



Trustee Handbook Book Club

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

[*Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State*](#)

Post-Session Tool Kit for Boardroom Discussions

Book Club Reading:

Handbook for Library Trustees of NYS, Duties & Responsibilities (Page 15 - 18)

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Additional Readings and Recordings:

NYS Board of Regents: Statement on the Governance Role of a Trustee or Board Member

http://www.regents.nysed.gov/about/statement_governance

NYS Office of the Attorney General: Right From the Start: Responsibilities of Directors of Not-For-Profit Corporations <https://www.charitiesnys.com/pdfs/Right-From-theStart.pdf>

New York State Library - Library Trustee Webinars

<https://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/webinars.htm>

Recording from Live Handbook Discussion: Tuesday, October 19, 2021 – Duties & Responsibilities

<https://youtu.be/TKTMYBM-fek>

Post-Session Questions & Considerations for the Boardroom

The questions in this section are intended for trustees and their directors to discuss before or after a board meeting once they have read the Duties & Responsibilities section of the Handbook, or watched the Live Event Recording.

1. *Duty of Care* refers to acting in good faith and exercising diligence, care and skill. As a board, can you share some examples of how you exercise care before, during or after a meeting?
2. *Duty of Loyalty* highlights the importance of pledging allegiance to the library and avoiding conflicts of interest. What are some examples of conflicts of interest your board might face, or currently faces, and how do you disclose and manage them?
3. *Duty of Obedience* serves as a reminder of the laws, regulations and ethics trustees should follow. Can you list some recent changes in laws or regulations your library has had to adhere to, and what are the specific things you as a board did to follow them?

4. Library mission can be a philosophical or literal statement. As a board, read your literal written mission statement and evaluate it for clarity and relevance to your library's current services.
5. What year did the board approve its strategic plan? Is it current? Can each trustee select a section of the plan and discuss why they believe it is important to the library's mission?
6. Understanding the library's budget is extremely important. As a trustee, can you quickly state a rough dollar amount of the library's overall annual budget (i.e. total fiscal year spending)? How is the bulk of your library funded? Is it a reliable source?
7. Who in the library has overall responsibility for managing the budget? And, can you list the people who are involved in tracking expenditures from time of purchase to when the expenditure shows up on a financial statement?
8. What is your board's current process for updating policies? Who or what committee is involved in the process and what policies are required? [Does your library have all of the recommended policies as listed by the New York State Library?](#)
9. The relationship between board and director is necessary for a healthy library culture. What is your board's current procedure for evaluating the director? And, what is your board's current process for evaluating itself?
10. Does the library have a current facility management plan or facilities policy? How does your library maintain the building, plan for upcoming projects (near and long term), and does the board tour the building on a regular basis?

The questions above are intended to facilitate discussion within the boardroom among trustees and director. Please contact your public library system if you are unable to answer some of the questions, or if the board identifies an area needing improvement. Your system has several resources that can help with your unique circumstances.