

trustee tale

Newsletter for Public Library Trustees

Trustee Appointment FAQ

by Mark Arend, Winnefox Library System

Systems frequently get questions relating to library board appointments. Section 43.54 of Wisconsin Statutes spells out board appointment requirements. This article reviews statutory requirements for city, village, town, joint, and tribal government library boards. The requirements are somewhat different for county library boards.

Who appoints library trustees?

Library trustees are appointed by the head of the municipality (Mayor, Village president, Town chair, etc.). The appointments are approved by the municipal board (City Council, Village board, etc.).

How many trustees should be on our board?

This depends on what type of municipality has established the library. Library boards in 2nd or 3rd class cities have 9 members, boards in 4th class cities have 7 members, and boards in villages, towns, and tribal governments have 5 members. A village, town, or tribal government can decide to increase the size of the board so it has 7 members, and a 2nd or 3rd class city can reduce the size of the board to 7 members. A joint library board has between 7 and 11 members. The exact number is determined by the jurisdictions operating the joint library and is specified in a joint library agreement.

Who can nominate library trustees?

Anyone. The library director or board should be prepared to give names of possible new trustees to the head of the municipality when vacancies occur. However anyone can suggest names to the municipal head, and persons interested in being on the library board can nominate themselves.

Are there any residency requirements for library trustees?

Statutes specify that one or two members can live outside the municipality. If the library receives substantial use from outside the municipality the municipality sometimes finds it beneficial to have board representation from those areas.

Can a municipal board member be on the library board?

Yes, the municipal board can appoint one of its members to serve on the library board. This person has the same rights and responsibilities as any other trustee. Sometimes a municipal board will choose to appoint one of its own to be an informal "liaison" to the library board rather than as a library board member; this liaison does not have voting rights on the library board and may only participate as permitted by the library board chair.

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What are the rules regarding a school representative?

At least one trustee has to be the school district administrator or the administrator's designee. In all respects, school representatives are subject to the same requirements as other trustees: they are appointed by the municipality for a three-year term and must live in the municipality or be one of the allowable non-municipal residents. For this appointment, the school district administrator should communicate his or her choice to the municipal head, either directly or through the library.

Can the county appoint library trustees?

Yes. Depending on the amount of county funding the library receives in proportion to the amount of municipal funding, the county may appoint between one and five additional trustees over and above the number the municipality appoints. These trustees can live anywhere in the county, and one may be a county board member. Section 43.60(3) deals with county appointments and spells out the formula that determines how many additional trustees the county may appoint.

How long are trustees appointed for?

Library board terms are for three years. As trustees' terms expire they need to be reappointed by the municipality. If someone leaves the board before their term is up their replacement is appointed to fill the remainder of the current term, not to a fresh three-year term.

Can we have term limits for board members?

Some library boards have term limits written into their bylaws. This decision, however, is up to the municipality which can reappoint trustees as many, or as few, times as they choose.

When do terms expire?

Statutes do not currently specify a starting date for terms for library trustees appointed by cities, villages, towns, or tribal governments so this would be determined by local practice. The terms for trustees appointed by a county begin on May 1st.

Are the rules different for joint library boards?

Joint library boards may have more members than municipal library boards (between 7 and 11 members) and membership has to be proportional by the populations of the municipalities that are participating in the joint library agreement. In other respects there is no difference between joint library boards and municipal library boards.

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The State Budget and *Your* Library

By Mark Arend, Winnefox Library System

Governor Doyle is currently drafting his 2010-2011 State Biennial Budget proposal, which will go to the State Legislature in early 2009. Resources are tight, and there are many difficult funding decisions to be made, so this is an excellent time to email or phone the governor and your state senator and representative. Simply let them know how important libraries are to you, and encourage them to support libraries through the state budget. You can email Gov. Doyle at www.wisgov.state.wi.us/contact.asp, or phone his office at (608) 266-1212. You can find email addresses and phone numbers for your legislators at <http://waml.legis.state.wi.us/> (just enter your home address when prompted).

While your library does not receive funding directly from the state there are items currently included in the state budget which directly affect your library and people in your community.

Library System funding:

Your library receives valuable support services from your library system. While every system provides a different mix of services here are some of the more commonly provided ones.

- Coordination and support for the shared catalog and circulation system.
- Delivery service which allows libraries to share materials
- Continuing education programs for library staff and trustees
- Interlibrary loan and reference backup
- Consulting and general assistance to library directors and trustees
- PC and technology support
- Printing and graphics services

Your library director can give you more specific information on the services your library receives.

BadgerLink:

BadgerLink provides Wisconsin residents with access to quality online information from home, school, or office as well as from the library. This service provides Wisconsin residents access to almost 12,000 magazines and newspapers, many in full text. This service is used extensively with more than 18 million searches conducted annually. It is estimated that providing this service

through a statewide contract saves about \$66 million, compared to what would be spent if libraries contracted separately for the service.

Library Service Contracts:

- Contracts with the Wisconsin Library Services (WiLS), and the Milwaukee Public Library insures that state residents have interlibrary loan access to the specialized collections of the State Historical Society, the UW-Madison Libraries, and the Milwaukee Public Library.
- The Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped provides audiobooks free of charge to residents who cannot read printed books due to disability. Funding is also included for NFB-Newsline, which provides newspapers accessible by telephone.
- The Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) is a repository of children's books used by librarians and teachers that regularly conducts programs throughout the state.

In addition to items currently included in the state budget, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Burmaster has asked Governor Doyle to include a new initiative in his biennial budget proposal.

Delivery services:

To encourage sharing between libraries Wisconsin has a delivery service connecting all 17 library systems and reaching every library. This has been found to be the most economical way of transporting materials between libraries. Currently, public library systems pay for rapidly increasing delivery costs. This new initiative would pay approximately 50% of the cost of the delivery that connects all 17 systems.

Please remember that encouraging the Governor to support libraries in the state budget is important for library service in your community.





Wisconsin Library Association Library Legislative Day

Mark your calendars now for the Wisconsin Library Association's Library Legislation Day in Madison on Tuesday 3 February 2009. This is a great opportunity for library supporters to talk with their State Legislators about the importance of library support.

Ask your library director or go to <http://www.wla.lib.wi.us/legis/day/index.htm> for more information

TRUSTEE SOAPBOX

Do you have a question, comment or topic to suggest for a future TrusteeTale? Send an Email to Mark at: Arend@winnefox.org.

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