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Section 3: Personnel Matters

3.1 – Determining if Your Librarian Needs a Professional Librarian’s Certificate. Obtaining a Professional Librarian’s Certificate

Employing a librarian with a Professional Librarian's Certificate is a requirement for the receipt of state aid in communities of 7,500 population and above. The body having charge of any library in the state supported in whole or in part by public funds (except a board of education) and serving 7,500 or more may require the certificate of persons already employed. Librarian Certification Regulation:

http://www.njstatelib.org/services_for_libraries/resources/library_law/librarian-certification-regulation/

Professional librarian’s certification for the State of New Jersey is issued by Thomas Edison State College. Certification was transferred from the N.J. Dept. of Education to Thomas Edison State College in 2004. See:

<http://www.tesc.edu/documents/NJStateLibraryCertificateApplication.pdf>.

3.2 – Recruiting and Selecting a New Director

One of the Board’s most important responsibilities is to hire a capable and competent library director.

The needs of your library and your community will determine who will be the best person to fill the position. Once you determine what you most need in your director, begin your search by gathering necessary information to conduct a legal and productive recruitment campaign.

Some guidelines to assist the board in hiring the director may be found on the New Jersey State Library’s website at:

http://www.njstatelib.org/services_for_libraries/consulting_services/library_trustees/hiring_and_evaluating_director/

1. Know the law.
Before recruiting and hiring the director, the board should learn about federal and state laws concerning Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action and the issues of confidentiality, public information and documentation as they apply to the hiring process. Ask your attorney to provide you with the necessary information, including a short presentation with time for questions.
2. Develop a process and timeline.
Determine what process your search will take. Will it be done by the Search Committee or the entire board? Develop a timeline for the hiring process, which could take several months. Who will be in charge of the library during the search if the current director is gone? What responsibilities do you expect the Acting Director to handle? What is a fair salary for the Acting Director?

3. Write a Job Description
Before recruitment begins, the board needs to determine the purpose of the director's job, duties, and what qualifications are required. For a sample library director's job description, go to www.njla.org.

4. Determine the salary range and benefits.

5. Develop a realistic budget for the recruitment and hiring process. Consider how much money is available to spend on:

The acting director's salary

Advertisements

Travel and related expenses for bringing in out-of-town applicants for final interviews

Interviewing expenses, such as for lunch with the board

Long distance telephone expenses for verifying applicants' employment history, background checks, education, and references

6. Establish a Search Committee with appropriate representation of board and community to meet established needs for the next director.
7. Establish review criteria.

Determine the process and criteria by which the applications will be initially reviewed, based on the requirements determined in the job description. Some of the basic criteria used to review and screen applications might include:

Inclusion of both resume and cover letter

Completed application form

Educational requirements are met, and verified by the designated committee member

Basic experience and reference requirements are met and verified.

8. Screen candidates and make recommendations for finalists to be interviewed.
9. Notify candidates and set up interviews.
10. Prepare structured questions to be asked of all candidates, to ensure consistent treatment.
11. Conduct the interviews.
12. Select the new director.
In addition to reaching a consensus on their first choice, trustees should also determine their second and third choices at this point, in case the selected candidate turns down the board's offer or agreement with the candidate about the terms of employment cannot be reached.
Prepare a written memorandum of agreement regarding the employment offer, which should be signed by both the library board president and the candidate.
13. Notify the staff and public of the appointment of the new director, as well as local

officials. News releases of the new director's appointment should be sent to appropriate media channels.

14. Monitor the probationary employment for new director.

Make several points in your advertising and recruiting efforts.

- ◆ Don't delay about searching for a new director even if the departing director is retiring and has given plenty of warning. A thorough search for a new director may take as many as three to six months. A leaderless staff will deteriorate. Consider hiring an interim director until a permanent director is identified.
- ◆ Base your ad on what you need. Don't expect recent graduates to have years of experience. Energy may well rank above experience, especially in small libraries, where future top library leaders often get their experience.
- ◆ Provide the name of the person accepting applications, including telephone number and email.
Include the name of the town.
- ◆ Be honest about the library, its budget, hours of operation, and especially current problems.
- ◆ Offer a competitive salary.
- ◆ Do not specify experience unless it's really relevant. Don't mention age or sex.
- ◆ Offer to provide further details in a summary sheet to be sent to those who express an interest. This will form the basis of a good interview.
- ◆ Decide on the major qualifications your library needs, and base the interview on those needs. If you are going into a building program, skills in that area may be the most important at the moment.
- ◆ Give the same interview to all those interviewed. The same facts and conditions need to be shared with each candidate. Then explore the extra capabilities the interviewee could bring to the job.
- ◆ Prepare staff for the new director's arrival. It's a good time to reinforce the policy that gives the director specific powers and responsibilities with which board and staff cannot tamper.
- ◆ Provide an introduction to the community – especially to its leaders – for the newcomer. You've stressed that much of the job is relations with the public and government, so start out right and show that you see the director in that role.
- ◆ Set goals and objectives soon after the new director begins the job. Some of these will begin with the interview for the person you hire. Explain that evaluation will be based on how well the director fulfills the job description and the objectives agreed upon. It's not fair to set up other rules later!
- ◆ Don't wait until a probationary period is over to begin constructive evaluation. If the director is getting into trouble, help; don't let him or her sink.

For more information on Hiring a New Director, visit

http://www.njstatelib.org/services_for_libraries/consulting_services/library_trustees/hiring_and_evaluating_director/

3.3 - Evaluating the Director

Evaluation of the library director is so important that it begins with the hiring process. As the position is defined and then discussed with the prospective director, evaluation checkpoints are built in. A full evaluation should be done annually, or even twice a year.

For example, if the director is being hired partly to initiate a building program, the director's performance in this role is subject to evaluation, as are the usual requirements of running the library.

Fairness to the employee dictates that expectations be clearly noted. The director should know on what basis he or she will be continued and rewarded.

But what of the director who is a long-term employee? Perhaps that director has never had a formal evaluation by the board, or the evaluation process has been casual. The problem is that a single episode, which does not please the board, can be weighted too heavily. A regular evaluation calls attention to well-performed duties as well as to areas in need of attention. The latter should be addressed when they occur and not held in waiting for a performance review.

Make sure that your evaluation process has a written component, including documentation of both positive aspects and areas for improvement of the director's performance. The documentation should be reviewed with the director by the Board's Personnel Committee or other designated body. The evaluation should be signed by the director and designated board official. Such documentation provides guidance to future boards and may forestall legal difficulties or prove helpful to the board in case of problems.

3.4 - Setting Goals and Objectives with the Director

The best method of evaluation for a new or long-term director is to set goals and objectives for the director. These should be specific to the library. The library director's goals and objectives should be key frameworks of the library's overall planning process.

A library board, which is analyzing and planning progress all the time, will know what it wants over the next year, and the director should be able to suggest what is possible to achieve.

The director and board may have multiple goals covering periods longer than a year. Set specific objectives to accomplish these goals and establish timetables for their completion.

The director will be able to report on achievements of the objectives when performance is being evaluated. This provides an opportunity for the board to look at its own aspirations for the library and to assess how well the director is carrying out the assignments developed under the goals.

For information on evaluating a library director, visit http://www.njstatelib.org/services_for_libraries/consulting_services/library_trustees/hiring_and_evaluating_director/

3.5 – Appropriate Measures of Director Performance

Directors can be judged in many ways, but quality of performance is clearly the best measure.

- ◆ Has the director managed the operation of the library so as to provide the intended services?
- ◆ Has the director managed the staff so that operations are friendly, efficient and cost-effective?
- ◆ Has the director been a leader in making the library an important service in the community?
- ◆ Has the director moved forward satisfactorily on achieving the goals and objectives outlined for the library and for the director?
- ◆ Has the director provided sufficient information to the board so that it can perform its duties?
- ◆ Has the director kept in touch with new trends in library service and relayed these to staff and board?
- ◆ Has the director, through activity in the community, enhanced the importance of the library?

These are among the questions boards might use in assessing the director's performance. This should be done in discussion with the director, who should know that evaluation is going on all the time, not just in an annual review.

The importance of sharing problems as they arise cannot be over-emphasized. Boards and directors must work in tandem with constant communication. There should be no surprises to the director or the board during the annual performance review. Review of progress and need for improvement should be continuous to keep performance reviews balanced and objective.

For a sample of a director evaluation form, visit

http://www.njstatelib.org/ldb_files/imported/Trustees/Library%20Director%20Performance%20Appraisal.pdf

3.6 - Handling a Complaint

Occasionally, the library director becomes involved in an incident, which the board must handle. All too often, there may be reaction to the incident.

The board should have a policy and procedures on handling personnel complaints by the public, just as it has on handling internal personnel problems. Then any board member approached by an irate member of the public can honestly state that there is a procedure to be followed and that discussion of the problem before thorough investigation would be unfair and unproductive. Following established policy and procedures should minimize reactive results and provide for greater consistency.

If the director is aware of a personnel grievance regarding his or her employment, s/he should promptly notify the board president and chair of the Personnel Committee, who should determine whether a meeting is needed and when to notify board members. The board's role is to find the facts, ascertaining what happened by interviewing those concerned. Have staff

members submit statements in writing, according to procedure. Make sure you follow your complaint and grievance procedures. The board should not act, or make public statements, until it has had an opportunity to confirm the facts. Premature decisions are hard to undo. Review all board discussion and proposed actions with your attorney.

3.7 - What to Do if the Director Just Isn't Working Out

The time may come, even in the first year of a relationship, when it's evident to one or both sides that a parting of the ways is necessary. Any board decision needs to be fair and impartial, to avoid the risk of litigation. Guard against snap judgments, such as decisions made on the basis of a single complaint, or action based on opinion rather than fact. The director, of course, can decide to resign at any time (even if there is an employment contract, it may not be enforceable). Whatever the reason, unless you're sure the problem can be worked out and can convince the director of this, it seldom works to ask a director to stay.

Why do boards and director diverge and part? The fault is usually shared. Effective communication between the board and the director is a shared responsibility. If possible, the board and the director should review what happened. It is vital to correct a situation so that the next director and the board do not repeat the same mistakes.

An evaluation of a director – as well as a self-evaluation of a board – should be based on how the library is doing. If there is satisfaction in the community, if the board receives praise for the library, if there is movement toward goals – then board and director can afford to work it out. If somehow the community impression of the library is that the library is not meeting its needs, then the director and board should probably part. The board should ask itself what it could do better next time and make changes accordingly to ensure a successful search and transition to a new director.

3.8 – The Best Way to Handle Relationships with the Director and Library Staff

Library trustees should not interfere with the day-to-day operations of the library. They should not give instructions to a staff member other than through the director. Nor should they do the job of librarians or staff.

In some instances, board members may volunteer at the library. In these cases, the roles of volunteers, and particularly board members as volunteers, need to be established with written volunteer guidelines to ensure that appropriate board and staff roles are followed.

Board members function as representatives of the public, making recommendations based on their knowledge of community needs and establishing policies so that the library functions efficiently. Board members need to know a great deal about how the library functions. It is natural for a well-informed board member to be concerned about the operation of the library. However, board members should not be involved in the day- to- day administration of the library. For more information on roles and responsibilities of boards and directors, visit <http://www.ala.org/united/sites/ala.org.united/files/content/trustees/orgtools/role.pdf>.

Relationships With The Library Director

The board hires a director with qualifications and experience necessary for the position of administering the library. It is part of the hiring and evaluation process for the board to know what the director does best and how the board can be helpful.

A good director shares problems with the board and seeks guidance on problem solving. A good board expects excellent performance and does everything it can to provide solid support and good working conditions.

It is especially important that the director tell the board what is possible to accomplish with the resources available. Boards naturally want the best, but need to understand costs in terms of funding, time and people. The director must assure that the board receives the information it needs to make timely decisions.

Relations With Staff

The library is an important asset of the community with a staff that works for community benefit through management, as represented by the board and director. The staff must accept and follow the leadership of the director, who provides professionalism and reflects the leadership of the board. The director must have the confidence of the board and be given authority to manage the library staff.

Boards should not confuse this administrative line by giving direct orders to the staff. It's all right to talk with staff members, remembering that, as a trustee, a board member is seen as somewhat different from an ordinary patron. Comments from a board member can be misconstrued. Board members should not circumvent the director's authority in regard to the daily operations of the library. As noted, if issues arise, proper channels for complaint should be followed to address problem areas. The board will not be able to hold the director accountable for staff performance if trustees get involved in staff management.

Boards might well discuss with the director what constitutes interference and what channels are appropriate for making suggestions. It is important to discuss this distinction with new board members during orientation programs for new trustees. (For more information on orientation see **For New Trustees** in Supplementary Documents.)

A good practice to prevent problems is to put the matter of trustee and director responsibilities on an agenda for discussion. Such a session might use the following generally accepted listing of divisions and commonalities of responsibilities.

3.9 – The Responsibilities of the Library Board and the Director

GOVERNANCE AND POLICY MAKING

The Board

Knows local, state, and federal laws which affect libraries.

Plays an active role in initiating and supporting beneficial library legislation.

Understands powers conferred upon trustees by N.J. library laws.

Develops a long-range plan for library.

Adopts by-laws and procedures for board operations.

Determines and adopts written policies to govern the operation, use, and programs of the library.

Establishes a written library materials selection policy reflecting community needs and the Library Bill of Rights, including a Freedom To Read statement. Defends policies upon challenge. Reads information provided and keeps abreast of current library trends.

Authorizes membership application for participation in the N.J. Library Network.

Attends state and national library association meetings and workshops when possible.

Joins appropriate organizations, such as NJLTA, regional trustee associations and ALTA to work for improved libraries. Attends meetings pertaining to the New Jersey Library Network, such as annual and regional trustee training.

The Library Director

Knows local, state and federal laws which affect libraries.

Plays an active role in initiating and supporting beneficial library legislation.

Understands powers conferred upon trustees by N.J. library laws.

Assists the board in developing a long range plan.

Administers the library within the framework of the library's plans, policies, and budget.

Recommends needed policies to board.

Provides examples and sources of information.

Interprets policies to staff and to the general public. Implements policies of the board. Provides board with recommendations and materials for study or background.

Keeps board informed of services, policies, and activities of the Network.

Joins and attends state and national library association meetings and workshops when possible.

Joins appropriate organizations working for improved libraries.

Attends meetings pertaining to the New Jersey Library Network.

Establishes a cooperative working relationship with officials of the local governing unit.

Submits an annual report to the governing body of the community served by the library, and to the N.J. State Library.

Attends all board and committee meetings, as assigned. Promptly carries out all special assignments.

Establishes a cooperative working relationship with officials of the local governing unit.

Prepares all needed library reports for the appropriate bodies.

Attends all board and committee meetings except those covered under the circumstances of the **Open Public Meetings Law** (for more information on the Open Public Meetings Law, go to N.J.S.A. 10:4)

Reports monthly to the board on current activities, financial status, and progress toward implementing the plan for the library.

PLANNING

The Board

Establishes a planning process. Studies and analyzes the community to determine its needs. Considers the strengths and the weakness of library service to better meet needs.

Determines goals and objectives for the library.

Sets priorities and decides on a course of action to implement the plan.

Evaluates the plan. Reviews goals and objectives at least annually and evaluates progress. Measures progress of the plan and revises as necessary.

The Library Director

Participates in the planning process. Assists the board in identifying the needs of the community.

Assists in the development of goals and objectives for the library.

Administers library to fulfill the goals, objectives and plans as adopted by the board; suggests revisions as needed.

PERSONNEL

The Board

Establishes personnel policies.

Develops personnel policies for staff selection.

Employs a competent and qualified library director.

Determines compensation, fringe benefits compensation, and working conditions for all employees, subject to federal, state, and local law.

Evaluates performance of director.

Establishes criteria for performance evaluation of the library director.

Establishes personnel policies that include in-service training and continuing educational opportunities for staff members.

Considers establishment of career ladders within the library, where feasible.

Provides a planned orientation program for new trustees and continuing educational and training opportunities for all trustees.

The Library Director

Hires and directs staff members in accordance with library personnel policies.

Provides information on fringe benefits and working conditions.

Evaluates performance of staff.

Works with the board to establish personnel policies that include in-service training and continuing educational opportunities for staff members.

Assists in orientation of new trustees, including introduction to library policies and procedures, departments and staff.

Encourages continuing educational opportunities for trustees and staff.

FINANCE

The Board

Knows the budget procedures of the local governing unit.

Works with the library director to formulate a budget to carry out the library's goals and objectives.

The Library Director

Knows the budget procedures of the local governing unit.

Prepares an annual budget in consultation with staff and board.

Provides a report of budget status and expenditures at each board meeting.

Presents, explains, and defends the budget to public officials and the general public.

Helps to secure necessary funds for staff and services.

Stays within the budget.
Explores ways of increasing the library's funding.

Reviews complete, accurate and current records on finances, personnel, and inventory.

Submits an annual report to the chief financial officer of the municipality and to the N. J. State Library.

Investigates means of cooperation with other libraries for effective use of funds and expansion of services.

Provides adequate insurance coverage for buildings, materials, personnel, and the general public.

Supplies facts and figures to the board to aid in interpreting the library's financial needs.

Works with the board to interpret budget and financial needs of the library to public officials and the general public.
Stays within the budget.
Explores ways of increasing the library's funding.

Maintains complete, accurate, and current records on finances, personnel, and inventory.

Prepares annual report for the board.

Investigates means of cooperation with other libraries for effective use of funds and expansion of services.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Board

Establishes, supports, and participates in a planned, on-going, marketing and public relations program in order to increase community awareness of the library and its services.

The Library Director

Helps to establish, support and participate in a planned, on-going marketing and public relations program in order to increase community awareness of the library and its services.

SUMMARY

A good board is one that:

1. Takes seriously its legal responsibility to provide the best possible library service to its community.
2. Initiates studies and analyses of the community, its needs and the ways in which the library can respond to those needs. This may include new or expanded relationships with other community agencies and with other library boards.
3. Is creative and innovative in serving community needs, including special outreach efforts to serve groups who are underserved.
4. Adopts goals and objectives, reviewing and revising them periodically and evaluating the library activities adopted to carry out the objectives.
5. Keeps its library facilities attractive, well maintained and available to all.
6. Faces financial problems directly, with the goal of quality service as its top priority, and works for increased tax support where necessary.
7. Works effectively as a board and with the library director.
8. Accepts responsibility for compensation of its staff, for personnel procedures, and for staff benefits that will enhance working conditions.
9. Participates actively in professional organizations such as the New Jersey Library Association (NJLA) and the New Jersey Library Trustee Association (NJLTA).

3.10 – The Effective Use of Volunteers

Many libraries in the United States have their origins in volunteer groups – from women's clubs to the creation of public facilities from private collections. The desire to help the library may be supported through volunteerism.

The use of volunteers should be carefully planned, beginning with determining the purpose of library volunteers. Some questions that may yield answers: Does the library have an adequate staff to provide needed services? Are there roles volunteers can fill that make a positive contribution to library services? Volunteers are not a substitute for the core of paid staff that is necessary to provide good library service. Since volunteers are not paid, the expectation should not be for them to work as substitutes for staff or on a regular schedule. They may or may not be available consistently. Maintaining dependable library service is very important if the community's needs are to be met.

A volunteer program should have its own goals and objectives, a plan, and a management system.

It is important that staff be fully involved in developing the concept of a volunteer program. Staff should be involved in the planning process to establish roles and to iron out difficulties, and to work toward the success of the volunteer program. If this is done, staff “resistance” to the program, if any, may be eliminated. Staff should discuss what gaps might be filled by volunteers.

Some examples of staff work, which might be done by volunteers, are:

- ◆ shelving books
- ◆ checking out and receiving books
- ◆ setting up displays and exhibits
- ◆ processing and repairing of materials
- ◆ greeting visitors and providing basic information
- ◆ contacting patrons to inform them of availability of requested materials
- ◆ maintaining depository collections in nursing homes and other sites
- ◆ delivering books to home-bound people

And, given talents and ability along appropriate lines:

- ◆ creating press releases or radio or TV spots, and delivering them to editors and program staff during friendly visits
- ◆ planning and executing programs in the library, including story hours and demonstrations
- ◆ speaking to community organizations about the library
- ◆ developing major events such as art fairs, book sales and special observances
- ◆ helping to organize advisory groups to talk with librarians about special collections
- ◆ assisting to convey planned messages to groups and individuals about library events or special interests
- ◆ training to be a stand-in for staff members who want to attend a workshop
- ◆ undertaking special projects for which the staff does not have time, such as oral history, newspaper clipping, developing mailing lists, showing videos, and arranging for discussion groups
- ◆ data entry

3.11 – *The Organization of Volunteers*

Ideally, a volunteer program in a library should have a staff member in charge. Often, the program is organized and operated by a volunteer, much in the manner of such groups in hospitals, nursing homes and agencies.

Assuming a library of modest size, these are the elements of a volunteer program operation:

- ◆ A coordinator of volunteers, preferably hired, but probably a volunteer who likes to manage, has good skills in working with people, is reliable, and can give planned time
- ◆ An office or location with desk, file, telephone and computer, as well as access to a private interview area
- ◆ A list of jobs which volunteers may be invited to do, together with an estimate of the time requirement and the level of skill required
- ◆ An interview process which results in placing volunteers in the most suitable jobs

- ◆ A training program for volunteers covering job requirements, techniques and the library's functions and purposes
- ◆ A manual of operations setting policies for volunteers and including job descriptions and regulations
- ◆ A reward system coupled with evaluation. Rewards may be as simple as hours-earned mentioned in the library bulletin or local press; they should exist to say thanks to the volunteer
- ◆ A recruitment system that makes it possible for new people to join the volunteer corps
- ◆ A method for dismissing a volunteer who does not perform
- ◆ Funds and an accounting system to cover out-of-pocket expenses for volunteers who do more than come to the library

3.12 - Friends of the Library Groups

Friends of Libraries organizations comprise a special group of volunteers, varying in function from library to library. A library board's perception of the Friends group can vary greatly from community to community.

In order to develop a positive relationship between the board and the Friends, each group needs to understand the other's role and mission. The Friends should have bylaws and procedures to guide their activities and to establish their role. Likewise, the library board with a Friends group would do well to define its role through its own policy manual. The library staff should also understand the Friends' roles and any limits pertaining to Friends' requests of library personnel and resources.

Successful Friends groups find that having a liaison to the library board is helpful. Boards of trustees often designate a board member to serve as a liaison to the Friend's Board. The function of a liaison is to know what is going on, what directions are being pursued, and what aid is needed. Frequent communication between the groups is a key ingredient towards developing trust, a positive relationship, and for both organizations to work to improve the library.

The majority of Friends organizations are healthy adjuncts to a library. Most concentrate on raising funds through special projects and on serving as library advocates in the community. They are often involved in lobbying for the library and for library legislation. Some members do aspire to trusteeship. Former board members may gravitate to the Friends to continue their interest in and service to the library.

Making Friends successful, however, depends on making the group a real organization. The organization may choose to affiliate with a state or national unit. The group should be structured to include these elements in a set of bylaws:

- ◆ purpose of the organization
- ◆ legal basis (consult an attorney on meeting state and national requirements as a not-for-profit group, including tax status)
- ◆ structure: officers, outlining duties and terms, election of officers and board members, committee structure, meetings schedule and normal agenda, designation of the annual meeting, handling of funds, relationship to the library and the library board.
- ◆ disposition of funds

- ◆ membership requirements and dues.

Boards should accept the limitations Friends set for their group. Some groups will put on one fund-raiser a year; others are active in seeking donations year-round. The most successful groups plan ahead and guarantee to do certain tasks during the year. Some groups mix volunteerism with fundraising activities as a way to support the library.

Friends supplement the work of the board as well as provide a link to the community. Boards can contribute to harmonious relations by recognizing the Friends, asking for help in planning mutually beneficial activities and giving support to the concept of a community group willing to work to benefit the library.

For more information on Friends of Library groups and board and Friends relationships, see <http://www.ala.org/united/> (United for Libraries) or http://www.njstatelib.org/services_for_libraries/consulting_services/library_trustees/friends_of_library/