

Kingston Library Board Trustee Code of Conduct and Ethics Statement

(Reviewed and Approved by the Kingston Library Board on July 20, 2016)

I. Introduction

A. The purpose of this Kingston Library Code of Conduct is to clearly define and recommend the expectation and responsibility of how a Board trustee is to comport and conduct themselves on behalf of the Kingston Library, the governing body of the Board of Trustees (BoT), and all staff, volunteers, patron and community. This policy shall be reviewed and signed annually during the reorganizational meeting held by the BoT.

B. Members of the Kingston Library Board of Trustees have legal authority for the conduct of the Kingston Library only when acting as a body in a properly convened session. Board members acting as individuals have no authority over library personnel. They shall neither direct nor request that employees and/or the Library Director perform their jobs or other tasks, either in oral or written communications, unless a duly approved resolution of the Board of Trustees directs them to do so.

C. Members of the Board are free to speak to individuals on library issues outside of Board meetings, but such public expression is not to be construed as Board policy. Information from executive sessions must remain confidential at all times, unless release is appropriately authorized. The Board will not be bound in any way by any individual's statement or action unless the Board, through an adopted policy or by a majority vote of Board membership, has delegated this authority to the individual member. When exercising their authority and individual rights, members of the Board are asked to be mindful of the impact their actions may have upon the mission of the Board and the operation of the Kingston Library.

II. Board Member Code of Conduct

As a Board member, I understand that I have duties of care, loyalty, and obedience to the organization.

- ❖ The duty of care is the duty to pay attention to the organization – to monitor its activities, see that its mission is being accomplished, and guard its financial resources.
- ❖ The duty of loyalty is the duty to avoid conflicts of interest, and
- ❖ The duty of obedience is to carry out the purposes of the organization and to comply with the law.

As a Board member, I agree to:

- ❖ Comply with the BoT approved "Patron Code of Conduct Policy"
- ❖ Act with honesty and integrity

- ❖ Support in a positive manner all actions taken by the Board of Trustees even when I am in a minority position on such actions. I recognize that decisions of the Board can be made only by a majority vote at a Board meeting and respect the majority decisions of the Board, while retaining the right to seek changes through ethical and constructive channels
- ❖ Participate in (1) the annual Strategic Planning Retreat, (2) Board self-evaluation programs, and (3) Board development workshops, seminars, and other educational events that enhance my skills as a Board member
- ❖ Keep confidential information confidential
- ❖ Exercise my authority as a Board member only when acting in a meeting with the full Board or when appointed by the Board
- ❖ Unless provided with authority of the Board to represent the Board, individual Board members have no more authority than other individual citizens when visiting the library. When visiting the library, a Board member must follow the same rules and procedures as all library patrons.
- ❖ Any concerns or opinions of the visiting Board members related to library operations or library programs shall be directed to the Library Director in writing and sent either by email to the Director, U.S. Mail, or left at the front circulation desk with staff to be forwarded to the Director.
- ❖ When visiting the library, Board members are not to engage in prolonged visits which keep staff preoccupied and away from regular duties. Employees are to immediately notify the Director if individual Board members give them directives, criticize library personnel, attempt to undermine established authority or chain of command or communication procedures or otherwise engage in behavior outside the authority of any other individual citizen. In the event that a Board member is a parent, he/she is entitled to exercise all of the prerogatives of a parent in accessing library programs and personnel, but should be clear in their statements and representations to employees and Director when they are speaking in the capacity of parent and when they are speaking in the capacity of a Board member.
- ❖ Work with and respect the opinions of my peers who serve this Board, and leave my personal prejudices out of all Board discussions
- ❖ Always act for the good of the organization and represent the interests of all people served by the organization
- ❖ Represent this organization in a positive and supportive manner at all times

- ❖ Observe the parliamentary procedures and display courteous conduct in all Board and committee meetings
- ❖ Refrain from intruding on administrative issues that are the responsibility of management, except to monitor the results of the organization
- ❖ Accept my responsibility for providing oversight of the financial condition of the organization
- ❖ Avoid acting in a way that represents a conflict of interest between my position as a Board member and my personal or professional life, even if those actions appear to provide a benefit for the organization. This includes using my position for the advantage of my friends and business associates. If such a conflict does arise, I will declare that conflict before the Board and refrain from voting on matters in which I have a conflict.
- ❖ Abide by these Board operating procedures

III. Ethics Statement

- ❖ *Trustees shall comply with all laws, rules and regulations that apply to them and to their library.*

This justifies periodic training for the entire BoT, Director, and all staff members on important issues that affect the workplace today. Examples include diversity training, effective communication, gender issues, sexual harassment, and guidelines for professional behavior.

- ❖ *A Trustee shall immediately disqualify him/herself whenever the appearance of or a conflict of interest exists.*

The Trustee should disqualify him/herself and withdraw from any personnel decision that affects the staff member with whom s/he was involved with in a conflict of interest.

- ❖ *Trustees shall not use their position to gain unwarranted privileges or advantages for themselves or others from the library or from those who do business with the library.*

When a Trustee uses the library as a patron, he or she is bound by the Patron Code of Conduct as any other person enjoying the resources and services of the library. Similarly, any infraction will be addressed accordingly to BoT By-Laws protocol.

IV. Corrective Action/Removal

- A. If a Trustee is accused of violation of this policy, Patron Code of Conduct, or Ethics Statement, representatives of the Executive Committee (omitting that Trustee if they are a member of said committee) will conduct an investigation into the accusation and determine whether a violation of the policy did occur.

If so, Kingston Library Board of Trustees By-Law Article 5, Section 2 will go into effect at the next BoT meeting, first act after "Call to Order" of the BoT Agenda. Removal by BoT vote overrides Article 2, Section 2 and is FINAL.

- B. If applicable, suspension from the Kingston Library based on the Patron Code of Conduct may also occur. Violator may appeal this suspension at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the BoT during "Public Comment".

Signature

Date