



Public Library Advisory Board Handbook

2012



Texas
State Library
and Archives
Commission

Advisory Board Bylaws

Advisory board bylaws are required for board organization and business. As a public entity, the board must design, approve, maintain and consistently review bylaws as well as “register” bylaws according to the processes established by the governing entity.

Library boards must adopt bylaws and guidelines or rules and regulations and policies to conduct

business such as public meetings, communication, advocacy, public relations, recordkeeping, roles and responsibilities, and relationships. Bylaws for public library advisory boards should be brief and are typically standard board operating guidelines. However, due to the variety of umbrella institutions for public libraries (cities/counties with varying populations and structures, etc.), it is not always easy to provide an example of perfect bylaws.

Some Critical Elements of Bylaws

- Umbrella organization authorization and the specific, formal identification of the advisory board
- Board power and influence and roles and responsibilities specifically as an *advisory entity*
 - Applicable ordinances
 - Advisory parameters as to what and to whom
 - Any relevant policies
 - Role in planning and guidance of operations
 - Role in interpreting policies as appropriate
 - Role in development of library funding
- How board members are selected
- Member terms, roles and responsibilities, power, and duties
- Board organization, such as officers and officer roles and responsibilities and how bylaws are managed
- Board workgroups, such as committees and committee duties or roles and responsibilities
- Board relationship to the library director
- How the board conducts business (meeting location; time, and frequency; quorum, any financial dealings)
- What guides board business, such as parliamentary authority, including calling and holding regular and special meetings, posting agendas, posting minutes
- Audience participation (comments, hearings, and general communication) in public meetings with relevant codes

- An outline of the order of business at meetings, such as voting; membership meeting requirements; attendance expectations; member sanctions; communication rules for board business meetings and specifically:
 - Call to order
 - Adoption/amendment to agenda
 - Roll call
 - Approval of minutes
 - Correspondence and communications
 - Report of library director
 - Committees reports (standing, ad hoc)
 - Unfinished business
 - New business
 - Adjournment
- Reporting board business in general and specific to the library and staff (minutes, annual reports, and other board communication)
- Board member behavior, such as ethical behavior, roles and responsibilities for communication and public relations

Sample board bylaws can be found on the web in a number of locations. Bylaws posted on the Internet should be vetted to ensure they are current, they apply to advisory rather than

governing boards, and, for the best match to a library's needs, should be assessed as to the size and type of library they represent.

A General Outline for Advisory Board Bylaws

ARTICLE I

NAME

As authorized by the (City, county, entity) Charter, xxxx of _____, and xxxx Ordinance No. _____. This body shall be known as the _____ Public Library Board. *(Often the word "advisory" is inserted in the title to clarify roles and responsibilities.)*

ARTICLE II

MEETINGS

Section 1.

The regular meeting of the library board shall be held at a time designated by the board in the library or such other place the board may determine.

Section 2.

Special meetings may be called by the chair or at the call of any two members of the board, provided that notice thereof be given to all board members and the library director.

Section 3.

A simple majority of the members shall constitute a quorum at all meetings of the board. A meeting may be held without a quorum but is identified as such in minutes and board communiqués.

Section 4.

All questions presented for a vote of the library board shall be decided by a simple majority of the quorum. *(The vote may or may not include the vote of the chair.)*

Section 5.

Any member of the board who misses three consecutive meetings without good cause shall be deemed to have resigned, and the board will recommend to xxxx that a replacement be appointed for the balance of the unexpired term. *(The board should determine—in consultation with the director if board members appointed to fill out terms are then eligible for appointment to the board given term limits.)*

Section 6.

Board business should be conducted according to parliamentary procedure or rules of order. The process should be chosen by the board and the latest edition of the rules should be used to conduct business in all business meetings and board forums. (*Boards should work within the xxxx structure to determine if specific parliamentary processes are required or if they may choose another.*) Processes to choose from include *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (latest edition)* or *Sturgis Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (latest edition)*.

ARTICLE III

OFFICERS

Section 1.

The officers of the board shall be a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and a secretary.

Section 2.

Officers shall be elected and take office at the first regular meeting after new board members have been appointed and sworn in.

Section 3.

Vacancies in office shall be handled as follows:

- (a) In the event of resignation or incapacity of the chair, the vice-chair shall become the chair for the unexpired portion of the term.
- (b) Vacancies of officers other than the chair shall be filled for the unexpired term by special election.

Section 4.

Duties of the officers shall be as follows:

- (a) Chair:
 - (i) Preside at all meetings.
 - (ii) Represent the library board at public functions of the xxxx (city, etc.) and at events such as special library events, local, state, or national advocacy activities for the library or for local, state, or national association activities.
 - (iii) Appoint standing, special, or ad hoc committees.
 - (iv) Assist library director in establishing the agenda for each meeting. Agenda items requested by any board member will be included.
 - (v) Liaison with the governing authority regarding library issues.

(b) Vice-chair:

- (i) Assist the chair in directing the affairs of the board and act in the chair's absence.
- (ii) Serve as chair of ad hoc or special committees or projects such as chair of an advocacy initiative.

(c) Secretary:

- (i) Be responsible for the accuracy and posting of the minutes of the board meeting and bring any corrections to the attention of the board at its next meeting. The secretary shall sign the approved minutes and complete recordkeeping activities required by xxxxx.

ARTICLE IV

COMMITTEES

Section 1.

Committees may be appointed for completing regular business of the board and/or special purposes by the chair and by special request from the library director or the governing authority. Committees, following requests, are formed with the consent of the majority of the board. All committees will have at least one library board member serving on them. Standing committees are typically formed annually and reviewed for continuation annually. Ad hoc or special committees are automatically dissolved upon completion of the activity or project.

ARTICLE V

LIBRARIAN

Section 1.

The library director serves as an ex-officio member of the board.

ARTICLE VI

POWERS AND DUTIES OF BOARD MEMBERS

Section 1.

Library board members provide opinion, support, and expertise as needed, but do not have governing authority. Board members shall:

- (a) Abide by applicable ordinances of the xxxxx _____.
- (b) Act in an advisory capacity of the xxxxx (city council, city manager, county official, library director, etc.).

- (c) Review existing policies and recommend new ones to govern the operation and program of the library.
- (d) Assist in strategic planning.
- (e) Provide opinion and guidance, as appropriate, for special issues to include, but not be limited to, new facilities, the expansion of existing library facilities, and the performance evaluation of the Library Director.
- (f) Provide opinion and guidance, as appropriate, for new library services.
- (g) Assist in interpreting the policies and functions of the library to the public.
- (h) Encourage in every possible way the development and advancement of the public library at local, regional, state, and national levels.
- (i) Participate in advocacy initiatives including, but not limited to, local issues, including funding issues and requests, state advocacy activities, and federal advocacy initiatives.

ARTICLE VII

AMENDMENTS

Section 1.

These bylaws may be amended by a majority vote at any regular meeting, provided all members have been notified of the proposed amendments at least xxxxx days prior to such meeting. Such amendment would then be subject to approval by xxxxx.