

Board Code of Ethics

Purpose

The Orange City Public Library Board of Trustees is entrusted with stewardship of a public institution that serves its community. This Code of Ethics establishes standards of ethical principles for trustees. It has been designed to promote public confidence, guide decision making, and support effective governance.

This policy supplements but does not replace any applicable laws, including the City of Orange City Code of Ordinances, Iowa Code, and the Library Board Bylaws.

Commitment to Public Interest

Trustees shall act in good faith and in the best interests of the entire community, not in the interest of personal, political, or special interest groups, or segments of the community. In doing so trustees will place the mission, values, and long-term sustainability of the library above individual preferences. This will support access to library services and freedom of choice for all residents the library serves.

Governance Role and Respect for Authority

Trustees recognize that authority rests with the board as a whole, not with individual trustees. Therefore, board decisions once made will be supported even when holding a dissenting view. This respects the aspect of governance of the board.

As a governing body, the board of trustees in its entirety as well as individually will respect the distinction between governance, which is a board responsibility, and administration, which is the responsibility of the Administrative Librarian/Library Director.

Integrity and Professionalism

Public trust requires that the conduct of trustees is in accordance with the highest levels of integrity, including honesty, civility, and mutual respect in all board-related activities. Trustees will engage in discussions openly and respectfully, valuing opposing perspectives and viewpoints. While serving as trustee individuals will avoid behaviors that undermine the trust in the board, the library staff, and the larger organizational structure of city government.

Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Trustees will read and sign the Conflict of Interest Statement at the beginning of their term, keeping it updated as needed. The disclosure of any actual or perceived conflicts of interest shall be made promptly. Should a conflict of interest exist, the trustee will refrain from participating in discussions or voting on such matters. Trustees are prohibited from using their board position for personal, financial, or organizational gain or improvement.

Confidentiality

The confidentiality of library records, closed sessions, or information designated as confidential shall be maintained during and after serving as library board trustee. The use of discretion when discussing sensitive information related to personnel, legal issues, or library security is required. Confidentiality that is mandated by law or library policy upholds the public trust and effectiveness of the board.

Collective Responsibility and Accountability

It is the duty of all trustees to attend meetings regularly and arrive prepared to participate thoughtfully. Trustees should seek sufficient information for clarity and to make informed decisions when the need arises. Trustee training and education related to library governance and public service are required by the Board Bylaws and Iowa statute. It is the responsibility of each trustee to participate in the periodic evaluation of the board's performance and governance.

Advocacy and Public Representation

Trustees are library ambassadors within the community who represent board positions when speaking publicly. They are to promote constructive relationships with city officials, community organizations, and the public.

Ethical Concerns and Enforcement

Concerns regarding trustee conduct should be addressed respectfully and in accordance with board policies. This includes the acts of censure or recommendation for removal as outlined in the Board Bylaws. Adherence to this Code of Ethics is a condition of board service.

Affirmation

Upon appointment trustees will acknowledge receipt of and commitment to abide by this Code of Ethics for their full term and upon reappointment for each successive term until their service is completed.