



Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library

Welcome to the Library Board of Directors!

Orientation Guide

Table of Contents

About the Library	2-4
Welcome to the Library Board!	5
Library Board of Directors: Job Description	6
Responsibilities of the Library Board and Library Director	7-8
Library Board Ethics	9
Board Resources	10
Annual Reports	
Bylaws	
Minutes	
Strategic Plan	
Library Policies	
Handbook for North Dakota Public Library Board Members	
North Dakota Library Law	
NDLCC's Standards for Public Libraries	
Open Records and Meetings Laws	
Library Bill of Rights	11
Freedom to Read Statement	12-15
Orientation Checklist	16
Acknowledgements	17
Attachments	
Library Board Contact List	
Organizational Chart	
Public Service Policy	
Library Staff Policies	
Circulation Policy Brochure	
Friends of the Library Brochure	
Library Foundation, Inc. Brochure	
Summary of ND's Open Records and Meetings Law	

ABOUT THE LIBRARY

Mission

Collecting, organizing and providing open access to educational, informational, recreational and cultural resources.

Vision

Offering information, ideas and personal enrichment to all.

Values

- Ensuring fast access to information
- Treating all patrons with respect and equity
- Responding to community needs
- Providing quality basic services without charge
- Protecting freedom of information, privacy and confidentiality
- Providing a safe and secure environment
- Stewarding community resources
- Focusing on cooperative development through partnerships
- Encouraging programming and display of the arts

Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library

Bismarck pioneer women established a reading room soon after the city was first established in 1873. By 1915 the Bismarck Civic League and the Commercial Club (forerunner of the Chamber of Commerce), with guidance from the State Library Commission, undertook a book drive resulting in a lending library of 1,500 books housed in the Commercial Club rooms. The secretary acted as Bismarck's first librarian.

Interest grew and the Andrew Carnegie Corporation was approached for a grant to build a "real library." Application was made and Bismarck was offered \$25,000 for its first building if the city would provide a minimum upkeep of \$2,500 annually. In February 1916, A.W. Lucas, president of the City Commission, brought the idea to the governing body and they decided to ask the citizenry. City citizens showed their support, 374 to 70, in a February 28th election. The city then donated the site at the southwest corner of Thayer Avenue and 6th Street and the Commercial Club began collecting books for the new Bismarck Public Library, which opened in 1917 with a collection of about 4,000 items.

The first library board members were prominent Bismarck citizens: C.B. Little, C.L. Young, Otto Holta, George F. Will and Agatha Patterson. George M. Register replaced Patterson in 1923. Ten years later a trained children's librarian was added and, in 1938, a trained catalog librarian was hired. The operating budget in the 1940s was less than \$20,000. The Carnegie Library building served the city well through the 1950s but became inadequate in size for the growing city.

In the early 1960s citizens began planning a new 16,000 square-foot, three-level facility to be located farther north on 6th Street at the corner of Avenue A. Financed through a \$240,000 bond levy and named to honor the area's World War II and Korean War veterans, the Veterans Memorial Public Library opened in 1963 with a collection of 100,000 volumes. The building served very well for a number of years; services expanded and the library became perceived as a more active place with expanding weekly attendance and growing demand for more space.

In 1976 Burleigh County began levying support for library services as an expansion of the city services. In 1979 the Library Board appointed the first planning committee to conceptualize an expanded facility to meet present and future needs. This visioning process ultimately resulted in a sales tax funded major expansion of the 16,000 square foot building into a 70,000 square foot facility. A new parking lot was constructed on the west side; the new front of Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library now faced 5th Street. The library now encompasses the entire block. Its 2014 annual operating budget is approximately 2.3 million dollars and employs 15 full-time and 38 part-time staff to provide seven day, 71 hours per week service year around. Volunteers clocked 1543 volunteer hours this last year for the library.

Burleigh County has, since the early 1970s, contracted with the Bismarck Public Library to operate and maintain bookmobile services to rural schools and communities. The staff, collection and bookmobile are housed in the public library. The bookmobile currently has 83 locations and makes 700 stops annually and utilizes a full time librarian and an assistant.

In 1975 The Library Foundation, Inc. was established to raise private funding to supplement available tax support. Its endowment fund has surpassed \$1 million. During the early 1990s the Friends of the Library was resurrected and now has semi-annual used book sales, supports the services of the library and provides volunteers for library events.

Bismarck Public Library offers the public a choice of three meeting rooms (one being a 240 seat recital room with a grand piano and large screen for presentations and library movie showings), a video conferencing facility and fourteen single and multi-user private study rooms. It houses the Missouri River Room, the library's rare materials collection; the Grants Resource Center; and a library training center where classes are taught to the public.

A wealth of electronic resources and databases are available to the public. These include a richly featured online catalog along with extensive full text newspaper and magazine databases, genealogy, community information, health, history, music and antiques resources and databases. The Library has 50 public access computers for Internet searching, Email, database research and word processing activities. In addition, wireless Internet access and printing is available to laptop users throughout the library.

Since 1993, Bismarck Public Library has been a member of the Central Dakota Library Network (CDLN), a resource-sharing and automated consortium of 23 member libraries. CDLN also cooperates with other state libraries and systems and shares over 500,000 items with its system, SirsiDynix's Horizon Information Library System.

Library sponsored teen programs, children's story hours, book discussions and various groups and organization's scheduled meetings, Internet users, and regular library patrons help keep this a busy and vibrant library that is well used and appreciated. A 600 square foot coffee shop, that is leased and operated by an independent vendor, was built in 2007. The Children's area of the library underwent major redecorating in 2010. In 2013 a major remodeling of the main circulation desk was completed to make it more user friendly to staff and patrons.

WELCOME TO THE LIBRARY BOARD!

Congratulations on your appointment to the Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library's Board of Directors! Board members are appointed by the City Commission under authority of ND statute. Each director may hold office for a term of three years from the first day of July in the year of appointment. Board members may serve for no more than two consecutive 3-year terms.

The Library recognizes the importance of board member orientation for the Library's efficient operation. After you've been appointed by the City Commission, you will go through an orientation process that encompasses the information and tools needed to understand the duties and responsibilities of being a board member. This orientation process will be conducted by the Library Director.

The Library Director will contact you to welcome you to the library board and to set up an appointment for the orientation session.

Board member orientation includes a tour of the library, an introduction to the information included in this orientation guide, and other documents you may find helpful as you familiarize yourself with library operations.

LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS: JOB DESCRIPTION

Qualifications & Experience

- Interest in the library and community
- Excellent written and verbal communication
- Ability to negotiate with town/city/county managers and councils
- Good organizational skills and planning experience
- Holds a current library card
- Capable of raising funds for the library
- Willing to devote time to board activities
- Awareness and appreciation of the library's past, present and future role in our community
- Ability to gracefully handle opposition and make decisions in the best interest of the library
- Knowledgeable of political issues that may affect the library
- Willingness to learn about the library and its services

Duties

- Attends regularly scheduled library board meetings and special board meetings
- Attends library functions as appropriate
- Knows and abides by library board bylaws
- Reads board meeting minutes and other materials sent out before the board meetings
- Abides by North Dakota's [Open Records and Meetings](#) laws
- Participates appropriately in board meetings
- Works with library director on long range plans
- Hires and evaluates library director
- Approves policies that govern the operation of the library
- Adopts the annual budget and approves monthly invoices
- Represents the library's point of view at city commission meetings and other public forums
- Looks for ways to build a positive image for the library
- Knows and supports the basic library tenets such as Intellectual Freedom, Freedom the Read, Confidentiality of Patron Records, and the Library Bill of Rights
- Becomes knowledgeable about local, state and federal laws affecting libraries when appropriate
- Abides by the majority decisions reached by the board, and publicly supports these decisions

President Job Description - Duties

- Presides at all board meetings
- Serves as the chief spokesperson for the library board
- Creates committees as necessary
- Communicates as necessary with the library director
-

Vice-President Job Description - Duties

- Presides when the president is absent
- Accepts responsibilities as delegated by the board president

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND LIBRARY DIRECTOR

If there is a mantra for governing boards of library directors it is: “The board sets policy, the director operates the library with the assistance of staff.” What does this really mean, and what are the differences?

Sometimes the line between policy and operation is very thin and the differences are subtle. Basically, the board of directors and the library director must work as a team, just as the director must construct a team with staff. In order to work successfully, it must be a process of two-way communication, consultation and trust building.

On the following page, you’ll find a chart that breaks down the major responsibilities of the library board and library director. This will distinguish the roles and illustrate where the commonalities and differences are.

<u>Library Board</u>	<u>Library Director</u>
<p>Staff: Recruit, hire, and annually evaluate the Library Director. Approve personnel policies and salary schedules/benefits for all staff.</p>	<p>Staff: Recruit, hire, and annually evaluate all staff. Create and implement personnel policies and salary schedules/benefits for all staff.</p>
<p>Policy: Approve written policies to govern the operation of the library.</p>	<p>Policy: Create and carry out policies as approved by the Library Board. Recommend new policies and/or policy changes to the Library Board.</p>
<p>Budget: Officially adopt the budget upon review after presented by the Library Director and present it to City Council. Review expenditures. Approve monthly invoices. Amend line items within the budget as necessary.</p>	<p>Budget: Prepare and submit the budget to the Library Board. Maintain complete and accurate records of finances. Expend funds based on the approved budget.</p>
<p>Planning: Work with the Library Director to determine the mission, vision, and goals of the library. See that a plan is developed for meeting community needs/interests and that it is carried out.</p>	<p>Planning/Management: Work with the staff on supporting the mission and vision of the library and on achieving goals. Manage day-to-day operations of the library, including collection development. Continually refine library services to meet community needs/interests. Report the library's current progress and future needs to the Library Board.</p>
<p>Legal Issues: Be familiar with city, state, and federal laws relating to public libraries.</p>	<p>Legal Issues: Be familiar with city, state, and federal laws relating to public libraries. Keep the Library Board informed on laws relating to public libraries.</p>
<p>Collection Development: Approve and adopt a collection development policy.</p>	<p>Collection Development: Responsible for the selection and ordering of all books and resources.</p>
<p>Board Meetings: Regularly attend monthly board meetings. Conduct affairs of the board at these meetings.</p>	<p>Board Meetings: Attend monthly board meetings. Provide a progress report and provide information as needed/requested by the Library Board.</p>
<p>Board Member Recruitment: Recommend qualified candidates. Approve new board members.</p>	<p>Board Member Recruitment: Recommend qualified candidates. Provide new board member orientation.</p>

LIBRARY BOARD ETHICS

Library boards represent the community in which they serve by having a diverse set of individuals representing various cultures, ages, ethnicities, and genders. When members of the board come together to make decisions, the board members must present a unified voice despite the difference of opinions that may exist. These library board ethics have been created in the hope that boards can avoid some of the friction that can easily lead to disagreement and controversy.

As a member of the library board I will:

- Listen carefully to fellow board members
- Respect the opinion of the other board members
- Respect and support the majority decision of the board
- Recognize that all authority is vested in the board when it meets in legal session and not with individual board members
- Keep well-informed of developments that are relevant to issues that may come before the board
- Participate actively in board meetings and actions
- Call to the attention of the board any issues that I believe will have an adverse effect on the library
- Attempt to interpret the needs of the community to the library and interpret the action of the library to the community
- Refer complaints about the library to the proper level on the chain of command
- Recognize that the board member's job is to ensure that the library is well-managed, not to manage the library
- Vote to hire the best possible person to manage the library
- Represent the whole community to the library and not a particular area or group
- Do my best to ensure that the library is well maintained, financially secure, growing and always operating the best interests of the community
- Declare any conflict of interests between my personal life and my position on the library board and avoid voting on issues that appear to be a conflict of interest
- As a member of the library board I will NOT:
 - Be critical in or outside of the board meeting, or of fellow board members or their opinions
 - Use any part of the library for my personal advantage or the personal advantage of my friends and relatives
 - Discuss the confidential proceedings of the board outside the board meeting
 - Promise prior to a meeting how I will vote on any issue in the meeting
 - Interfere with the duties of the director or undermine the director's authority

BOARD RESOURCES

Below are links to resources you will find helpful in your position as a library board member. They include information about the library as well as state laws applicable to public libraries and nationally accepted library policies.

Library Resources

[Annual Reports](#)

[Bylaws](#)

[Minutes](#)

[Strategic Plan](#)

[Library Policies](#)

State Laws and Standards

Handbook for North Dakota Public Library Board Members

Volume 1: [General](#)

Volume 2: [Conduct of the Board Meeting](#)

[North Dakota Library Law](#)

[NDLCC's Standards for Public Libraries](#)

[Open Records and Meetings Laws](#)

National Library Policies

[Library Bill of Rights](#)

[Freedom to Read Statement](#)

Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries that make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

A history of the Library Bill of Rights is found in the latest edition of the [Intellectual Freedom Manual](#).

Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

A Joint Statement by:

[American Library Association](#)
[Association of American Publishers](#)

Subsequently endorsed by:

[American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression](#)
[The Association of American University Presses, Inc.](#)
[The Children's Book Council](#)
[Freedom to Read Foundation](#)
[National Association of College Stores](#)
[National Coalition Against Censorship](#)
[National Council of Teachers of English](#)
[The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression](#)

ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

- Library Tour
 - Main Floor – adult area
 - Main Floor – children’s library
 - Main Floor – teen zone
 - Lower Level – fiction/magazines/800’s-900’s
 - Lower Level – meeting rooms
 - Staff areas
- Orientation Guide
- Board Responsibilities
- Board Resources
- Budget Information
- Organizational Chart
- Library Staff Policies

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guide was prepared using information from the following:

Board and Director Roles and Responsibilities - Washington Secretary of State

Duties and Responsibilities of the Library Board and of the Library Director - Iowa Library Services – State Library of Iowa

Handbook for North Dakota Public Library Board Members – ND State Library

In the Public Trust – Indiana State Library

Library Board Fundamentals (Librarian’s Toolkit) - New Mexico State Library
Trustee Orientation Policy – Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives

Wisconsin Library Trustee Handbook – Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction