



Peterborough Public Library

To: Library Board of Trustees

From: Jennifer Jones, Library CEO

Meeting Date: January 8, 2019

Subject: Report PPL19-003
New Library Board Orientation – Proposed Outline

Purpose

A report to provide the Board with a proposed outline for the new Library Board orientation.

Recommendations

That the Library Board approve the recommendations outlined in Report PPL19-003 January 8, 2019 of the Library CEO, as follows:

- a) That the report be received for information; and
- b) That the current Board provide feedback on the orientation elements proposed.

Budget and Financial Implications

There are no budget or financial implications associated with the recommendations of this report.

Background

One of the first agenda items for the new Library Board will be an orientation session for all members. Typically, the orientation session occurs shortly after new members are appointed and is focused on Board Members reviewing and discussing roles and

responsibilities. The orientation session provides all Board Members with a common frame of reference for how the Board and Library operate.

Topics to be included in the orientation session reinforce the library's purpose and mission, provide an overview of how the board operates, and introduce core areas of service. See Appendix A for a sample agenda and supporting documentation.

Recommended materials to hand out for board orientation include copies of:

- a. Public Libraries Act
- b. Board by-laws
- c. MOU
- d. Written guidelines outlining board duties and responsibilities (will provide a copy of OLBA's "Cut to the Chase")
- e. "Library Board Resource" materials (Southern Ontario Library Service website)
- f. Current Strategic Plan
- g. Library calendar (e.g., board meeting dates; key deadlines – budget to council, trustee training – conference dates)
- h. List of current board members and contact info, e-mail addresses
- i. Library budget
- j. Latest board minutes
- k. Current Library Policies (and review schedule)
- l. Overview of the Friends of the Library and the Library Foundation

Other orientation information may include:

- a tour of the library branch(es)
- a review of the new website
- a broad overview of services provided including programs and events, physical and digital collection, public use technology, etc.
- an introduction to library staff members

Submitted by,
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Library CEO

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Attached:
Appendix A – SOLS sample agenda for a Board orientation session

Appendix A – SOLS sample agenda for a Board orientation session



Sample Agenda for a Board Orientation Session

This sample agenda is one option for topics that could be covered in a two or three hour board orientation session. The focus of this sample agenda is on public library governance. There is less of a focus on library services, in which case the information on services would need to be expanded on at another session or at the regular board meetings.

Board Orientation - Sample Agenda

- Item 1 - Welcome and Introductions
- Item 2 - Review of Purpose of the Orientation
- Item 3 - The *Public Libraries Act*
- Item 4 - Role of the Board
- Item 5 - The Board and the CEO – Shared leadership
- Item 6 - Duties and Responsibilities of Individual Board Members
- Item 7 - Introduction to Library Services – Mission and Goals
- Item 8 - Library Board Development – Next Steps

Item 1 - Welcome and Introductions

In most cases the presenters will be the library CEO and the board chair from the previous term. This does not have to be the case if there are other board members who would like to present a section of the agenda. Presenters will introduce themselves to the group at the beginning of the session. Some participants may be new, and introductions of everyone attending are necessary at this point. Each participant should provide some information on why they are interested in library leadership, and what motivated them to volunteer for board membership.

Item 2 - Review of the Purpose of the Orientation Session

Information on the purpose of the session should be provided. In addition to getting to know each other, participants should be told that they will be provided with information about:

- the legislative framework for public libraries
- the roles and responsibilities of the board and CEO
- governance and the operations of the board
- core library services

At this point, participants can be asked if they have any further expectations from the orientation session. If so, note these in the “parking lot” to review at the end of the meeting, or at another time. The use of a “parking lot” is one method for sticking to the

agenda of any meeting and can help to capture additional issues and ideas generated throughout the session. Items are noted on a flip chart or white board. Each issue is then addressed at the appropriate time of the session and the list reviewed again at the end of the workshop for the purpose of either: addressing outstanding items; or seeking further information; or suggesting that trustees work on outstanding issues and the items be placed on the board agenda.

Item 3 - The Public Libraries Act

Under this item on the agenda, the participants will be given a thorough review of the [Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, chapter P.44](#) (*the Act*). The *Act* is provincial legislation that governs the establishment and operations of public libraries in Ontario. It is important for board members to be aware of the areas of the *Act* that stipulate the operations of the board, the powers of the board, and the legislated requirements for the provision of library services. The *Act* includes specific directions for the first meeting of the library board.

The actual legislation runs to about 20 pages. A document which help people to gain an understanding of the legislation is [Public Libraries Act - Questions and Answers for Public Libraries](#) from the Ministry's website at http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/libraries/act_q_a.shtml

In doing the review, the specific directions from the legislation for the first meeting of the library board should be highlighted:

- The first meeting of a board in a new term shall be called by the chief executive officer if authorized by by-law of the municipal council or if no by-law has been passed by the clerk of the appointing council (Section 14(1))
- A board shall elect one of its members as chair at its first meeting in a new term (Section 14(3))

Item 4 - Role of the Board

The *Act* directs the library board to provide a comprehensive and efficient public library service that reflects the unique needs of its community.

Ask participants to share their ideas on what the work of a governing board is in order to be successful. A look at the information provided in Section 4 of *Library Board Development Kit*, referring to the Role of the Board could be helpful. The group could also review the library board's policy on the role of the board, assuming that a policy exists.

Key points to highlight in this agenda item include:

- The board is the legal authority for the library and is responsible for the organization's highest level of decision-making
- The board is accountable for establishing the library's vision and mission and setting the rate of progress in achieving these

- The board carries out its governance function by developing and monitoring policy and delegating authority to the CEO

Item 5 - The Board and the CEO – Shared Leadership

The library board and the CEO share the responsibility to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of their library. Their work in leading the library is quite specific and requires different skills and different information from staff. The board directs the vision and mission of the library and ensures that the community's needs have been met, but has no direct responsibility for library operations. The board is focused on what the library should accomplish and the CEO focuses on how it is done.

To illustrate how the Board and CEO should work together in shared leadership, review the information provided in the OLBA publication called [Cut to the Chase: Ontario public library governance at-a-glance](#). In particular, look at the section called *The Public Library Board and the Chief Executive Officer: Who Does What?* In addition, it would be helpful to review the library board's policy on delegation of authority to the CEO, if one exists.

Key points to highlight in this agenda item include:

- The board directs the work of the CEO through decisions made at board meetings, policies, official plans, and the budget; and,
- The CEO manages the staff, the day-to-day operations of the library and serves as a professional advisor to the board.

Item 6 - Duties and Responsibilities of Individual Board Members

Public libraries are given corporate status in the *Public Libraries Act*. Therefore the *Corporations Act* applies in determining the duties and liabilities of members of public library boards. Each member of the library board has responsibilities by virtue of being a director of a corporation. As a board, they have collective responsibility for oversight of library operations, and they are the ultimate decision-maker with fiduciary responsibility. The duty is a "fiduciary" duty because there is an obligation to act in the best interests of the corporation. Individually, directors have a duty of care and of loyalty, and an obligation to honesty and good faith. This includes all individual board members, whether they've been appointed as a citizen representative or a council representative. Individuals on a board do not act alone or on behalf of the board unless specifically given the authority by the board as a whole.

It is useful to review local documents such as the library's code of conduct or policy on duties and responsibilities of individual board members

Key points covered in this agenda item include:

- The duties and responsibilities of municipal councilors on the board are the same as those of other board members;
- Board members prepare for all board meetings and use meetings productively;

- Board members offer opinions on issues that are subject to board discussion and show respect for the opinions of others; and,
- Board members assume no authority to make decisions outside of board meetings.

Item 7 - Introduction to Library Services

The board's role has been described as one of setting direction and ensuring progress while the CEO makes program decisions and ensures that programs achieve desired outcomes for the community. While the board should not get involved in day-to-day program decision making, it must know if the library is successful in meeting its goals. To do this the library board needs to have an understanding of the library's services and programs.

There are several activities which could be undertaken to cover this item on the agenda:

- Review the library's current vision and mission statements;
- Describe the library's service and program priorities; and,
- Describe the way in which the library's official planning documents, such as the budget, support the mission and service priorities.
- Complete the profile for the library using the template in Appendix A (or similar template)

Key points to be included in this agenda item include:

- Services and programs are the vehicles for achieving the library's mission; and,
- Priorities for programs and services are identified in the board's plans and budget.

Item 8 - Library Board Development – Next Steps

Library board development is about raising the quality of the board's operations. The board orientation session begins the process of library board development. The process continues with ongoing training. The board should decide at this point to continue its learning at future board meetings and take advantage of outside training offered through library partners such as OLBA, SOLS and others.

Any items that remain in the "Parking Lot" should be reviewed, and plans made for follow-up actions. The presenter should thank everyone for their contribution to the session.

Key points covered in this agenda item:

- The work of the board includes board development
- The board needs to plan for ongoing training and development
- Everyone is thanked for their participation

Learning about your own library

The Library CEO and board chair are responsible for providing an orientation for all library trustees. New trustees need to understand the basics of the public library and the board's authority. The following is a list of information which could be provided to all trustees as part of their orientation.

Tour of the library building(s):

The new trustee should be given a tour of the main public library facility and should be introduced to staff members. Give the trustee a map of the library, a list of staff members, and any other public library handouts which are provided to the public. The tour should include details of each department (if there are separate areas) and its function in relation to the work of the entire library. If the library has a number of facilities, through the course of the first year, the trustees should tour as many of the facilities as possible. If possible, the board may wish to hold board meetings at various facilities.

Supporting Documentation:

Information Sheet for Library Trustees

Official Library Name	
Street address of main branch or administration office	
Telephone numbers	
Library CEO	
E-mail – CEO	
E-mail - general	
Library website	

Service:

Population served: _____ Number of households: _____

Name of service point/branch	Hours open per week	Accessible?
1.		
2.		

Holdings and collections:

Total number of volumes held in library system (English): _____

Total number of titles held in library system (English): _____

Total number of volumes held in library system (French): _____

Total number of titles held in library system (French): _____

Circulation:

Annual circulation: _____

Interlibrary loan:

Total number of items borrowed through interlibrary loan: _____

Total number of items lent through interlibrary loan: _____

Annual library visits:

Visits to the library (based on number of visits during 'typical week'): _____

Programs:

Annual program attendance: _____

Staffing:

Professional librarians: _____

Library technicians: _____

EXCEL graduates: _____

All other staff: _____

Total staff: _____

Volunteers: _____

Awards - Listing and short description of any awards won by the library / staff

Special grants - Received by library in past year

Community partnerships - Brief description of community partnerships and program description

Current library association memberships: