Effective Orientation for New Board Members Should Include:

- Copies of the library's mission, goals, and strategic plans
- Tour of the library and introduction to staff members
- List of expectations for new board members
- Copies of board bylaws, library policies and procedures
- Schedule of board meetings
- Current library budget, recent annual report, and monthly reports
- Minutes from the last two board meetings
- Statistics related to the community and the library
- Topics of: Friends of the Library groups and Library Foundation groups
- Information about other library organizations
  - » SDLA- South Dakota Library Association (sdlibraryassociation.org)
  - » MPLA - Mountain Plains Library Association (mpla.us)

Things the Board Needs to Know

- Differences between approving policy by the Board, and administering that policy by the library director
- Importance of confidentiality of library records (SDCL 14-2-51)
- Role of the board in library personnel decisions, and any legal processes for personnel-related action
- Role of the board in determining the library budget and in approving expenditures (SDCL 14-2-40)
- Accreditation of public libraries (library.sd.gov)
- Certification of library directors and library staff (library.sd.gov)
- The role and importance of access to information in local library services

Cover photo: Watertown Regional Library

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This pocket edition of the South Dakota Guide for Library Boards is intended to serve as a handy reference for library trustees and staff, and for local officials who may be considering candidates for library board vacancies.

For further questions or training opportunities, contact:

South Dakota State Library
Library Development Staff
800 Governors Drive
Pierre, SD 57501
1-800-423-6665
library.sd.gov

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Board Responsibilities

The majority of South Dakota's public library boards of trustees are governing or administrative boards, as laid out in SD law. This means that they are responsible, among other duties, for:

- Setting policy
- Hiring, firing, and evaluating the library director
- Empowering the library director to manage day-to-day operations of the library
- Engaging in strategic planning
- Approving library expenditures and submitting a budget
- Reporting annually to the city or county
- Submitting annual statistics to the state library

The board is selected by the city or county to serve terms as determined by that body. The library board must be broadly representative of the city as a whole.

Characteristics of a Good Board Member

- Active engagement with the community
- Interest in how the library can meet public needs
- Avoids conflicts of interest
- Adherence to ethical standards of truth, integrity and honor
- Understanding of the purposes of public libraries
- Willingness to protect confidentiality of library records
- Knowledge of pertinent statutes (e.g., SD code pertaining to libraries, public meetings laws)
- Eagerness to keep up-to-date with issues affecting libraries
- Adequate preparation before board meetings
- Skill in group decision making, and acceptance of board decisions
- Understanding of the need for board turnover, and eagerness to recruit and recommend potential board members
- Ability to differentiate between board and staff responsibilities
- Imagination, energy, and good will

A common meeting agenda

1. *Call to order*
2. *Roll call*
3. *Adoption of agenda*
4. *Approval of previous minutes*
5. *Current budget reports*
6. *Correspondence*
7. *Library director's report*
8. *Committee reports*
9. *Unfinished business*
10. *New business*
11. *Next meeting date and time*
12. *Adjournment*

For Open Meeting Laws, see South Dakota Codified Laws (SDCL): 1-25-1 and 1-27-1.16 (legis.state.sd.us)

What should be included in Library Board Bylaws?

- Selection, appointment, term length, number, and composition of board, as determined by local ordinance establishing the library
- Place, time, and responsibility for regular meeting
- Procedures for calling special meeting
- Attendance requirements
- Definition and requirements of a quorum
- Parliamentary rules to be followed
- Duties of individual board members
- Duties of officers
- Appointment and duties of standing committees
- Provisions for special committees
- Relationship with the library director
- Limitations on board members
- Required reports and yearly timetables
- Procedures for adopting or amending bylaws
- Order of business