region
* Available to attend board and committee meetings and to come prepared to contribute to discussions and decisions
* Willing to become more aware of the bigger picture by learning about library service at the system and provincial levels
* Open to learning about system services and structure, and how they serve the member library community
* Enthusiastic about working with other board members and the Chief Executive Officer within a process designed to provide programs and services that meet the greatest number of needs in within the system library community

# References:

“Appointment to Library System Boards – A Fact Sheet for Alberta Public Library Boards and Councils” Government of Alberta January 11, 2022, Municipal Affairs [Appointments to Library System Boards (alberta.ca)](https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/9c5f2901-a45a-458a-a149-190bca33f312/resource/e33873d3-70b3-4f80-8c4a-1974b22cdc20/download/ma-plsb-appointments-to-library-system-boards-2022-01.pdf) Accessed 28 June 2024.