Ramsey County Library
Request for Library Board Action

Meeting Date	Action Requested	Presented By
April 5, 2017	Approve Policies	Jill Boldenow, Library Director

SUBJECT:
Ramsey County Library Board Policies

BACKGROUND:
A subcommittee comprised met several times in 2016 with the Library Director to revise the Library Board By-laws and Policies, which had not undergone a comprehensive review in many years.

The Library Board Policies were developed in the 1990s using language from the Carver Governance model. However, the Carver model was never fully implemented, and the Policies became outdated.

The subcommittee removed sections of the policies document that dealt with Carver philosophies, and retained relevant policies on Board Members Code of Conduct, an Attendance Policy, and Committee Principles. Executive Policies on Financial Planning and Authorizations were also retained.

A Conflict of Interest statement was added to the Board Members Code of Conduct.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:
To review and approve the Library Board Policies as amended by the Library Board By-laws and Policies subcommittee.

RAMSEY COUNTY
Library

Library Board Policies

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Ramsey County Library Board Policies

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I. Governance Process

Policy A: BOARD MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

The Ramsey County Library Board expects that its members will conduct themselves in an ethical and businesslike manner. Board members will act only within the scope of their legal authority and will perform the work of the Board in a manner that is respective of the community, library staff, and each other.

1. Board members must avoid conflicts of interests. A conflict of interest exists where the board member's ability to act in the best interests of the library system is limited by the member's personal or business interests; including interests as a member of other community groups, or membership on other boards or staffs. If a Board member has a conflict of interest, the Board member should abstain from participation in that matter.

2. Board members must avoid any conflict of interest with respect to their fiduciary responsibility.

    a. There must be no self-dealing or any conduct of private business or personal services between any Board member and the Ramsey County Library except as procedurally controlled to assure openness, competitive opportunity, and equal access to "inside" information.

    b. Board members must not use their positions to obtain for themselves, family members, or close associates employment within the Ramsey County Library.

    c. Should a trustee be considered for employment by the Ramsey County Library, the trustee must temporarily withdraw from Board deliberation and voting.

3. No individual Board member, officer, or committee has authority over the Library Director. Information may be requested, but if such request, in the Library Director's judgment, requires a material amount of staff time, it may be refused.

    a. Board members' interaction with the Library Director or with staff must recognize the lack of authority in any individual trustee or group of Board members except as noted above.

    b. Board members' interaction with the public, press, or other entities must recognize the same limitation and the similar inability of any trustee or Board members to speak for the Board.

Policy B: ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Library Board members are expected to attend all regularly scheduled Library Board meetings. Board members must notify the Chair if they are unable to attend a Library Board meeting.

2. Regular attendance at Library Board meetings is essential so that decisions made represent the opinions of the Board as a whole.

3. A Library Board member may forfeit their appointment as a result of poor attendance. Poor attendance is defined as three unexcused absences in a calendar year. Should this occur, the member will be contacted by the Chair asking the member to re-commit to the Library Board or relinquish their position to allow another individual to be appointed. The member's response will promptly be shared by the Chair with the entire Board at the next Board meeting. In that meeting, the Board will decide what actions to take regarding the Board member's future membership on the Board.

Policy C: COMMITTEE PRINCIPLES

The Board may establish committees to help carry out its responsibilities. To preserve Board integrity, committees will be used sparingly. Committees will be used so as to minimally interfere with the wholeness of the Board's job, and so as never to interfere with delegation from Board to Library Director.

1. Board committees may not speak or act for the Board except when formally given such authority for specific and time-limited purposes. Such authority will be carefully stated in order not to conflict with authority delegated to the Library Director.

2. Board committees are to help the Board do its job, not to help the staff do its jobs. Committees will assist the Board chiefly by preparing policy alternatives and implications for Board deliberation. Board committees are not to be created by the Board to advise staff.

3. Board committees cannot exercise authority over staff and, in keeping with the Board's focus on the future, Board committees will not ordinarily have direct dealings with current staff operations. Further, the Board will not impede its direct delegation to the Library Director by requiring approval of a Board committee before an executive action. The Library Director works for the Board, never for a Board committee, officer, or trustee.

4. This policy applies only to committees that are formed by Board action, whether or not the committees include non-Board members. It does not apply to committees formed under the authority of the Library Director.

II. Executive Policies

Policy A: FINANCIAL PLANNING

The Library Director will follow Ramsey County's accounting guidelines and shall assure the financial integrity of the Ramsey County Library when planning or executing the budget for all or any remaining part of a fiscal period.

Accordingly, the Library Director is responsible for:

1. Providing sufficient budget detail to the Board including a reasonably accurate projection of revenues and expenses, separation of capital and operational items, cash flow and subsequent trails, and disclosure planning assumptions.

2. Plans for expenditures in any fiscal year shall be based on revenues reasonably projected to be received in that period.

3. The budget shall be consistent with Board-stated priorities in its allocation among competing budgetary needs.

4. The budget shall comply with the guidelines and procedures of the Ramsey County Finance Department and the County Manager's Office.

Policy B: FINANCIAL AUTHORIZATIONS

The Library Director shall assure the Ramsey County Library's fiscal integrity by adhering to the fiscal policies and procedures established by the Ramsey County Finance Department and by the Library Board.

Accordingly, the Library Director is specifically authorized to:

1. Approve bills for payment and to transfer funds within the various Library accounts, including the facilities fund, during each fiscal year. A financial condition report shall be submitted to the Board on a quarterly basis.

2. Make purchases of budgeted supplies and equipment costing less than $25,000, such purchases to be made in accordance with state laws. Purchases of $25,000 or more are to be brought to the Board for appropriate action.

3. Purchase for the Ramsey County Library books, periodicals, audiovisual materials and other library materials as may be necessary to meet the Library's needs, without advertising for competitive bids, since no significant advantage can be gained by advertising for competitive bids for the purchase of books, periodicals, audiovisual materials and other library materials that are protected by patent, copyright or exclusive franchise, and are noncompetitive in nature.

4. Accept gifts, consistent with Library Board policy, of cash and personal property valued up to $25,000. Gifts exceeding $25,000 in cash or personal property are to be brought to the Library Board for appropriate action. A quarterly report of gifts received by the Library will be submitted to the Board.

5. Apply for and accept grants, in accordance with Ramsey County guidelines, of up to $5,000. Grants exceeding $5,000 are to be brought to the Board for appropriate action.