Library Trustee Job Description

"Since a public library belongs to its entire community, library boards have been created by law to act as citizen control or governing body of the library. Library trustees are public officials and servants of the public, and the powers delegated to library boards are a public trust." (Young, Virginia, The Library Trustee: A Practical Guide, ALA, Chicago, 1995: 10) The Library Board member must have a deep personal commitment to the library and the services it provides.

Public library boards have five primary roles.

1. **Advocate** for the library in the community and advocate for the community as a member of the library board. To be a library advocate is to work for the betterment of the library services for the community. Advocacy includes working to obtain adequate funding for the library; pursuing opportunities to meet and speak with community groups; getting to know the mayor and city council; making sure the community's needs and interests are paramount when making board decision.
2. **Plan** for the future of the library. Planning is one of the most important trusts that the community gives to the library board. Planning is deciding what is going to happen with library services over the next few years. It is taking charge of the library's future and creating it to be responsive to what the community needs.
3. **Monitor and evaluate** the overall effectiveness of the library. The community puts its trust in the library board to make sure the library is operating the way it should. For example, the library board is familiar with the library's budget – where the money is coming from and how it will be spent. The board monitors monthly financial reports and approves the bill so they can be paid. The board also helps determine whether the community is satisfied with the service received from the library.
4. **Set library policies.** The library board spends much of its time on policy issues – developing policies and monitoring the effectiveness of those policies. (Policy is carefully designed, broadly stated, written guideline for actions and decisions of the library.) Once adopted by the board, library staff carries out the policies on a day to day basis.
5. **Hire and evaluate the library director.** The board hires a qualified director to manage the day-to-day operations of the library and works with the director, carefully respecting each other's roles. The board also regularly evaluates the director to make sure the library operates well and in the best interest of those the library serves.

ADVOCATE:

- Help obtain adequate funding for the library. Work in partnership with the Library

Director and other fellow board members to arrive at a fair and workable budget each fiscal year.

- Attendance and regular participation at library board meetings. Work to establish a clear idea of how the library fits into the overall picture of the community.
- May attend council meetings in order to advocate for the library. This is most effective during budget time and other important moments in the library's mission.
- Advocate and defend intellectual freedom, an individual's right to any and all information. Firm support of the American Library Association's Freedom to Read Statement and the Library Bill of Rights.
- Support the library's role in making available a balanced representation of the community and the collection.

PLAN:

- Awareness of the Library Mission Statement and Long Range Goals.
- Monitoring and planning of rapid change, especially in the areas of technology.
- Plan and help implement goals and objectives for the future good of the public library.

MONITOR & EVALUATE:

- Monitor the bottom line effectiveness of the library. Micro-management is not part of the monitoring process.
- Maintain an ear to the community to help evaluate the effectiveness of library services.
- Attention to the annual budget and help in preparing, evaluating and implementing the chosen budgetary course of action.
- Review and assess monthly financial reports. Work towards feeling comfortable with the overall budget process and how it affects the library.
- Ask clear cut questions about the library finances. The Library Director and the Finance Director for the city of Sioux Center are responsible for preparing financial documents for the board's review.
- Support appropriate spending, a fair and adequate budget and a reasonable process during the course of budget discussions.

SET POLICIES:

- Begin with the Mission Statement.
- Observe, interpret and evaluate any and all supporting documents.
- Work with the Director on existing polices and help to create new policies when needed.

HIRE & EVALAUTE THE DIRECTOR:

- The Board must follow standard procedures when hiring or firing a Library Director.
- A well-defined Library Director job description must be made available.

- Determine the salary range of a Library Director based on other city/county government positions and pay ranges. Pay for the Library Director should be comparable with other city/county positions.
- State Certification of the Library Director must be addressed. Applicants must be certified when hired, or given two years to complete the certification process. There are six levels of certification according to State Standards, all based on education.
- Monitor and evaluate the Director's effectiveness in the following areas: effective partnership with the board, ability to work with library staff, carrying out the day-to-day functions of the library, working with city officials, budgetary processes, and State requirements.
- Formally evaluate the Library Director on an annual basis.

If you are interested in becoming a Library Board Member, please contact Director Becky Bilby at 722-2138 or click here to send her an email message.