

Board Motion Number:	2022-04	Date of Review:	2024, 2028
Date Approved:	June 2024	Chairperson's signature:	

LIBRARY BOARD CODE OF CONDUCT

BACKGROUND

Oxford County Library Board is committed to the highest level of integrity and ethics in all of its dealings in accordance with all current legislation, as well as all Library and County of Oxford policies and by-laws.

PURPOSE

Oxford County Library Board is bound by the [Oxford County Council Code of Conduct Policy](#) (9.17 of the General Policy Manual). This policy further defines the code by which Oxford County Library Board Members will conduct business with each other, with library staff and with the library's partners.

PROCEDURES

Governing Style and Accountability

1. The Oxford County Library Board will govern with a style that ensures:
 - a. encouragement of, and respect for, diverse opinions;
 - b. strategic leadership;
 - c. clear distinction between Board and CEO/Chief Librarian Roles; and
 - d. collective, rather than individual, decisions.
2. Furthermore, the Library Board shall:
 - a. act in the interests of the Oxford County Library and the greater Oxford County community served by the Library, over and above other interest group involvement, membership on other boards or personal interests;
 - b. speak with one voice once a decision has been reached or a resolution passed;
 - c. prepare for meetings to make informed decisions and actively participate in carrying out the work of the Board;
 - d. adhere to all of the policies approved by the Board;
 - e. conduct the business of the Board with integrity to reflect credit on the Library and inspire the confidence, respect and trust of colleagues, staff and the community;
 - f. support the Library's Values as outlined in its Strategic Plan; and
 - g. monitor and discuss the Board's performance.

Commitment to "One Voice"

1. Individual Board members shall exercise their authority responsibly, respect Board decisions and maintain decorum to uphold the integrity and discipline of the Library Board governance.
2. Once the Board has made a decision, each Board member, regardless of individual dissent, will respect the decision of the Board.

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3. Although all Board members are at liberty to express differences of opinion on Board issues during debate, individual members shall not express their differences of opinion in a manner which would create polarization, or undermine a decision of the Board.

Authority

1. Board members acting independently have no authority to insert themselves in Library operations except when explicitly authorized by the Board and carried out by the CEO/Chief Librarian. Furthermore,
 - a. no Board member will involve staff members in their disputes or negotiations;
 - b. further, Board members shall not involve themselves in the disputes or negotiations between staff; and,
 - c. any information requested by a Board member of Library personnel must be brought to the Library Board for approval.
2. Board members' interaction with the public, press or other entities must recognize the same limitation and the similar inability of any Board member or Board members to speak for the Board. Board members will adhere to the Board's [Advocacy Policy](#) regarding the guidelines for Library Spokesperson.
3. Board members will make no judgments of the CEO / Chief Librarian or staff performance except when assessed according to Board policy.

Conflicts of Interest

1. Board members must adhere to the requirements of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, R.S.O 1990, c. M.50* with respect to pecuniary or fiduciary conflicts of interest.
2. Members will disclose their involvement with family members, relatives, or other close personal relations, as well as other organizations, vendors, or any other associations that may be considered or perceived as a conflict of interest.
3. Members are encouraged to seek guidance from legal advisors when they become aware that they may have a conflict between their responsibilities to the public as a member and any other interest, including a direct or indirect pecuniary interest.
4. When a Board member has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in any matter, and is present at a Board meeting at which the matter is the subject of consideration, the Board member, in accordance with the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.50 s. 5 (1)*, shall:
 - a. prior to any consideration of the matter at the meeting, disclose the interest, and the general nature thereof;
 - b. not take part in the discussion of, or vote on any question in respect to the matter; and
 - c. not attempt in any way whether before, during or after the meeting to influence the voting on any such question.
5. A record of the disclosure shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting, and entered into a registry of disclosures maintained by the Board Secretary in accordance with the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, R.S.O 1990, c. M.50 s. 6 (1)*.

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Personal Accountability

1. The accountability of Board members' governance of the Library must take precedence over any conflicting loyalties, including those towards advocacy or interest groups; membership on other boards, organizations, or staff; and the personal interests of individual board members as consumers of the Library's services.
2. Oxford County Library Board members shall:
 - a. treat others in a courteous, dignified and fair manner;
 - b. encourage and respect diversity of viewpoints and skills;
 - c. take responsibility for personal professional development through continuing educational opportunities and participation in regional, provincial or national library organizations; and
 - d. support the value of Intellectual Freedom as referenced in library operational policies.

Confidentiality

1. Board members shall not disclose or release by any means to any person either in oral or written form any confidential information acquired by virtue of their office except when required by law to do so.
2. Board members have a duty to hold in strict confidence all information concerning matters dealt with in meetings closed to the public in accordance with the *Public Libraries Act, R.S.O 1990*, or any other legislation.
3. All information, documentation or deliberation received, reviewed or taken in a closed meeting of the Board is confidential unless the matter ceases to be confidential as determined by the Board.
4. No Board member shall:
 - a. obtain access, or attempt to obtain access, to confidential information in the custody or control of the Library except when required or authorized by the Board or otherwise by law to do so;
 - b. use confidential information for personal or private gain or benefit, or for the personal or private gain or benefit of any other person or body; or
 - c. disclose or discuss, through written, electronic or oral communication, to any individual or corporate third party, any information that has been or will be discussed at a closed session of the Board or a Board Committee until such time that the Board or a Board Committee has determined, or has been advised by Staff that the matter, or any part of the matter, can be made public subject to review under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, or if directed to do so by a court of law.
5. When a Board Member ceases to be a Member, the duty to not disclose or release any confidential information acquired by virtue of one's office, except when required by law to do so, continues.

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References and Related Documents:

Legislation

Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P. 44.

Municipal Act, 2011, S.O. 2001, c. 25

Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.50

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56

Oxford County By-Laws and Policies

County of Oxford. (August, 2023). *Procedural By-Law No. 6268-2020*

County of Oxford. (October, 2019). *Council Code of Conduct Policy, No. 9.17*

Oxford County Library Policies

Oxford County Library Board. (February, 2024). *Board Advocacy Policy.*