

BY-LAWS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF  
THE TOMPKINS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY  
ITHACA, NY  
October, 2010

ARTICLE I - NAME AND AUTHORIZATION

The name of this organization is the Board of Trustees of the Tompkins County Public Library, located in the City of Ithaca, County of Tompkins, State of New York. The Board of Trustees exists and functions by virtue of the provisions of New York State Education Law, Section 255, the Tompkins County Charter Article 28, which is appended to these By-laws, and assumes the responsibilities delegated to it by the Tompkins County Legislature, New York.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of the Board of Trustees of the Tompkins County Public Library is to represent the Library on behalf of the people in Tompkins County. It is the obligation of the Board of Trustees to prepare a budget which requests adequate funds from the Tompkins County Legislature for good Library service, to apply for state and federal funds when available, to supervise management of the Library, to promote the best possible use of all Library resources, to improve existing services, and to formulate policy.

ARTICLE III - BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Section 1 - Members

The Board of Trustees is composed of fifteen (15) members, all to be residents of Tompkins County at the time of their appointment and during their tenure. The members of the Board of Trustees are appointed by the Tompkins County Legislature.

Section 2 - Term of Office

The term of office of Trustees shall be three (3) years. No Trustees may serve more than two full consecutive terms. A Trustee may be reappointed after serving two consecutive terms following a lapse of one year. If a member is appointed to serve an unexpired term of office and serves more than half of that term, it shall be considered a full term of office.

Section 3 - Disqualifications and Vacancies

a) Resignation from the Board will be automatic in the event a Trustee ceases to be a resident of Tompkins County.

b) The Board may declare a position vacant when a Trustee fails to attend three consecutive regular meetings of the Board, excused or unexcused. An exception may be made if a leave of absence for good cause is secured.

c) The Tompkins County Legislature shall be notified by the President of the Board whenever a vacancy occurs. Notification to the Tompkins County Legislature shall include the name of a person qualified to fill the position for their consideration. (See Article IV c.)

#### Section 4 - Leaves of Absence

The Board may grant a Trustee a leave of absence from regular Board meetings for a period of from three to five consecutive regular meetings. No member shall be granted a leave of absence more than once during a three year term of office.

#### Section 5 - Duties of the Board of Trustees

The Trustees shall:

a) Establish policies for the operation of the Library which are designed to promote efficient and effective procedures.

b) Appoint a Director of the Library whenever that position shall become vacant.

c) Advise the administration in the preparation of the annual budget; approve the budget; recommend its adoption by the Tompkins County Legislature and make every effort to secure adequate funds to finance Library operation.

d) Regularly review the needs of the physical plant and building needs to see that they meet the requirements of the Library program.

e) Study and support legislation which will bring about the greatest good to the greatest number of libraries in New York State and the nation.

f) Cooperate with other public officials and boards and maintain vital public relations.

g) Keep abreast of standards and Library trends by attending whenever possible, regional, state and national Trustees meetings and workshops.

h) Recommend individuals to the Tompkins County Legislature for membership on the Board of Trustees.

i) Perform such other duties as shall become necessary from time to time.

## Section 6 - Officers

Officers of the Tompkins County Public Library's Board of Trustees shall be a President, a Vice President, a Secretary and a Treasurer. Officers shall be elected at the November Board meeting. An officer may succeed himself or herself. Vacancies in any office shall be filled by a majority vote of the Board at the next regular meeting of the Board after the vacancy occurs.

The duties of the officers shall include, but not be limited to the following:

- a) The President shall preside at meetings and perform such other duties as custom and regulation may require. In the absence or disability of the Treasurer, the President shall sign vouchers for disbursements from the Library fund.
- b) The Vice President shall assume the duties of the President in the event of the absence or disability of the President. The Vice President shall also be responsible for oversight of the Library's committee system.
- c) The Secretary shall endorse an accurate record of all proceedings of Board meetings and shall supervise correspondence of the Board.
- d) The Treasurer shall be responsible for all accounting of Library receipts and expenditures. The Treasurer shall sign all vouchers for disbursement from the Library's funds within the framework of the approved budget and with the approval of a majority of the Board present at a regularly scheduled meeting. The Treasurer shall serve as the Chair of the Finance Committee for the Board.
- e) The Library Director or a person designated by the Director shall serve as Clerk of the Board.

## ARTICLE IV - COMMITTEES

The Board of Trustees for the Tompkins County Public Library will usually act as a committee of the whole. Certain functions, however, will be aided by the following standing committees:

- a) The Executive Committee shall include the Board's President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and past President, if still serving on the Board. The Library Director may be asked to serve as an ex officio member of the Executive Committee and act as its recorder. The Executive Committee shall, whenever necessary between regularly scheduled meetings of the full Board, make decisions on behalf of the Board. Those decisions must be reported, in writing, at the next meeting of the Board and are subject to ratification by a majority of the Board at a regularly scheduled meeting. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for evaluating the performance of the Director and Assistant Director and may ask the Chair of the Finance and Personnel Committee to serve as an ex officio member for this purpose.

b) The Finance and Personnel Committee shall develop and modify the Library budget, defend this budget to the Tompkins County Legislature, oversee the Library's fiscal affairs and fiscal policy, represent the Library management in contract negotiations regarding staff compensation and benefits, hours of operation, staffing levels and appropriate labor grades and reclassification of jobs, manage the search process for the Director and Assistant Director and manage the decision-making process regarding their compensation and evaluations.

c) The Nominating Committee shall recommend, recruit, interview and advise the full Board regarding selection of new trustees and trustee development and shall prepare a slate of officers for the Board.

d) The Library Art Committee shall review all proposed gifts and purchases of art and shall recommend their permanent acquisition to the Board and shall also recommend de-acquisition of permanent art to the Board.

e) The Library Services and Policy Committee shall provide oversight and review of all Library activities and services, including public programming, review proposed new Library policies or changes to existing policies and recommend action to the Board.

f) The Community Relations and Outreach Committee will identify communities in need of increased connection with TCPL and facilitate meetings and collaborations with these communities. Further, it will provide advice and feedback on community relations and develop advocacy strategies for the Tompkins County Public Library, as well as promote information-sharing with lawmakers, the media and the public.

g) The Technology Committee shall recommend and review the Library's technology plans, and provide assistance and advice on technology purchases and directions. The committee will ensure that technology is tied to the overall mission and goals of the Library, and that the Library maintains and upgrades existing technology following industry standards. The committee shall work with Library staff to ensure that the Library continuously surveys the evolving technology landscape for appropriate applications and pilots promising new technology.

h) From time to time, ad hoc committees may be formed for the special study of problems which are not covered in other committee assignments. Such committees shall be appointed by the President, with approval of the majority of the Board, to serve until the final report for their work has been presented.

## ARTICLE V - MEETINGS

a) The Board of Trustees for the Tompkins County Public Library shall meet once a month, at a time and place to be determined by the Board with notice to the public as required by Public Officer's Law, §104.

b) The regular January meeting of the Board of Trustees shall be the annual meeting.

c) Special meetings for the Board of Trustees may be called by the President, or upon the request of any three Trustees, provided that notice in writing is given to every Trustee at least three (3) calendar days before the proposed meeting. This notice shall state the time and place of the special meeting and the purpose for which it is being held.

d) A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the Board's full membership.

e) An affirmative vote of a majority of the Board shall be necessary to approve any motion before the Board at any meeting.

f) Robert's Rules of Order, plus common sense, shall govern the parliamentary procedures of all meetings.

#### ARTICLE VI - LIBRARY DIRECTOR AND STAFF

The Board of Trustees for the Tompkins County Public Library is charged with the obligation of appointing a qualified Library Director who shall be the administrative officer of the Library under the Board's review and direction. The Library Director shall recommend to the Board the appointment of other staff, shall specify the duties of such staff, and shall be responsible for the direction and supervision of such staff. The Library Director is also responsible for the care and maintenance of Library property, for the selection and care of materials in keeping with Board policies, for the fiscal operation of the Library within the stated limitations of the budget, for the efficiency of Library services to the public served by the Library and for the development of a first draft of an annual budget for the consideration of the Finance and Personnel Committee before presentation to the full Board.

The Library Director, or designee, is expected to attend all regular and special Board meetings, unless otherwise specifically stated by the President of the Board. The Director or designee shall serve as Clerk of the Board

#### ARTICLE VII - AMENDMENTS

The by-laws shall be reviewed annually by the Library Services and Policy Committee. Proposed amendments to the by-laws shall be presented to the Board at a regularly scheduled meeting for consideration by the Board at the next regular meeting of the Board. A two-thirds vote of the Board membership is required for passage.

August 27, 1985

Amended November 24, 1998

Amended May 22, 2007

Amended October 26, 2010