



Advocacy

Governance

Purpose

The Library board must ensure that the community is aware of the importance of the Library and that funding bodies fully understand the important role which the Library plays in the community, especially in promoting lifelong learning and literacy.

This policy sets out the advocacy responsibilities of the Library Board and the role of staff in this work.

Policy

Section 1: Key points

While advocacy is important, it is also important that these efforts are done in a thoughtful way that strengthens the depth and breadth of support for libraries. Some key points:

1. The goal of advocacy is to promote awareness of the impact and value of public libraries.
2. In the process of advocating for the library, the focus will be on the positive merits of our value. Criticism of individuals not sharing this perspective should be avoided.
3. Where appropriate, the library will participate in advocacy efforts with provincial and national library organizations, for example to support independent research that improves the understanding about the impact of libraries and the best practices to achieve that impact.
4. The timing and nature of library advocacy will be careful to avoid the appearance that specific candidates or political parties are being endorsed.
5. In general, the library's formal advocacy efforts will focus on issues that are related to our mission as a public library. For example, efforts to influence the provincial and federal governments will focus on funding or legislation that impact public libraries or libraries in general. This does not preclude the library from participating in or supporting awareness campaigns on issues consistent with our values of respect and inclusion, or, in general, support of issues related to health and wellness and democratic participation.

Section 2: Advocacy strategy

1. In pursuing its advocacy activities, the Library Board shall:
 - a) inform council of the needs of the community, the development of library services, funding requests, plans, and achievements
 - b) participate regularly in activities that build relationships with individuals and organizations that share interests with those of the Brantford Public Library

- c) identify and respond to issues, concerns and government policies that may directly or indirectly affect the Brantford Public Library and ensure that government decision-makers at all levels are aware of the value of the library and its benefit to individuals and to the community.

Section 3: Roles

1. The **Board chair** (or delegate) shall be the official spokesperson for the Brantford Public Library on issues approved by the Library Board, including being a media spokesperson.
2. All **Board members** are encouraged to promote the value of the Brantford Public Library and its impact on the community. This is done by:
 - Sharing stories and relevant information about library programs, services and impact.
 - Sharing information about the Board's values, vision, and strategic plans.
 - Being an ambassador for the library and advocating in a manner consistent with this policy.
 - When requested, assisting the Board Chair in officially representing the library at meetings or other events.
 - Respecting the confidentiality appropriate to any issues of a sensitive nature and understand that it is the Chair's role to represent and speak on behalf of the Board.
 - If contacted by the media, coordinate with the Board Chair and CEO/Chief Librarian to ensure appropriate information is shared. Because of their roles, the Board Chair and CEO/Chief Librarian are responsible for responding to media inquiries. This role may be delegated to others, but the delegation requires the approval of the Board Chair or CEO/Chief Librarian.
3. The **CEO/Chief Librarian:**
 - May speak on behalf of the Library in matters relating to the operation and procedures of the library and may speak on behalf of the Board in cooperation with the Board Chair.
 - Shall identify and maintain effective relationships with appropriate stakeholders such as other libraries, governments, agencies, businesses, media, non-governmental organizations, and community leaders.
 - Will periodically report to the Library Board on the status of advocacy efforts undertaken by staff, especially those which support the overall advocacy activities of the Library Board.

History

Supersedes: Not applicable

Background documents, related policies: *Brantford Public Library Use of Library Resources for Political Elections Policy*

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