
Medicine Hat Public Library
Category: Governance

Policy: G.1
Title: Code of Ethics Guidelines
Date Approved: 2014 02 06

Medicine Hat Library Board Members shall observe the following Code of Ethics.

1. Accountability

- 1.1. The Medicine Hat Library Board shall be responsible for making policy decisions and ensuring the appropriate staff and structures are in place to carry out the policy and day-to-day tasks of the organization.
- 1.2. The duty of the Board member is to the Medicine Hat Public Library rather than to any individual community, group or special interest.
- 1.3. Board members shall be loyal to the Medicine Hat Public Library and are accountable to exercise the powers and discharge the duties of their office honestly, in good faith, and in the best interests of the Medicine Hat Public Library.
 - 1.3.1. This accountability supersedes the personal interest of any Board member acting as an individual or consumer of the Medicine Hat Public Library services. Board members shall exercise the degree of care, diligence and skill that a reasonably prudent person would exercise in comparable circumstances.
- 1.4. Board members should respect and work harmoniously with each other, with library staff and respect library patrons and all those associated with the library.
- 1.5. Board members shall not publicly impugn the motives, abilities or personalities of fellow board members or library staff.
- 1.6. Because the board is a corporate body, individual trustees may not contradict the decisions of the Board. The time to air questions and disagreement is before the decision, not after. The Board speaks with one voice.
- 1.7. Board members shall sign a Letter of Agreement abiding to the Code of Ethics guidelines as outlined in this policy.

2. Conflict of Interest

- 2.1. If a conflict of personal, financial or other interest should arise, the member shall declare their conflict of interest prior to any discussion and shall be absent from any portion of the meeting in which the matter is discussed and voted on.
- 2.2. The minutes must record all declarations of personal, financial and other interest, including the nature for such declaration.
- 2.3. A Board member who abstains from participation due to conflict of interest is still included in determining quorum.
- 2.4. A Board member shall ensure that unethical activities not covered or specifically prohibited by the foregoing or any other legislation are neither encouraged nor condoned.

3. Confidentiality

- 3.1. Board members will not communicate, either directly or indirectly, information designated confidential to anyone not entitled to receive the same.
- 3.2. Board members shall maintain confidentiality of information gained from or about the Board, including any information which may in any way jeopardize the confidentiality of library members or personnel of the Board.
- 3.3. Board members will not use information which has been designated as confidential by the Board for personal profit or use by themselves or any other person.
- 3.4. Board members will respect confidential information in perpetuity.
- 3.5. All material deemed confidential shall be returned to the Medicine Hat Public Library at the expiration of the Board member's term.

4. Individual Authority

- 4.1. Board members may not attempt to exercise individually the authority of the Board except as set forth in Board policies.
- 4.2. When interacting with the Chief Librarian or library staff, Board members must recognize that any individual Board member does not have authority other than that explicitly stated in Board policy.

5. Acceptance of Gifts

- 5.1. In their capacity as Board members, Board members shall not accept a gift, favour or service from any individual, organization or corporation, other than:
 - 5.1.1. The normal exchange of hospitality between persons doing business together;
 - 5.1.2. Tokens exchanged as part of protocol; or,
 - 5.1.3. The normal presentation of gifts to persons participating in public function.

6. Training and Development

- 6.1. Board members shall acquaint themselves with the incorporating documents of the Board, bylaws, regulations, policies and organizational structure of the Board, as well as the rules of procedures and proper conduct of a meeting so that any decision of the Board may be made in an efficient, knowledgeable and expeditious fashion.
- 6.2. Board members shall regularly take part in educational activities which assist them in carrying out their responsibilities.

7. Special Privilege

- 7.1. Board members will not use their position of trust to secure special privileges, favours or exceptions for themselves or any other persons.

8. Violation of the Code of Ethics

- 8.1. The Board Chair is responsible for handling all reports of Board member violations of the Code of Ethics.
- 8.2. The process for handling reports of violations is as follows:
 - 8.2.1. The Board Chair will discuss the issue with the member concerned;
 - 8.2.2. If unresolved, the Board Chair will discuss the issue with the Chair of Human Resources and Finance and the Board member;
 - 8.2.3. If unresolved, the Board Chair shall refer the issue to the Board as a whole.