

Westchester Library System Trustee Institute

Assuming Responsibility for Tomorrow...

Library Trusteeship in the "New Normal"

April 3, 2013
White Plains Public Library

*Jerry Nichols, Director
Palmer Institute for Public Library
Organization and Management*

TONIGHT'S ISSUES

- ▶ Trustees' Basic Responsibilities
 - Do you know your Job?
- ▶ The Trustee/Director Partnership
 - Who's the Boss?
- ▶ Life in a Tax Cap World
 - Where did the Money Go?
- ▶ Rediscovering Your Community
 - Back to the Future
- ▶ The Realities of Consolidation/Redistricting
 - Will it Save your Library?

WHAT IS AN EFFECTIVE BOARD?

▶ A knowledgeable, professionally organized group of diverse individuals working in consistent collaboration and dedicated to the common goal of providing quality public library services to all residents of the community. They strive as individuals and as a group to maintain a relationship with the director and each other that is open, fair and equitable.

TRUSTEES' BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES

- ▶ Meet State Library standards;
- ▶ Conduct business publicly and ethically;
- ▶ Oversee Finances;
- ▶ Conform to applicable laws, regulations and decisions;
- ▶ Appoint/Approve Personnel;
- ▶ Establish Policies;
- ▶ Be an Advocate for the Library!
- ▶ Communicate openly with the Director.

WHAT IS AN EFFECTIVE DIRECTOR?

A trusted and well qualified individual who serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Library, ably fulfilling the Library's mission on a day to day basis.

The Director maintains a relationship with the Board that is fair, equitable for each trustee and effective for the Board as a whole, as well as for the staff and institution.

BASIC DIRECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- ▶ Manages Library operations and staff;
- ▶ Implements policies set by the Board;
- ▶ Selects personnel;
- ▶ Recommends programs & services;
- ▶ Responds to the Board's need for information;
- ▶ Is an Advocate for the Library;
- ▶ Communicates frequently with the Board.


**TRUSTEES AND DIRECTORS
SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES**

- ▶ Budget Development
- ▶ Policy Development
- ▶ Public Relations
- ▶ Facility Design
- ▶ Advocacy




**AN EFFECTIVE BOARD UNDERSTANDS
RESPONSIBILITY VS. DELEGATION**

- ▶ The Director as CEO
- ▶ The need for Fiscal Oversight
- ▶ The authority to appoint (not select) staff
- ▶ Their policy making role
- ▶ Their accountability to the community
- ▶ Their ultimate responsibility for adequate resources
- ▶ Their responsibility for the future



ISSUES TO DISCUSS ON A REGULAR BASIS

- ▶ The Library's philosophy and goals
- ▶ Library Finances – today and tomorrow
- ▶ Policy review
- ▶ Your Role in the community
- ▶ Review of critical issues
- ▶ New trends in library service



"The most important task of an organization's leader is to anticipate crisis. Perhaps not to avert it, but to anticipate it.

To wait until the crisis hits is already abdication. One has to make the organization capable of anticipating the storm, weathering it, and in fact, being ahead of it.

It's called innovation, constant renewal."

- Peter Drucker

THE "NEW NORMAL"
THE FUTURE IS NOW

- ▶ Living in a Competitive Environment
 - ▶ Information as a Commodity
 - ▶ The Battle to Control Content
 - ▶ The War over Access
 - ▶ The Lack of Political Clout
 - ▶ The Loss of a Clear Mission

LIFE IN A TAX CAP WORLD
WHERE DID THE MONEY GO?

- ▶ The designated driver gets the bill....
- ▶ Where you fit in the Tax Cap Law
- ▶ How long will this last?
- ▶ So let's deal with reality....
 - ▶ Multi-year planning
 - ▶ Ethical downsizing
 - ▶ Breaking the cap
 - ▶ Changing the rules

REDISCOVERING YOUR COMMUNITY
BACK TO THE FUTURE

- ▶ **Weathering the Storm: The Library as a Safe Place**
 - ▶ Would you leave your children there?
 - ▶ Where were you when...
 - ▶ Are you ready to respond as a Trustee?
- ▶ **Back to the Future: the Community Center**
 - ▶ **Civic Engagement Renewed**
 - ▶ To "inform democracy" or to be a catalyst of change?
 - ▶ Intellectual Incubators and other such roles...
 - ▶ Passive or Aggressive? That is the question....

**THE REALITIES OF CONSOLIDATION
AND REDISTRICTING**
WILL IT SAVE YOUR LIBRARY?

- ▶ Who created public libraries?
- ▶ Who is willing to pay for public libraries?
- ▶ Who isn't willing to pay for public libraries?
- ▶ Will your Library exist 20 years from now?

What is your responsibility as a Trustee?

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