

MacDonald Public Library

Library Trustee Job Description

The MacDonald Public Library Board of Trustees is made up of six residents of New Baltimore, Michigan, who share a love of the library and an interest in ensuring its success. They are elected by the residents of New Baltimore, Michigan. The job of each individual trustee is to work with their fellow members to accomplish the library's mission:

“To serve the cultural, recreational, and educational needs of our New Baltimore patrons, to serve as an information center, and to offer wide varieties of materials and services in a welcoming and helpful environment.”

The Board represents the community and its interests. It also represents the Library in the community with each trustee serving as a connector between the Library and the town. It is accountable to the taxpayers of the town. Trustees are required to maintain open records and hold open meetings under the requirements of the Michigan Open Meetings Act. All authority rests with the full Board and its designees, not with individual trustees.

Responsibilities and Duties:

- Engage in a strategic planning process for the Library.
- Be aware of and comply with applicable laws, regulations, bylaws, and policies.
- Regularly self-evaluate the performance of the Board and determine areas where improvement is needed.
- Attend and participate in all board and assigned committee meetings; prepare for said meetings by reading materials pertaining to said meeting. A packet is sent in advance of the meeting and typically includes a proposed agenda, minutes of the last meeting, financial reports, staff reports, and documents relevant to old and new business items.
- Adopt and review written policies to govern the operation of the Library consistent with the mission of the Library, as necessary. Policies are written and presented by the Director and reviewed by the Board.
- Adopt an annual budget with adequate support for the Library. Review monthly financial reports in the context of the annual budget.
- Employ a competent library director, who is responsible for the daily operation of the library and supervision of library staff and volunteers. Provide regular periodic evaluations of the director.
- Advocate for legislation favorable to libraries on the local, state, and national levels.

- Follow the established chain of command for effecting change, working through the library director.
- Be an advocate to the community and residents for the Library and for Board decisions.
- Keep up with current library trends and practices through attending professional meetings, visiting other libraries, talking to trustees from other libraries, and actively participating in library related workshops and activities from the Library of Michigan.
- Support basic library tenets and standards, such as Intellectual Freedom, Freedom to Read, Confidentiality of Patron Records, Library Bill of Rights, and the Public's Right to Information.

It is important that trustees and the Board (as a whole), operate in an ethical manner. To that end, a trustee should:

- Declare any personal conflicts of interest and avoid voting on issues that appear to be conflicts of interest.
- Not use their position on the Board for personal advantage or the personal advantage of friends/relatives.
- Observe confidential proceedings of the Board and not discuss business outside of meetings.
- Support open discussion on any agenda item prior to a vote; once a vote is taken, support the decision of the majority.
- Not interfere with the day-to-day work of library staff, nor interfere with the duties of the director or undermine the director's authority.
- Recognize that the library's and community's best interests must prevail over any individual interest.

Qualifications:

- A resident of New Baltimore.
- An abiding interest in the Library and the community.
- A willingness to seek opportunities to learn more about the MacDonald Public Library and about the library community in general.
- Knowledge of the community.
- Commitment to providing quality library services and equitable access to those services to the entire community.
- Readiness to devote an effort to the duties and responsibilities of the position.
- Ability to work well with people, relate to the public, lead meetings, and communicate effectively.

Monthly Board meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. in the MacDonald Public Library Community Room. Trustees may be assigned to serve on a committee (Finance and Policy). Committee meetings occur as needed. Board officers include Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary. It is important to note that the Board's authority, while broad, is a collective authority. Trustees must work cooperatively together; no trustee can speak or act for the Board unless specifically empowered to do so.

Expected time commitment: 2 hours monthly to prepare for and attend meetings; this may increase if a trustee is assigned to a committee and/or elected to an officer position.

Trustee training and education resources:

- [Library of Michigan Trustee Information page](#)
- [Library of Michigan Trustee Manual](#)
- [United for Libraries page](#)
- [United for Libraries statewide access page](#); for additional training videos and resources

If you are interested in becoming a trustee, please contact the library director, Tonya Ryals, at 586-725-0273 or at director@macdonaldlibrary.org. More information about the role of library trustees can be found in the [Michigan Public Library Trustee Manual](#).