

Responsibilities of Library Board of Control Members

In the operation of the East Baton Rouge Parish Library system, trustees have three responsibilities: statutory, practical, and ethical.

Statutory

All authority for operation of the library resides in the board, in its legal and official capacity. Each Library Board of Control member is charged by legislative action with broad powers. The duties and powers contained in the statutes are described below.

Library Laws of Louisiana RS 25:215

§215. Duties and powers of the board; employment of librarian, assistants, and other employees

- A.** The board of control shall meet and organize immediately after their appointment and annually thereafter and elect a president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, whose duties shall be those customarily exercised by such officers. The board of control shall have authority to establish rules and regulations for its own government and that of the library not inconsistent with law; to select and employ a librarian, and, upon the recommendation and approval of the latter, to employ assistant librarians and other employees and fix their salaries and compensation; provided that no contract of employment shall be made for a longer period than four years nor with any person as head librarian who has not been certified by the State Board of Library Examiners as provided in R.S. 25:222. The head librarian may be appointed or elected secretary of the board of control.

Note: In conjunction with the duties and responsibilities provided by state statutes, the Library Board of Control is also obliged to operate within the framework provided by the East Baton Rouge City-Parish Plan of Government. The Library is a department of the City-Parish, and its budget, purchases, contractual arrangements, personnel practices, and general operations are subject to the rules, regulations, and operational requirements of the City-Parish. Budget requests are approved by the Board and forwarded to the City-Parish which provides final authorization for budgets and expenditures.

Practical¹

The Library Board of Control members:

1. Employ and/or dismiss the library director.
2. Establish written policy.
3. Secure adequate funding.
4. Approve budget.
5. Provide and maintain:
 1. Facilities
 2. Resources
 3. Services
6. Help develop and approve the library's plan of service.
7. Help promote and advocate for the library.
8. Participate in opportunities for continuing education.

¹Source: *Handbook for Louisiana Library Trustees*, 1996, LA State Library

Ethical Responsibility²

Ethical Statement for Public Library Trustees

Trustees in the capacity of trust upon them shall observe ethical standards with absolute truth, integrity, and honor.

Trustees must avoid situations in which personal interests might be served or financial benefits gained at the expense of library users, colleagues, or the situation.

It is incumbent upon any trustee to disqualify himself/herself immediately whenever the appearance of a conflict of interest exists.

Trustees must distinguish clearly in their actions and statements between their personal philosophies and attitudes and those of the institution, acknowledging the formal position of the board even if they personally disagree.

A trustee must respect the confidential nature of library business while being aware of and in compliance with applicable laws governing freedom of information.

Trustees must be prepared to support to the fullest the efforts of librarians in resisting censorship of library materials by groups or individuals.

Trustees who accept library board responsibilities are expected to perform all of the functions of library trustees.

²Adopted by the Board of Directors of the American Library Trustee Association, July 1985; Adopted by the Board of Directors of the Public Library Association, July 1985; Amended by the Board of Directors of the American Library Trustee Association, July 1988; Approval of the amendment by the Board of Directors of the Public Library Association, January 1989.