



# The City of Kawartha Lakes Public Library

Policy Number: LIB2019-19

<b>Policy Name:</b> <b>LIBRARY BOARD MEMBERS – CODE OF CONDUCT</b>
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Developed By:	Linda Kent, Chief Librarian & CEO	Date:	07 April 2005
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## **POLICY STATEMENT AND RATIONALE:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a statement of philosophy and identify key objectives respecting a code of conduct and executive limitations for members of the Library Board.

## **SCOPE:**

This policy shall apply to all members of the City of Kawartha Lakes Public Library Board.

## **DEFINITIONS:**

In reading and interpreting this policy, the following definitions shall apply;

“Board” means the City of Kawartha Lakes Public Library Board;

“Board member” means a member of the City of Kawartha Lakes Public Library Board;

“CEO” means the Chief Executive Officer of the City of Kawartha Lakes Public Library;

“City” means the Corporation of the City of Kawartha Lakes;

“conflict of interest” means the definitions set out in the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter M50 and its amendments;

“Library” means the City of Kawartha Lakes Public Library.

“Library Board” means the City of Kawartha Lakes Public Library Board.

“staff” means a staff person who works for the City of Kawartha Lakes Public Library.

## **POLICY, PROCEDURE AND IMPLEMENTATION:**

### **1.0 Responsibility**

1.1.1 Responsibility for the implementation of this policy will lie with the Chair of the Library Board.

## **2.0 General Code of Conduct**

The Board commits itself and its members to ethical, businesslike, and lawful conduct, including proper use of authority and appropriate decorum when acting as Board members.

2.1 Board members will represent the interests of the citizens of the entire City of Kawartha Lakes. This accountability to the whole City supersedes:

- (a) Any conflicting loyalty a member may have to other advocacy or interest groups,
- (b) Loyalty based upon membership on other councils or boards,
- (c) Conflicts based upon the personal interest of any Board member, or
- (d) Conflicts based upon the member's election from a ward of the City.

2.2 Board members may not attempt to exercise individual authority over the organization:

- (a) Individual Board member interaction with the CEO or with staff must recognize the lack of authority vested in individuals except when explicitly authorized by the Board, and
- (b) Individual Board members interaction with the public, press, or other entities must recognize the same limitation and the inability of any Board member to speak for the Board except to repeat explicitly stated Board decisions. Individual board members may express their own opinions as long as it is understood that they are not speaking on behalf of the Board.

## **3.0 Board member's Covenants**

3.1 In order to build efficient and effective relationships, Board members commit to communications that build mutual expectations and trust. Accordingly all Board members covenant, as follows, to:

- (a) Exercise honesty in all communications.
- (b) Demonstrate respect for each other's opinions.
- (c) Focus on issues, not personalities.
- (d) Build and practice trust.
- (e) Maintain focus on shared goals.
- (f) Communicate in a timely manner.
- (g) Respect majority decisions of the Board.
- (h) Withhold judgement on issues until fully informed and discussed.
- (i) Seek to understand and be understood.
- (j) User executive sessions appropriately and judiciously.

- (k) Maintain confidentiality.
- (l) Openly share personal concerns, issues and agendas.
- (m) Assume a non-defensive posture, taking the initiative to communicate and ask questions for clarification.
- (n) Share information and knowledge which constructively contributes to Board work.
- (o) Give direction as the whole, not as individuals.
- (p) Make every reasonable effort to protect the integrity and promote the positive image of the Library, the Library Board and each other.

3.2 Library Board members will not:

- (a) Intentionally embarrass each other or the Library.
- (b) Intentionally mislead or misinform each other.
- (c) Maintain hidden agendas.

#### **4.0 Commitment to “One Voice”**

4.1 The citizens of the City of Kawartha Lakes are represented by the Library Board acting as a body. Consequently, the City of Kawartha Lakes Public Library is answerable to the Library Board as a body, not to individuals Board members. The Library Board fails to be accountable the public if it allows any breach in this principle. Therefore, individual Board members are committed to proper use of their authority and decorum consistent with maintaining the integrity and discipline of Library Board leadership. Accordingly, Board members will:

- (a) Respect Board decisions.
  - (i) Regardless of individual dissent, once the Board has made a decision, each Board member will respect the decision of the Board.
  - (ii) Library Board decisions are only those that have been voted upon or have been reached at an official Board meeting. These will be written as policies, or in the case of short-term projects or processes will be reflected in the minutes of the meeting. Comments by individual Board members, even if they are not challenged, will not reflect a Board decision.
  - (iii) Although all members are at liberty to register differences of opinion on Board issues at the Board level as passionately as desired, individual members may not direct their differences of opinion in a manner which would create polarization or undermine a decision of the Board majority.
  - (iv) Members will not individually render judgements on CEO or staff performance apart from compliance with Board policies as monitored by the Board as a body.

4.2 Make no attempt to exercise authority over the Library except through setting and following explicitly written Board policies.

- (a) While the Board expects individual members to be given common courtesy, it does not require the CEO and staff to heed any individual member's opinions or instructions. Individual members' interactions with the CEO or staff must recognize that individual members have no authority over staff and no authority to insert themselves into staff operations except when explicitly authorized by the Board through the CEO.
  - (i) No Board member can place himself or herself between staff members in their disputes or negotiations.
  - (ii) Any information requested by a Board member of library personnel must be brought to the Library Board for approval.
  - (iii) Nothing contained in Section 4.2(a) of this policy is intended to restrict or discourage normal and open communication between the governing Board, staff and community.
  - (iv) Board members are encouraged to visit the Branch libraries in our system and as a courtesy should identify themselves as Board Members to Branch Staff.
- 4.3 Respect and never violate the confidentiality of library board deliberations and decisions made in camera. This means that no information, however a member may feel about it, will be shared with any person not on the Library Board.
- 4.4 Focus on what needs to be accomplished at the Board table (i.e. policy development, monitoring adherence to policies, major issues, etc.)
  - (a) If issues are raised by community members, staff or Board members about which the Board already has a policy, the Chair or CEO will state the policy. Discussion will center on whether the concerns justify needed changes to the policy or whether compliance monitoring of the policy is needed.
  - (b) The CEO will keep a list of potential issues for policy discussion as they arise so that the Board may discuss issues in the context of policy making, at an appropriate time, with all necessary information.
  - (c) Responsibilities delegated to the Chair or to any Board members will be performed and reported to the Board on a through and timely basis.
- 4.5 Keep personal concerns and differences with other Board members from impacting the functioning of the Board.

**5.0 Conflict of Interest**

- 5.1 The Board shall abide by the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act R.S., c. 299, s. 1
- 5.2 A Board member who has a personal or private interest in a matter proposed or pending before the Board shall disclose such interest to the Board, shall not be present during the Board's deliberations on the matter, will not vote on it, and shall not attempt to influence the decisions of other Board members.

**6.0 Disqualification of Board Member**

- 6.1 The Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter P.44, sets out criteria for the disqualification of library board members. A Board member who meets any of the criteria for disqualification as set out in the Act, and its amendments, shall inform the Chair immediately for their failure to meet the requirements for board membership.

## **7.0 Process for Addressing Violations**

- 7.1 The Board and its members are committed to faithful compliance with the provisions of the Board's policies. In the event of a Board member's violation of policy, the Board will promptly seek remedy by the following processes, as needed.

- (a) Conversation in a private setting between the Board member in question and the Board Chair,
- (b) Discussion in a work session between the Board member in question and the full Board.
- (c) Public censure of the Board member in question.

## **8.0 Gifts and Honoraria**

- 8.1 Members of the Board are not to accept or provide any gift or benefit where it may be, or perceived to be, in exchange for favour or influence.

Exceptions:

- (a) Small Christmas gifts (cards or edibles, such as chocolates or cookies)
  - (b) Advertising materials (calendars, scratch pads, disposable pens, t-shirts)
  - (c) Any hospitality or gift that has monetary value under \$100
- 8.2 Board members may not participate in any Library contest open to members of the public. Even in the case where a Board member may be considered to be participating as a customer (i.e. attending an adult program with a door prize), they are still not eligible to participate in the contest component of the program.
- 8.3 Immediate family members of board members may only participate in Library contests where the winners are chosen randomly.
- 8.4 Board Members who receive cash honoraria from individuals or organizations for participation in events as a Library Board member will turn the honoraria over to the Library.