

Financial Responsibilities of the Board

Public library trustees are legally responsible for securing and auditing library finances. Trustees set the priorities for the expenditure of these funds through strategic planning, priority setting and budget development, all in consultation with their chief executive officer, the library director.

The financial responsibilities of the Board are to:

- Have knowledge of the library's financial base and funding agencies;
- Be aware of supplementary sources of revenue;
- Understand the financial needs of library operations;
- Acquire funds needed for growth and expansion;
- Understand the legal regulations and reporting requirements for library funding;
- Reviewing and formally adopt the budget;
- Present the budget to funding authorities;
- Authorize expenditures within the budget;
- Act in an open and transparent manner at all times;
- Ensure appropriate auditing of revenue and expenditures.

There will be some variance from Board to Board depending on roles and relationships and different governance models.

Regardless of governance model, however, each trustee requires basic competency in reading and understanding financial statements. Training should be provided each year for new and continuing trustees by the director, Library or municipal financial officer, Board member with particular expertise or external consultant.

Although mentioned elsewhere, it bears repeating here that the Board will have in place appropriate policies and procedures for budget development and presentation, monitoring and auditing of revenue and expenditures and fiscal oversight. The emphasis here is on policy to ensure compliance and oversight, not on day-to-day, or month-to-month, budget control and review.