

**Northern Saguache County Library District  
Board of Trustees**

**Pocket Handbook**

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# TRUSTEE BASICS

## THE TRUSTEE IN THE COMMUNITY

Library trustees play an important role in shaping the public image of the library. They are among the library's most influential representatives in the community. The effective trustee should:

- Be able to articulate the library's mission
- Keep the lines of communication open between the trustees, the director, the community, and local government officials
- Maintain a positive relationship with the Friends of the Library and Library Foundation
- Understand community needs, library capabilities, and the necessity to plan carefully for future library services
- Never miss an opportunity to build goodwill for the library
- Understand the social, legal and political context in which the library exists
- Participate in local and statewide advocacy, stressing the importance of public libraries in today's information-rich society

## TYPES OF BOARDS

In Colorado, there are two types of library boards of trustees: governing and advisory.

The Northern Saguache County Library District is an independent taxing district and has an appointed, **governing** library board. Governing boards have legal and fiduciary responsibility for the control and management of the library. In general, the board:

- Has fiscal and legal responsibility for the control and management of the library
- Has authority to make policy
- Hires/fires the library director
- Has all the powers enumerated in Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS) 24-90-109

- Has responsibility for submitting the Public Library Annual Report to the State Library each year, and meeting State Library Standards

## **POLICY GOVERNANCE**

The board provides the means for the district to operate through financial control and by setting performance expectations through policies and plans. The board sets the standards and goals they want the district to meet for the good of the taxpayer.

Their employee, the director, is in charge of the ways those standards and goals are met. She employs and directs all other staff, makes choices about how to spend money appropriated in the budget, oversees the physical facility and creates and administers procedures for the daily operation of the district.

### **Role of the Board**

- **POLICY:** The board develops and adopts policies for the library, which are written statements designed to guide decisions at all level
- **STRATEGIC PLAN:** The board prepares a long range plan for the future of the library based on the mission statement
- **FINANCIAL PLAN:** The board secures adequate funding and practices responsible fiscal management of the public money
- **FISCAL OVERSIGHT:** The board approves the annual budget which sets the stage for the operation of the library
- **NETWORKING:** Board members build relationships in the community with other leaders, and show the importance of being a library lover through their visibility in the community
- **ADVOCATES:** The board promotes library services and supports library issues on the local, state and national levels
- **MARKETING:** The board carries out the mission statement of the library by promoting programs, services and future plans in the community
- **BOARD MEETINGS:** Board members prepare for, attend, and participate in all board meetings, ready to discuss the issues on the agenda
- **DIRECTOR RELATIONSHIP:** The board employs a library director,

empowers her to manage the day-to-day operation of the library, and evaluates the director's performance

## Role of the Director

- **ADMINISTRATION:** The director hires and supervises all staff and services
- **POLICY:** The director advises the board on policies to handle specific library issues
- **PROCEDURES:** The director determines what is actually done to fulfill the intent of the Board's policies
- **STRATEGIC PLAN:** The director coordinates the planning process, and administers annual objectives
- **FINANCE:** The director drafts the annual budget and makes recommendations to the Trustees for approval
- **NETWORKING:** The director participates in community events and networks for the benefit of the library
- **MARKETING:** The director oversees the library's public relations and marketing plans
- **BOARD MEETINGS:** The director provides a board packet with explanations of agenda items to prepare the Trustees for decision making

## GOLDEN RULES FOR TRUSTEES

- Govern, don't manage. Leave the actual management of the library to the library director
- Listen to the citizens you serve
- Make your position on issues clear, vote your conscience, and agree to support majority decisions, even if they differ from your opinion
- Observe ethical standards with absolute truth, integrity, and honor, and disqualify yourself immediately whenever the appearance of a conflict of interest exists
- Annually the board of trustees should individually and collectively evaluate their performance and adopt a plan of action to enhance future performance
- Participate in fundraising efforts

- Keep an open mind... and a sense of humor

Statewide peer support, advocacy help, and information about library boards and trustees are available at the [Colorado Library Association \(CAL\) Trustees and Friends Division](#).

## BY- LAWS

Trustee by-laws provide a road map to the board's responsibilities and a structure for board operations. They include terms of office, election of officers, quorum attendance at meetings, voting, and govern other aspects of the board's internal affairs.

## SUNSHINE LAW

In accordance with the state's Sunshine Law, (CRS 24-6-402) and as a matter of ethical governance, all board meetings are open to the public. When three or more members discuss board matters, a public record must be kept. Always speak as though the world were listening.

## COLORADO LIBRARY LAWS

Colorado Library Law (CRS 24-90-101 *et seq*) provides a legal framework for library operations and responsibilities. Staff, governing boards, and attorneys who work with libraries should be familiar with the information contained on these pages: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/LibraryLaw/Contents.htm>

The full text of Colorado Library Law is found in the Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS). The COLORADO LAW SECTION of this guidebook provides relevant highlights.

## COLORADO PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS

The Standards provide information to help libraries plan and evaluate their services and meet the needs of their users in the most effective way their resources will allow. The standards promote quality library service to all Coloradans, inform community users about what they can expect from their library, assist libraries in connecting with the communities they serve, provide an authoritative document to which library administrators and supporters may refer when justifying requests for funds, and assist in planning and training.

Standards exist for:

- Collections

- Community Engagement
- Facilities
- Finance
- Governance
- Human Resources
- Marketing & Advocacy
- Planning
- Resource Sharing
- Services & Programming
- Technology

For details you can read or watch presentations on the Standards here:  
[www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/Standards/Index.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/Standards/Index.htm)

# EFFECTIVE BOARD MEETINGS

## BEFORE THE MEETING

Bring issues that you want covered to the attention of the Chair and/or director at least one week before the meeting so that the issue can be placed on the agenda, and so library staff can have full and accurate answers for the entire board.

Review the entire board packet. Packets typically include an agenda, previous meeting minutes, staff reports, financial reports, and documents related to business listed on the agenda.

## MEETING FOCUS

The most effective boards concentrate their time and energy on a few issues that will have a major impact on the library's future.

Stick to the agenda.

Respect each other's time.

## ATTENDANCE & QUORUM

Regular attendance at board and committee meetings is essential to make the best possible decision when it comes time to vote.

The Board President and director should be notified in advance if attendance is not possible.

A quorum is the minimum number of trustees required in attendance for the board to conduct business.

## ROBERT'S RULES

Parliamentary procedures are the code of rules for working together in groups. It is essential to competent self-government. It also can help any group make up its mind, leading promptly, fairly and intelligently to the discovery of the high common factors of agreement.

The Library Board uses Robert's Rules of Order as its code. These rules require the wishes of a deliberative body to be ascertained with justice to each member, and when so assured, it expects each member to abide by them.

## DECISION MAKING

Decisions are made by the consensus of a trustee majority and not necessarily unanimous agreement.

Once the board makes a decision, individual trustees are professionally bound to support the consensus decision publicly, even though they might not necessarily agree with the decision privately. When it comes to library board decisions, all trustees should speak with one voice.

## OPEN MEETING vs. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Public business must be conducted in public. “Sunshine Law” gives citizens the right to hear the deliberations and watch the decision making process in an open meeting.

In comparison, a limited number of specific topics may, under state statute, be discussed in an Executive Session that is not open to the public. No formal action, adoption, or resolution may occur in the executive session.

Statutory Reasons for entering into an Executive Session:

- Legal advice
- Purchase, sale, lease of property
- Matters that are required to be kept confidential by law
- Specialized details of security arrangements or investigations
- Personnel matters [Must name individual]

Please see CRS 24-6-402(3) and the library’s Executive Session policy for details.

## THE PUBLIC AT MEETINGS

Board meetings are held for the conduct of library business. They are **not** public hearings about library affairs.

Though not mandated by law, libraries should have a time at meetings for the public to express themselves.

The Board President must control the period for public expression and must consistently adhere to all rules governing the public’s participation at meetings.

Do not answer questions or get into debates, this time should be reserved for the public to share their thoughts on library issues.

Use staff for follow-up

## **MEETING MINUTES**

Minutes are a record or summary of all motions, proposals, resolutions and any matter formally voted upon. It does not need to be a transcript.

It must include a record of the vote of all members on all matters voted upon.

Annual/reorganizational meeting minutes are of particular importance.

Board meeting minutes are kept as a permanent record.

## ABOUT THE LIBRARY DISTRICT

The community is grateful to the Saguache Friends of the Library, who began the process of forming a district in 2009.

The voters approved the Northern Saguache County Library District in November 2010. Since the formation of the district, the library operates largely through annual property tax revenues, with additional financial support from the Friends of the Library.

The libraries together hold over 30,000 items, employ 6 people, enjoys the support of many volunteers and has an annual operating budget of over \$200,000.

The district website has additional current library information – <http://nsclcd.colibraries.org/>

## DISTRICT MISSION & OPERATING PRINCIPLES

**Mission:** We enable the people of our community to pursue lifelong learning through our responsive collections, electronic resources, and innovative services. Our welcoming public libraries are cornerstones of our diverse communities where children and adults can experience personal enrichment and connect with one another.

**Operating Principles:** The District is guided by the principles of Public Librarianship, First Amendment Rights, and Colorado Statutes for Libraries and Special Districts.

We seek innovative ways to:

- Respond and reach out to serve the current and evolving information needs of our diverse community.
- Create a sense of community by providing a welcoming, inviting, secure environment for our public and staff.
- Provide excellent customer service that is both timely and confidential.
- Develop a well-trained, knowledgeable, courteous and professional staff.
- Communicate with our public and staff to ensure vital, relevant and effective library services.
- Manage our resources effectively and be accountable to our funding sources.

We celebrate our accomplishments, learn from our mistakes and take pride in serving our community.

## BUDGET & FINANCES

**Revenue:** The library district operating revenue is derived largely from district property taxes, levied at 5 mills annually. In addition, we receive funds from Specific Ownership Taxes, modest interest earnings, fees and fines, and donations. The Friends of the Libraries also contribute to each library.

**Expenditures:** The library maintains expenditure ranges at board-mandated levels.

**Current Financial Status:** The District's budget is within normal industry standards. Our ranges are benchmarked against other similar libraries and districts on a regular basis. Current financials are available at each Board Meeting.

## POLICIES

Library policies reflect the district's priorities, define current practices, are comprehensive and user-friendly, and in compliance with state and federal regulations.

All library policies can be found online at <http://nscld.colibraries.org/>

## SUPPORT GROUPS: FRIENDS & FOUNDATION

The District is fortunate to have the support of the Friends of the Library groups, who make generous contributions each year towards strategic objectives.

### Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Library is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) membership organization, whose primary function is the financial support of the Library. Their support is for short-term requests on a case-by-case basis; to support the library staff through volunteer efforts; and to support literacy/cultural programs.

The Friends receive money from membership dues, and various other fundraisers.

# COLORADO LIBRARY LAW

Colorado Library Law provides a legal framework for library operations and responsibilities. Staff, governing boards, and agency attorneys who work with libraries should be familiar with the information contained on these pages. All Colorado Statutes can be viewed at <http://www.leg.state.co.us/>

The Colorado State Library has also created a website with links to many detailed and valuable summary documents on Colorado library law: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/LibraryLaw/Index.htm>

Below are the major highlights:

**PART 1, Section 104** is about the **state library**. The commissioner of education is the ex officio state librarian. The commissioner delegates the actual running of the state library to an assistant commissioner, currently called the director of the state library.

The state library is not an actual library in and of itself. It is charged with the development and improvement of libraries throughout the state. Responsibilities include rules and regulations, institutional libraries, the library for the blind and physically handicapped, library development, resource sharing, state funding, coordination of the regional service systems, promulgating service standards, and administering federal funds. The state library serves as the repository for Library District bylaws and the legal service area maps of all library districts within the state.

Sections 106 and 107 are about the **formation and establishment** of public libraries. In general, libraries can be formed by resolution or public petition, but in all cases, any new or increased tax must be approved by a vote of the people.

Sections 108 and 109 are about the **board of trustees**. Section 108 details the appointment process. Trustees cannot receive a salary and can be removed by a majority vote of the appointing legislative body or bodies, but only upon showing good cause as defined in, but not limited to, the board's bylaws. Section 109 lists the specific powers and duties of the board of trustees and calls for two reports at the end of each calendar year – one to the governmental body unit(s) and one to the state library.

Section 110.7 tells how any combination of cities, counties and library districts may form a separate governmental entity called a **regional library authority** to levy a voter-approved sales or property tax to provide library service on a regional basis.

Section 112 provides for library **tax** elections, collection and distribution.

Section 112.5 describes the requirements and responsibilities for library districts when **issuing bonds**.

Section 113.3 says that a city or county or school district may **contract with an existing library** in lieu of creating its own library.

Section 114 says that a public library (the complete entity, not just one building or branch) may be **abolished** only through a vote of the electors.

Section 115 sets up **regional library service systems** to provide cooperative services throughout the state. In 2004, due to lack of funds at the state level, seven regional systems were reduced to one, called the Colorado Library Consortium, or "CLiC". (Statewide courier is a service coordinated through CLiC.)

Section 117 says **stealing**, destroying or not returning library materials is a class 3 misdemeanor.

Section 119 is known as the "**privacy law**." It says that a library may not disclose any record or other information that identifies a person as having requested or obtained specific materials or service, or as otherwise having used the library.

The only exceptions to this are:

- When it is necessary for the reasonable operation of the library;
- Upon written consent of the user;
- Pursuant to subpoena, upon court order, or when required by law; or
- To a parent or guardian who has access to a minor's library card or card number for the purposes of accessing the minor's records on the computer.

**PART 2, STATE PUBLICATIONS**, describes the procedures for all state agencies to provide the printed and electronic materials for cataloging and distribution to designated libraries in the state.

**PART 3, COLORADO COMPUTER INFORMATION NETWORK**, creates the Colorado Virtual Library to provide statewide access to the on-line catalogs of Colorado libraries, digitized collections, database indexes and products, and an interlibrary loan system for resource sharing.

**PART 4, LIBRARY GRANTS**, authorizes state funds to be appropriated for education resources for school, public and academic libraries. Due to lack of state revenues, appropriations are no longer being made.

**PART 5, LIBRARY CAPITAL FACILITIES DISTRICTS**, authorizes library districts to create a capital facilities district to generate revenue for buying land, building a facility, or other capital improvements.

**PART 6, INTERNET PROTECTION IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES**, requires public libraries to adopt and implement a policy of internet safety for minors that includes a technology protection measure (filters on computers accessible to a minor, and provides for temporary disabling of the filter upon request of an adult). A library does not need to comply if no moneys exist in the budget, or if after a good faith effort, a filter cannot be found free of charge.

# APPENDIX

## CHECKLIST OF ITEMS FOR NEW TRUSTEES

- New Trustee Handbook
- Board of Trustees Roster
- Annual Budget
- Local Government Budget Calendar
- Library District Map

## TO DO's:

- Have your photo taken for Trustee webpage
- Tour the Library
- Study the website