

trustee tale

Newsletter for Public Library Trustees

An Overview of Library System Membership Requirements

By Mark Arend, Assistant Director,
Winnefox Library System

In his *Trustee Responsibilities from the System Point of View* article in the June 2010 issue of *Trustee Tale* Rick Krumwiede mentioned system membership requirements. These are not particularly complex but trustees should be aware of them.

When the Wisconsin Legislature passed the law providing for the establishment and funding of library systems they built in a partnership between the state and local governments. In order to receive services from the state-funded library systems local libraries must meet certain qualifications.

The membership requirements for public libraries are listed in Section 43.15(4)(c) of Wisconsin Statutes and are summarized here:

- Your library must be established and operated according to the requirements of Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 43. Among other things, Chapter 43 requires that a properly appointed library board control the library building, expenditures, and policies; hires and supervises the library director; and determines of the duties and compensation of all library staff.
- Your county must belong to the library system and must meet the system membership requirements for counties (see below).
- Your municipal governing body (or county board for a county library) must approve a resolution authorizing your library to participate in the library system.
- Your library board must approve an agreement with the library system to participate in the system and its activities, participate in interlibrary loan of materials with other system libraries, and provide to all residents of the system the same services, on the same terms, that are provided to local residents.
- Each year, your municipality (or county for a county library) must provide funding to your library at a level not lower than the average of the previous three years.



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- You must employ a library director with the appropriate certification. The director must be present in the library during library open hours at least 10 hours per week.
- If the library was established before June 3, 2006 the library must be open to the public an average of at least 20 hours per week or the number of hours each week that the library was open to the public in 2005, whichever is fewer. If the library was established after that date it must be open an average of at least 20 hours per week.
- The library must annually spend at least \$2,500 on library materials.

There are also system membership requirements for counties, which are listed in Section 43.15(4)(b) of Wisconsin Statutes and are summarized here:

- The county must adopt and maintain a plan of library service. Requirements for the plan are specified in section 43.11. The plan must be approved by the Department of Public Instruction, Division for Libraries, Technology, and Community Learning.
- The county must annually provide financial support for libraries at a level not lower than the average of the previous three years.
- The county must have a written agreement with the library system to participate in the system and its activities and to furnish library services to residents of those municipalities in the county not maintaining a public library.

If a library or a county fails to meet one of these requirements the Department of Public Instruction will require the system to develop a plan to bring the library or county into compliance with these requirements. Failure by the library or county do so may result in system services being reduced or withheld from the library or county. If a system should fail to take action when a member library or county is out of compliance, the system's state aid can be reduced by the Department of Public Instruction.



Election Year Challenge: 100 Contacts with New Officials

The Wisconsin Library Association has issued a two-part challenge to library supporters around the state: make sure Governor-elect Scott Walker and U.S. Senator-elect Ron Johnson receive at least 100 letters of congratulations from library workers and supporters around the state. In addition, every library supporter represented by a freshman state legislator is urged to make contact via a congratulatory letter. All elected officials need to hear about the importance of your local library.



You can find more information, including a list of new legislators with contact information, at:

<http://wlaweb.blogspot.com/2010/11/election-year-challenge-100-contacts.html>

FAQ

How many board members constitute a quorum of the board?

Wisconsin Statutes Section 43.54(1)(e) specifies that a majority of the board constitutes a quorum. However, it goes on to say that the board may “by regulation” specify that three or more members may constitute a quorum.

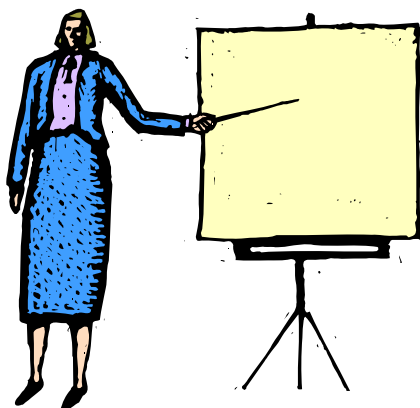


If the board chooses to do this it should be done by a bylaw change.

Does your library director have these skills?

Participates

Library leaders belong “at the table” with other local government decisionmakers, involved in overall planning for community betterment and service provision.



Shares your mission

Libraries and other service providers should know and share the strategic mission of your local government. They should find areas of commonality and ways to share resources and efforts with other departments.

Builds partnerships

Partnerships with public agencies, nonprofits, and the private sector strengthen programs. Effective partnerships require time and effort to establish, but they are worth the effort if they support the vision of the community.

Appreciates diversity

Differing cultural norms (organizational and community norms, for example) should be recognized, understood, and respected; and adjustments should be made as needed in program planning and execution. Flexibility and adaptability are key characteristics, needed by all involved in joint ventures.

Communicates

Communicating with partners, stakeholders, and the larger community is important to grow and nurture partnerships.

Fosters champions

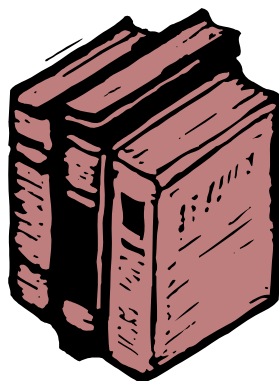
Champions and advocates are important to make programs successful and sustainable. Library champions have a clear understanding of library services and the role the library plays in the quality of life of a community. They can contribute support in any number of ways, including time, funds, influence, services, goods, and related items.



Embraces innovation

Reinforcing the library’s transformational nature and having it viewed as a great place to help change people’s lives is critical during tough budget times and when local government must be constantly changing how it does business. The library should be an engine for innovation in a community.

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2011 Library Legislation Day

Library Legislation Day in Madison is scheduled for **Tuesday, February 22** at the Madison Concourse Hotel.

LLD is an excellent opportunity to talk with legislators directly and encourage their support for programs that improve library services within the state.

Registration is easy; the Wisconsin Library Association arranges for appointments with legislators. We encourage anyone who can to attend.

You can find more information at: <http://www.wla.lib.wi.us/legis/day/index.htm>

Have questions?

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home system.

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