

Board of Trustees of the East Providence Public Library Bylaws

ARTICLE I - NAME

This organization shall be called The Board of Trustees of the East Providence Public Library, existing by virtue of the provision of Chapter 4, Section 29 of the laws of the State of Rhode Island; and according to Section III, Chapter 146, City of East Providence Ordinance. The Board of Trustees shall exercise the powers and authority and assume the responsibilities delegated to it under state law and city ordinance. The Board adheres to the principles set forth in the American Library Association's ethical and philosophical statements: the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement and the Freedom to View Statement.

ARTICLE II - MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1

Number

The number of Trustees of this Board shall consist of seven (7) members, serving without compensation.

SECTION 2

Appointments

Pursuant to RIGL 29-4-5, members shall be appointed by the City Council of the City of East Providence. Members of the Board must be residents of the city of East Providence, have civic values and are known to be devoted to the public library as an institution.

SECTION 3

Terms

Terms of office for Trustees shall be for three (3) years, on a staggered schedule. A member may be reappointed if they so desire, has the support of the remainder of the Board, and if said reappointment is approved by the presiding City Council. A former Trustee can be appointed after a lapse of one year.

SECTION 4

Disqualifications, Vacancies

Any member who moves out of the City shall be responsible for notifying the Chairperson. Upon receipt of such notification, the position shall be declared vacant.

SECTION 5

Attendance Requirements

Board members have a responsibility to attend all meetings of the Board. A board attendance problem occurs when one or more of the following conditions exist:

- The member has two un-notified absences in a row.
- The member has three notified absences in a row
- The member misses one third of the total number of board meetings in a twelve-month period.

If a board attendance problem occurs, the Chair will promptly contact the member to discuss the problem. The members' response will be shared with the full board and that body, in turn, will decide what actions to take in response.

In the case that a board member must miss a meeting, they shall notify the Chair as far in advance as practicable.

SECTION 6

Resignations

Any member may resign at any time by submitting their resignation in writing to the Chair. Such resignation shall be effective upon receipt unless another date is specified within. Preferred notice for a resignation is 30 days before the effective date.

ARTICLE III - POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE BOARD

SECTION 1

Powers

The Board shall be the legal guardian and custodian of the Library and shall provide suitable quarters for the same. The Trustees shall appoint a qualified Director of Library Services and evaluate the Director at least once every 2 years.

SECTION 2

Duties

The Board shall determine and adopt a five-year plan of service and policies to govern the operation and programs of the Library, in consultation with the Director of Library Services. Such policies must include but are not limited to:

- Collection development
- Reconsideration of acquired library materials
- Use of meeting rooms and exhibit spaces
- Computer and internet use
- Behavior or code of conduct
- Child safety
- Library programs and displays
- Confidentiality of library records
- Such other policies required to ensure safe operation of the library while establishing the rights of individuals to have access to materials, services and programs to meet their information needs.

Library policies shall be reviewed regularly. It also shall be the duty of the Board to assist in the preparation of the annual budget and present the financial needs of the Library to the City Council, and to ensure adequate public support for good library service.

SECTION 3

Five Year Plan

The Board is to adopt a five-year plan, which is to be filed with the Office of Library and Information Services, and reviewed annually at the April meeting.

SECTION 4

Library Association Activities

Board members are encouraged to participate in state and regional library association activities. Membership dues and expenses of participation will be reimbursed by the Library.

ARTICLE IV - MEETINGS

SECTION 1

Open Meetings

All meetings of the Board shall be conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings requirements as defined in Title 42, Chapter 46 of the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island.

SECTION 2

Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the Board shall be held on the first Wednesday of each month, excepting July and August, at an hour to be fixed from time to time by the Board; or at such other time as the Board shall designate.

SECTION 3

Order of Business

The order of business for regular meetings shall include, but not be limited to, the following

1. Call to order
2. Disposition of minutes of previous meeting
3. Reports from committees and other associated organizations
4. Director's report
5. Assistant Director's report
6. Unfinished business
7. New business
8. Adjournment

The Chair may decide if a public comment period is held and board members may respond to those comments if they choose. The board cannot vote on matters brought up in this manner if the topic did not appear on the meeting's agenda. The Chair can impose time limits on public comments.

SECTION 4

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting shall be held on the regular meeting date in the month of April, at the Weaver Library, at which time the Board shall elect officers to hold said offices for terms of one (1) year and review the Five Year Plan.

SECTION 5

Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Board may be called by the Chairperson, provided written public notice of the meeting within a minimum of forty-eight (48) hours, excluding weekends and state holidays in the count of hours, before the date. Special meetings shall be called when business of

a non-emergency nature must be conducted by the Board before the next regular meeting, or in such cases that there would be advantages lost to the library or penalties levied against the Board or library were the Board to wait for the next regular meeting. A meeting may be called dedicated to one or more particular matters.

SECTION 6

Emergency Meetings

Emergency Meetings may be requested by the Chairperson or the Director of Library Services with an affirmative vote of the majority of the members when the meeting is deemed necessary to address an unexpected occurrence that requires immediate action. A meeting notice and agenda shall be posted as soon as practicable. Upon meeting, the public body shall state for the minutes why the matter must be addressed in less than 48 hours and only discuss the issue(s) that created the need for an emergency meeting.

ARTICLE V - OFFICERS

The Officers shall be a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary elected from among the appointed Trustees at the Annual Meeting. In addition an Acting Chair may be authorized as stated later, in Article VI, Section 4.

ARTICLE VI - DUTIES OF OFFICERS

SECTION 1

Chairperson

The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Board. They shall handle all legal transactions as designated by the Board. The Chairperson shall also authorize calls for special meetings; appoint all committees; serve as an ex-officio voting member of all committees. The Chairperson, along with the Director of Library Services, shall be responsible for new Board members orientation, which shall happen within 30 days of appointment.

The Chair shall be the chief spokesperson for the Board, using outlets such as local media, social media, and other public communications. The members shall, to the extent possible and consistent with the proper discharge of their individual responsibilities, refer all inquiries which concern interpretation of Board position, action and policy to the Chair. Individual members of the Board shall not speak for the Board, nor misrepresent the opinions of the Board. The Chair may designate a member to represent the Board related to a specific action or a committee.

SECTION 2

Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson, in the event of the absence or disability of the Chairperson, or of a vacancy in that office, shall assume and perform the duties and functions of Chairperson.

SECTION 3

Secretary

In the event of the absence or disability of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall assume and perform the duties and functions of Chairperson.

In the absence of the Library staff person assigned by the Director to take minutes, the Secretary shall record the meeting minutes.

The Secretary should sign the approved meeting minutes.

SECTION 4

Acting Chair

In the vacancy of the positions of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary, absence of said officers or combination of both vacancy and absence on the part of said officials; the senior-most Trustee present when a quorum is reached shall serve as Acting Chair or may pass it on to the Trustee with the next most seniority until a Trustee accepts. The Acting Chair shall preside over the meeting until the arrival of one or more of the above stated officers or until the end of that meeting. The Acting Chair shall not perform any other functions of the Chairperson.

ARTICLE VII - COMMITTEES

The Board of Trustees shall create all committees as required. The Chairperson shall appoint members to these committees, with the approval of the Board; and the Chairperson shall serve as an ex-officio voting member of all committees.

ARTICLE VIII - DIRECTOR OF LIBRARY SERVICES

SECTION 1

Appointment

The Director of Library Services shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees pursuant to the provisions of state law 29-4-6 and other applicable laws as well as Board policies compliant with the above laws.

SECTION 2

Duties

The Director of Library Services shall administer library policy and conduct day-to-day library operations. The Director shall report to the Board all staff appointments and shall specify, based on Board policy, duties for all employees. The Director shall be responsible for the proper direction and supervision of staff; shall be responsible for the adequate and proper selection of books and other media materials, based upon Board policy; for the efficiency and quality of library service to the public; and for the financial operation of the library, within the limitations of the budget and board policy. They shall also attend all meetings of the Board of Trustees and make reports at regular and annual meetings; and shall compile reports as required by the Mayor and Office of Library and Information Services.

SECTION 3

Clerk

The Director of Library Services shall appoint a clerk from Library Administration to keep all records of the Board in accurate form and shall carry out all correspondence of the Board at the direction of the Chairperson.

ARTICLE IX - AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended by vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Board,

provided that written notice had been given to all Trustees at least thirty (30) days in advance. The proposed amendment shall be introduced by being written into the minutes of a regular monthly meeting, to be acted upon at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.

ARTICLE X - QUORUM

A quorum for the transaction of business, for the annual meeting, regular meetings and special meetings shall consist of a simple majority of the Board. A quorum for the transaction of business at emergency meetings shall be three (3) members.

ARTICLE XI - FINAL JURISDICTION

Any power or authority not established by these bylaws, nor prohibited by state law shall be delegated to the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE XII - CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

In areas not otherwise covered in these bylaws and in formal operating procedure passed by the Board of Trustees, meetings shall be conducted according to the latest revision of Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE XIII – ETHICS

SECTION 1

Code of Ethics of the American Library Association

The Board adopts the Code of Ethics of the American Library Association, which codifies the ethical principles that guide the work of librarians, library workers, and library trustees.

SECTION 2

Rhode Island Code of Ethics

The Board complies with the requirements of the Rhode Island Code of Ethics as defined in Title 36, Chapter 14 of the General Laws of Rhode Island.

Bylaws written: October 4, 1995

Amended: January 7, 2004

Amended: May 2, 2023

Amended: April 2026