Trustee Handbook Book Club

Library Policies and Risk Management
Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State

Post-Session Toolkit for Boardroom Discussions

Book Club Reading:

*Handbook for Library Trustees of NYS, Library Policies and Risk Management (*Pages 36 - 40)
Co-Authors Jerry Nichols & Rebekkah Smith Aldrich

Additional Resources:

Library Policies

- Mid-Hudson Library System: Public Library Policies - Development Tips & Samples,
  http://midhudson.org/topics/director-resources/policies/

- New York Library Association: Sample Policies,
  https://www.nyla.org/4DCGI/cms/review.html?Action=CMS_Document&DocID=28&MenuKey=career

Risk Management

- Disaster Preparedness and Recovery, American Library Association,
  https://www.ala.org/advocacy/disaster-preparedness

- NYS Citizen Preparedness Corps, NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services,
  https://www.dhses.ny.gov/citizen-preparedness-corps

- NYS Emergency Management, NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services,
  https://www.dhses.ny.gov/office-emergency-management

Recording from Live Handbook Discussion: Tuesday, March 29, 2022 – Library Policies and Risk Management

https://youtu.be/4vF-u3JY4YE

Post-Session Questions & Activities for the Boardroom

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

Library Policies

Policymaking is one of nine trustee responsibilities and arguably one of the toughest elements of trusteeship. It requires research, contemplation, thoughtfulness and time. Policy management is also ongoing. You never stop reviewing your Policy Manual. Lastly, policies impact everyone who utilizes library services. It is absolutely necessary trustees get them right, and align them with core values of librarianship.

Use this space and time and to get organized with your policy management practices through the *Essential Policies Inventory Workbook*.

 Activity #1: Visit the Mid-Hudson Library System's Policies' webpage. https://midhudson.org/topics/director-resources/policies/. As a board, review the different types of *Internal Policies* and *External Policies* recommended by the library system, which complement the list found in the Trustee Handbook . Compare these policies to your library's existing Policy Manual. What library policies are missing based on these two lists?

Assign a *Notetaker* to fill out the *Essential Policies Inventory Workbook* as your board identifies existing policies in your library's Policy Manual. The workbook can be found here, https://midhudson.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Essential-Policies-Inventory-Workbook-Updated-March2022.xlsx

 Activity #2: Now that you have identified your library's list of policies that compares to the *Essential Policies Inventory Workbook* (Activity #1), take a moment to record the most recent adoption or revision date for each of your library's policies using the workbook's *Date Last Revised*. Have your *Notetaker* put a check mark by each policy that has not been reviewed in more than five years while everyone else on the board is doing the research, and sharing their findings.

 Activity #3: Once the board has completed Activities #1 and #2 using the *Essential Policies Inventory Workbook*, have the *Notetaker* highlight the policy documents **not** included in your library's Policy Manual, but listed in the workbook. As a board, take time to review the intent (development questions) of these policies and discuss why these policies are important to maintain. Revisit the Evaluation Criteria (Page 40 of the Trustee Handbook) to determine what policies should be developed and in what order. The *Notetaker* can note what policies require near-term attention.

 Activity #4: Utilize your completed *Essential Policies Inventory Workbook* (Activities #1 - #3) to develop a timeline that allows the board to reasonably update or create policies in the coming month(s) and year(s).

For many boards this work will be done through the Policies Committee. And, for other boards, this might be done with all trustees during a Working Session. Make sure the board fully understands the policies, there impacts, and formally approves them during a public meeting.

Libraries can contact their public library system for guidance and resources on policies. In most cases, library systems will have sample policy templates, or access to policies from other libraries.

Risk Management

Exposure refers to the variety of risks a library is susceptible to considering day-to-day operations. Trustees should not allow exposure to prevent the library from delivering on mission, but it is important for the library board to take proactive measures that minimize risk. Let's use the next four step-by-step activities to help the board address risk through policy.

Activity #1: As individual trustees, take 2-minutes to write down as many library-related risks as you can identify. Now compare your list with other trustees on the board after the 2-minutes. Ask one trustee to be the *Notetaker* and draft a single list of all the unique risks that were identified by everyone on the board. How many unique risks were listed among the group?

Activity #2: Now that you have identified several library risks. Please take a moment to review your library's Policy Manual, or your recently completed *Essential Policies Inventory Workbook*. How many of the library's policies help minimize risk? Name the policies aloud as a group. What risks do they address, which were identified during Activity #1? Have the *Notetaker* check off each risk that is presently addressed through current policies.

Activity #3: What risks remain? Have the *Notetaker* read aloud the remaining risks that are not addressed through existing library policies. Can any of these risks be minimized by updating existing policies or plans?

As a group, assign a specific risk to a specific existing policy if it **can** be addressed through a revision to that policy. The *Notetaker* can keep track of what risks get assigned to what policies. If a risk **cannot** be addressed through an existing policy, or if it warrants its own policy, please have the *Notetaker* write down the type of new policy that should be created.

Activity #4: As a board, develop a timeline for what policies should be updated in the coming months to minimize risks that are not presently addressed through policy. Make sure to include the creation of new policies that address risk that cannot be addressed through existing policies.