

# MANSFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY TRUSTEES BOARD

## By-Laws

Adopted February 8, 2024 as per RSA 202:A Public Libraries

### I. AUTHORITY

The Library Trustees Board (hereinafter “Board”) for the Mansfield Public Library (hereinafter “Library”) derives its authority from State Law under RSA 202-A. Nothing in these By-Laws is intended to conflict with State Law.

### II. MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES

1. The Board shall consist of 5 elected members, from which officers shall be selected annually. Members shall serve a three-year term.
2. Selection, qualification, term, removal of members, and filling of vacancies shall conform to [RSA 202-A](#).
3. Up to three (3) Alternate members may be appointed by the Select Board after recommendation by the Board, to take the place of full members as needed, and participate as non-voting members when not appointed to fill a full member’s position at a meeting of the Board. Alternate members shall serve a one-year term.
4. Alternate members should attend all meetings and familiarize themselves with the workings of the Board to stand ready to serve whenever a regular member of the Board is unable to fulfill their responsibilities at a meeting.
5. At Board meetings, Alternates who are not activated to fill the seat of an absent or recused member or who have not been appointed by the Chair to temporarily fill the unexpired term of a vacancy, may participate with the Board in a limited capacity, exclusive of any motions or votes that may be made. At all times, the Chair shall fully inform the public of the status of any Alternate present and identify members who shall be voting on matters before the Board.
6. All Board members must reside in the community and are expected to attend each meeting of the Board to exercise their duties and responsibilities. Any member unable to attend a meeting shall notify the Chair as soon as possible. Members, including the Chair and all officers, shall participate in the decision-making process and vote to approve or disapprove all motions under consideration.
7. Each newly elected or appointed (including re-elected or re-appointed) member shall be sworn in and take an oath of office as required by [RSA 42:1](#).
8. Each newly elected or appointed (including re-elected or re-appointed) member shall adhere to the Library Trustees Code of Ethics below.

As elected or appointed public officials, trustees of New Hampshire public libraries have an obligation to meet the highest legal, moral and ethical standards. The following standards shall be used to guide each Trustee’s conduct and decisions. *As a member of this board, I will:*

- Sustain the core freedoms of our democracy by providing a broad diversity of viewpoints, beliefs, information, and literature and equal access to everyone.
- Abide by all state and federal laws that apply to New Hampshire public libraries.
- Observe the provisions of the Right-to-Know Law RSA 91-A by ensuring: all meetings are open to the public except as provided within the law; records of all meetings (including discussion and support materials) are available for public review; the subject matter of e-mails and phone calls to a quorum of the board do not take the place of public meetings.
- Avoid real or perceived conflict of interest when making decisions for or about the library that may involve issues of personal gain for yourself, your family or friends.
- Keep confidential information confidential.

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- Remember that the Board acts as a whole and never assume sole authority for comment or actions unless you are delegated to do so by the Board.
- Remain objective in dealing with staff and patron concerns, and use proper Board-established communications channels to ensure consistent, rational resolution of library matters.
- Observe publicity and information policies of the Board and library; refer requests to the library director when appropriate.
- Adhere to all Board established library policies, rules, procedures, and bylaws.
- Act to create a positive atmosphere of service throughout the library.
- Respect the director as the professional administrator of day-to-day operations and procedures; do not undermine the authority of the director's supervision of staff; administer regular performance reviews of the director according to clear, consistent library personnel policies; include the director as a valued member of the Board team.
- Have the moral courage to protect the integrity and purpose of the library as a community institution; challenge proposals or actions that are illegal or contrary to the mission; challenge any Board member whose actions betray the public trust, violate the law, jeopardize the integrity of the institution, or cause dissension within the library.
- Study all laws pertaining to libraries; prepare for board and committee meetings; take available training in order to serve my library in the most effective manner possible.
- Attend meetings regularly or resign so that a more active member can be appointed.

### **III. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

1. A Chair shall be elected at the first regular meeting following the annual town meeting. They shall preside over all meetings and hearings, ensure submission of the annual report, appoint such committees as directed by the Board, shall affix their signature in the name of the Board, prepare and present a proposed annual budget, become a signatory on financial accounts and shall perform other duties customary of the office.
2. A Treasurer shall be elected at the first regular meeting following the annual town meeting. They shall be responsible for working with the Library Director to ensure appropriate financial reports are made available to the Board on a timely basis, assisting the Library Director in preparing the annual budget and presenting the budget to the Board for approval, participating in the annual audit, becoming a signatory on all financial accounts, overseeing all monetary transactions, causing an annual report for trust funds to be submitted to the Office of the Attorney General, and performing all duties necessary to fulfill the financial work of the Board.
3. A Secretary shall be elected at the first regular meeting following the annual town meeting. When designated by the Chair they shall prepare and cause to be posted an Agenda for each meeting. They shall maintain accurate records of decisions of the Board and perform other duties as the Board may specify.
4. All officers are voting members of the Board. They shall serve for one year and shall be eligible for re-election.

### **IV. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. The Board is responsible for the following:
  - Formulation, adoption and revision of policies;
  - Maintenance and future development of the Library and of the grounds;

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- Hiring, dismissal and annual performance evaluation of the Library Director. The Library Director will interview candidates for additional staff positions and shall make hiring recommendations to the Board;
  - Submission of necessary reports to the Town and State as required by law;
  - Participation in procuring adequate financial support for the Library; and
  - Expenditure of the trust funds and the town funds appropriated for the Library.
2. These By-Laws shall be reviewed periodically and revised as needed. Amendments shall be by a majority vote of the Board.
  3. An annual budget shall be prepared by the Chair or their designee and approved by the Board prior to submission to the Select Board and/or its agents.

## **V. MEETINGS**

1. Regular Meetings shall be held monthly at a time and date to be determined by the Board and shall be posted on the Town of Temple Website Calendar with proper public notice in compliance with [RSA 91-A](#). Workshop meetings will be held as needed and specified by the Chair.
2. Special Meetings may be called by the Chair, or in their absence, another Officer, or at the request of three members of the Board, provided public notice and notice to each member is given at least 48 hours in advance of the time of such a meeting. The notice shall specify the purpose of the meeting.
3. All meetings shall be conducted in strict accordance with the spirit and intent of the "Right-to - Know" Law, [RSA Chapter 91-A](#).
4. Non-public sessions shall be held only in accordance with [RSA 91-A:3](#).
5. A quorum for all meetings shall be three (3) members, including alternates sitting in place of members.
6. If any member finds it necessary to disqualify themselves from any particular deliberation, they shall notify the Chair as soon as possible so that an alternate may be appointed. The disqualification shall be announced by either the Chair or the disqualifying member before the beginning of discussion of that agenda item. The disqualified member shall leave the Board table during all deliberations and voting on the matter.
  - The Chair shall designate one of the alternate members to sit in place of the absent or disqualified member. Such alternate shall have all the powers and duties of a regular member in regards to any matter under consideration on which the regular member is unable to act. The alternate member should continue until the matter is completed; the regular member does not vote on that matter.
  - If uncertainty arises as to whether a Board member should disqualify themselves, upon the request of that member or another member, the Board shall vote on the question of whether that member should be disqualified. A vote on a question of disqualification shall be advisory and non-binding, and may not be requested by persons other than Board members.

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7. Order of Business. The order of business for regular meetings shall be as follows:
  - Call to order by the Chair
  - Roll Call
  - Appointment of Alternates
  - Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting
  - Public Comment
  - Director's Report
  - Treasurer's Report
  - Old Business
  - New Business
  - Correspondence
  - Adjournment
8. Prior to each meeting, documents for use at said meeting shall be prepared and disseminated as follows:
  - the Chair or their designee shall develop an agenda and email to all members;
  - regular reports shall be emailed to all members 5 business days prior; and
  - all special reports, documents, or other information shall be emailed to all members 7 business days prior.
9. It is the practice and policy of the Board to reserve time at or near the beginning of each meeting for anyone having business with the Board, regardless of whether or not the person has made a previous effort to be placed on the Board's agenda.
10. All votes shall be taken by roll call.

## **VI.RECORDS**

1. The records of the Board shall be kept by the Secretary and shall be made available for public inspection at the town Municipal Building during normal business hours. A Town employee, such as the Town Clerk, Select Board Assistant, or a Board member must be present at all times while the files are being inspected. Copies of records shall also be kept at the Library for use by the Board and Library Director only; these copies are not inspectable by the public.
2. Files and minutes are never to be removed from the Board's files except temporarily for reproduction, during which time they must remain in the custody of a Board member or designated Town employee.
3. Minutes
  - Minutes of all meetings shall be posted at the Town Municipal Building within 5 business days of such meeting, as required by [RSA 91-A:4](#).
  - The file copy of the minutes shall show the date of such posting and the signature of the person who posted them.
  - All votes shall be recorded by roll call unless unanimous.
  - A copy of the minutes shall be furnished to each Board member and the Select Board Assistant.
  - Approved minutes must also be posted on the website in a consistent and reasonably accessible location per [RSA 91-A:2, II-b](#).