

Responsibilities of the Berkeley Public Library Board of Library Trustees

"There is not such a cradle of democracy upon the earth as the Free Public Library, this republic of letters, where neither rank, office, nor wealth receives the slightest consideration." – Andrew Carnegie

Overview

The Berkeley Public Library Board of Trustees provides a liaison between the general public and the library. The Library Board has the legal authority and responsibility to see that the library is well-managed, and that it operates in accordance with the Berkeley City Charter (Article VII, Section 30) as well as with policies established by the Board itself.

Legal Authorities and Responsibilities

Appointment of the Library Director: Trustees select and appoint the Director of the Library. They delegate to the Director the authority needed to ensure effective planning and managing of the day-to-day operations.

Policy formulation: The Director and appropriate staff assist the Trustees in developing policies to ensure that the organization is sound and can respond to the needs of the public. This includes determining fines and fees, setting or changing hours of service, approving and affirming principles used to guide collection development, and making final decisions regarding personnel actions involving grievances or the Skelly process.

Planning and Budget Review: The Trustees are involved in both short- and long-range planning; they are the managing agents of the Library Fund and are participants in the annual budget review and approval process.

Role as liaison between the general public and the Library

It is the responsibility of the Library Board to represent the Berkeley community to the library by mixing with many segments and interests in the community and attending meetings of other groups; to serve as library advocates, bringing library awareness to the citizens; to explain the library and its usefulness to individuals, groups and to the political structure; to respond to questions and comments positively, accurately, and convincingly; to organize support for the library, its plans, its programs, and its growth.

General Qualifications

- Demonstrated interest in and enthusiasm for the library (preferably a regular library user)
- Readiness to devote time and effort
- An open mind coupled with respect for the opinion of others and, a steadfast belief in intellectual freedom and privacy.
- Ability to plan creatively.
- Courage to withstand pressures and resist influences based on prejudice
- Ability to analyze the business and administrative procedures, and to be part of the accountability process to the public and provide oversight.
- Possession of common sense
- Reflects the diversity of the Berkeley community. Experience with books and libraries
- Willing and able to work with management, staff and the union.

Practical background and/or direct experience in one or more of these areas is desirable:

- Involvement in community organizations
- An understanding of local government operations, of public boards, and commissions
- An interest in long-range planning
- Personal experience in one or more of these areas:
 - Education
 - Architecture/Construction Accounting/Finance Business
 - Personnel management Technology Law/Government
 - Humanities
 - The Arts
- Availability and openness to the public