

## **LIBRARY TRUSTEE – SKILLS, QUALIFICATIONS, ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

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The Board of Trustees is the governing body of the Pierce County Library System. It provides fiscal oversight, sets long-term policy direction, and ensures responsible stewardship of public resources. Working with the Executive Director who manages day-to-day operations, the Board ensures the Library System complies with Washington State law (RCW 27.12) and responds to community needs.

### **Principles of Governance**

The Board:

- Acts collectively; individual trustees have no independent authority.
- Governs through policy, budget approval, and strategic direction—not operations.
- Supports the Executive Director’s leadership and respects staff roles.
- Conducts business transparently and in compliance with open meetings laws.
- Upholds high ethical standards and accountability.

### **Skills and Qualifications**

- Passion for public libraries and their mission, with a strong interest in community welfare.
- Experience in governance, finance, budgeting, organizational management, or public policy.
- Strategic thinking and ability to support long-range planning.
- Helpful but not required: knowledge of facilities, real property, and equity and inclusion principles.

### **Board Responsibilities**

As a governing body, the Board is responsible for:

#### **A. Policy and Oversight**

- Adopt and review policies guiding library services and operations.
- Ensure policies meet legal requirements and community needs.

#### **B. Financial Stewardship**

- Approve the annual budget and monitor financial health.

- Oversee the Library’s levy and election related actions.
- Approve contracts and major financial commitments.
- Accept gifts, funds, or property for library purposes.

### **C. Strategic Direction**

- Establish long-term goals and priorities.
- Plan for service evolution, growth, and facility development.

### **D. Executive Director Oversight**

- Hire, evaluate, and set expectations for the Executive Director.
- Provide guidance and support while maintaining appropriate boundaries.

### **E. Facilities and Capital Assets**

- Acquire, manage, and ensure maintenance of library facilities.

### **F. Community Representation and Advocacy**

- Represent the Library to the public, stakeholders, and elected officials in coordination with Executive Director or designee.
- Support collaboration with other governments, libraries, and community partners.
- Support Foundation activities as appropriate.

## **Responsibilities of Individual Trustees**

- Understand community needs and reflect them in decision-making.
- Become familiar with relevant library laws, issues, and trends.
- Contribute personal expertise while exercising good judgment and professionalism.
- Participate in training or development opportunities.
- Stay informed on library and community developments.
- Uphold laws and requirements related to ethics and open public meetings.

## **Trustee Conduct**

- Prepare for and attend meetings and major library events.
- Engage respectfully with colleagues and the public.
- Approach decisions with openness and a focus on the public interest.
- Support intellectual freedom and equitable access to information.
- Maintain integrity and handle conflicts constructively.