



Huntsville Public Library

Board Development Policy

Policy Number: G2102

Policy Approval Date: January 9th, 2026

Policy Review Date: January, 2030

Definitions

Library: Huntsville Public Library

Library Board: Huntsville Public Library Board

PLA: Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P44

Town: Town of Huntsville

Policy

To be effective, library board members must have sufficient knowledge of board governance and issues that are central to the role of the library in the community. This policy sets out the requirements for new board member orientation, ongoing training and development for all board members, evaluation of the board, and succession planning.

Section 1 - New Board Member Orientation

The goal of the orientation process is to enable new Directors to be engaged as soon as possible to contribute to the HPL's mission. The objectives of the plan is to ensure that new Directors;

- Have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities as a member of the Board.
- Are well-versed in the history, mission, vision and contributions of the HPL as well as how the HPL operates and their relationship to the organizational structure.
- Have an opportunity to meet the CEO and their staff and become familiar with their job descriptions.
- Are aware of the diverse programming, services and special projects that the HPL provides and how they can be involved in and support these programs
- Feel impressed that they joined a professional organization and are able to share some key accomplishments of the HPL to tell their families and friends about their new position.
- Receive any further training (if required) to be ready to contribute on Day One at their very first Board Meeting.
- Feel valued and appreciated as a volunteer by the HPL and the Board of Directors.



THE HPL ORIENTATION PLAN

1. Accessibility Training - Board members will receive training on the accessibility standards set out in the Regulations of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act*, including training on the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities. This must be completed before attending their first Board meeting.

2. Announcement- to introduce the membership and the general public to the new Director(s). These announcements will be made in a variety of ways, including but not limited to: the HPL newsletter, the HPL website, local on-line and print newspapers, and social media.

3. eOrientation - New Directors will receive training on-line in Library Board Governance before attending the HPL Orientation Session. Using the Ontario Library Service (OLS) website's Governance Hub, new HPL Directors will work their way through the information and videos for Year 1: Governance Roles and Responsibilities.

4. eResource Portal - The link to the HPL Board e-Portal will be sent to new Directors following the acceptance of their application. This is a resource for all Directors and the contents can be found in the [HPL Orientation Plan](#).

5. New Director Welcome Reception and Package

- **Reception** - New Directors will be introduced to the HPL Board and staff at a social gathering one evening after the Library closes.
- **Package** - New Directors will receive a number of items to welcome them to the Board, help identify them as Directors at HPL events and show an appreciation for their service as a volunteer. A detailed list of items can be found in the [HPL Orientation Plan](#).

6. New Director Orientation Plan Session(s) - This session(s) will be presided over by the Chair of the Board. Others in attendance to deliver components of the Orientation Session will include the CEO, and other HPL Directors and staff members. The primary focus of this session is to introduce the new Directors to the HPL; how we operate, who are the people and personalities at the heart of the organization; what we do, and why we do it.

7. Board Mentor - Each new Director will be assigned a Board Mentor who will touch base with the new Director before meetings and to follow-up after to answer any questions and field concerns or comments.

8. Orientation Evaluation - New Directors will receive a [HPL Board Orientation Evaluation Form](#) to provide feedback on their experience. This form will be sent electronically to the new Director(s) by a member of the Board who will then collect the forms and



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summarize the results and comments. This information will be shared with the Board to further develop and enhance the HPL's Orientation for New Directors Policy.

Section 2 – Ongoing Training for Board Members

Ongoing training ensures that library board members focus on good governance, strategic directions and policy implications rather than on operational details. This policy ensures that library board members have access to, and avail themselves of, training opportunities.

1. To ensure ongoing education, the Board Development Committee will schedule training following the themes of the OLS 4-year life cycle for public library boards that is aligned with Ontario's 4-year board and council terms.
2. The HPL will; maintain a membership in the Ontario Library Association and the Ontario Library Boards' Association; assign a representative who will attend the regional Trustee Council meetings and report back to the library board; fund two board members to attend a relevant conference annually (budget permitting).
3. The library board will receive information from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Board Chair, and the Board Assembly Representative about training and networking offered by various organizations in Ontario.
4. The cost of any training must be approved by the library board before it is undertaken and Board members will report on their participation in training events.

Section Three - Board Annual Self-Evaluation

Board assessments are completed to examine and identify a board's strengths and areas for growth. The following processes are used by the HPL to conduct a board assessment.

1. Board Self-Evaluation - The HPL Board conducts an annual evaluation using the HPL Board Evaluation Form document. In addition to evaluating the board as a whole, board members conduct a self-assessment of their own performance as a board member using OLS The Individual Board Member Self-Evaluation Tool.
2. Additions may be made to the HPL Board Evaluation Form to evaluate specific issues or topics that do not occur every year. (ie. capital campaign, building)
3. The Board Development Committee will tabulate the results and provide a summary to the all Board members and the CEO. The results will be discussed at a regular board



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meeting, may become the focus of an entire meeting, or require a retreat in order to develop a plan for addressing issues. The summary will include an Action Plan to address the issues that may also include planning learning opportunities, mentoring, or using some of the OLS tools for trustee development. Information gleaned from evaluations will be used in developing or revising recruitment, orientation, and training policies, procedures and strategic plans.

Section Four - Succession Planning

The library board recognizes that the Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P44, s. 10(4) requires that the council appoint library board members. To support the appointment process, the library board will collaborate with council on a preliminary selection process. This policy sets out the requirements for recruiting board members and planning for board succession.

In the third year of the current term, the library board will:

- undertake a review of the board's effectiveness in governing and accomplishing the strategic plan with input from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
- match the board's needs with the expertise and interests of the current members and identify the gaps that will need to be filled
- develop a board member's position description to highlight qualities and desired skills

Six months before the end of the current term, the library board will:

- Work with the town to solicit applications
- The HR Committee will review applications and interview potential candidates

Potential candidates will be provided with briefing materials and information about library governance and services, which may include:

- information on the library's vision, mission and values
- information on the role, structure, code of conduct and function of the library board
- an introduction to the Public Libraries Act

Related Documents:

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and *Ontario Regulation 165/16*
Ontario Library Boards' Association.

Cut to the Chase: Ontario Public Library Governance at a Glance.
Southern Ontario Library Service.

Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P44, s. 10(4)

Library Board Development materials posted at <https://resources.olservice.ca/governance-hub->

HPL Board Orientation Plan

HPL Board Orientation Evaluation Form



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***HPL Board Evaluation Form
OLS The Individual Board Member Self-Evaluation Tool
Library Board Application Form***

History:

Draft Policy - June 8, 2021