

Purpose: The Board recognizes the value of a Code of Ethics under which all Board Trustees act. Such a Code clarifies how the Trustees shall act in fulfilling their role. Trustees 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 Trustees is to the Medicine Hat Public Library rather than to any individual community, group or special interest.
- 1.3. Trustees 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 Trustee acting as an individual or consumer of the Medicine Hat Public Library services. Trustees shall exercise the degree of care, diligence and skill that a reasonably prudent person would exercise in comparable circumstances.
- 1.4. Trustees should respect and work harmoniously with each other, and ; they should additionally respect library patrons and all those associated with the Library.
- 1.5. Trustees shall not publicly impugn the motives, abilities or personalities of fellow Trustees or library staff.
- 1.6. The Board is a corporate body and speaks with one voice:
  - 1.6.1. Questions, disputes and disagreements should be aired prior to the Board adopting specific positions, and/or policies;
  - 1.6.2. Individual Trustees may not contradict the decisions of the Board.

2. Conflict of Interest

- 2.1. If a conflict of personal, financial or other interest should arise, the Trustee 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 Trustee who abstains from participation due to conflict of interest is still included in determining quorum.
- 2.4. Trustees 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. Trustees will not communicate, either directly or indirectly, information designated confidential to anyone not entitled to receive the same.
- 3.2. Trustees 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. Trustees 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. Trustees 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 Trustee's term, or as requested by the Board Chair.

4. Individual Authority
  - 4.1. Trustees 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, Trustees must recognize that any individual Trustee does not have authority other than that explicitly stated in Board policy.
  
5. Acceptance of Gifts
  - 5.1. In their capacity as Trustees, they 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. Trustees shall acquaint themselves with the incorporating documents, 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. Trustees shall regularly take part in educational activities which assist them in carrying out their responsibilities.
  
7. Special Privilege
  - 7.1. Trustees will not use their position of trust to secure special privileges, favours or exceptions for themselves or any other persons.
  
8. Voting
  - 8.1 Each Trustee is mandated to vote on all motions unless they declare a conflict of interest.
  
9. Violation of the Code of Ethics
  - 9.1. The Board Chair is responsible for handling all reports of Trustee violations of the Code of Ethics.
  - 9.2. The process for handling reports of violations is as follows:
    - 9.2.1. The Board Chair will discuss the issue with the Trustee concerned;
    - 9.2.2. If unresolved, the Board Chair will discuss the issue with the Chair of Human Resources and Finance Committee (where possible) and the Board member;
    - 9.2.3. If unresolved, the Board Chair shall refer the issue to the Board as a whole.
  
10. Upon acceptance of their appointment to the Board, Trustees shall sign and date a Letter of Agreement abiding to the Code of Ethics guidelines as outlined in this policy.