



# Board of Trustees Committee Descriptions

The Board of Trustees of the Palos Heights Library is somewhat unusual in its commitment to employing committees to take care of the detailed work that goes into the decision-making process of the Library's administration. Committees have proven effective at focusing on specific, specialized areas of running the library. In general, committees are responsible for vetting ideas on behalf of the Board as a whole. As a result of this vetting process, committees make recommendations to the full Board for formal implementation. This saves the full Board from having to dive into the minutiae of each and every decision that they are asked to make. However, committees make no decisions on their own. Their role is advisory, and they turn over final decision-making authority to the Board as a whole in all cases. So committees allow the Board to look more deeply at more issues than they would otherwise be able to without eroding the Board's authority in any way.

Committees are appointed by the Board President. Each committee has a chair or co-chairs who are responsible for the governance of each committee's work. The chair will work with the Board President and Library Director to conduct meetings as appropriate to the task at hand.

No specific expertise is required to participate in any given committee. In general, the Board President tries to make appointments according to the expertise and interests of Trustees, but this is not always possible. All that is asked is that Trustees bring their knowledge and engage in honest discussion of that matter at hand.

Generally speaking, committees' responsibilities are as follows:

## Budget & Finance Committee

The Budget & Finance Committee makes recommendations regarding significant financial decisions that the Board has to make from time to time. Financial oversight is one of the most important functions of the Board of Trustees, and much of this oversight takes place as a matter of routine business at each regular Board Meeting. This committee serves to provide recommendations on financial matters that fall outside of the Board's normal monthly business. Examples include the Library's annual budget/levy/appropriation, its annual audit, and investment strategies.

This committee typically meets 3-4 times per year. They typically meet once in January to discuss that annual appropriation resolution and excess fund balance transfer. They also typically meet in July and August to plan the following year's budget and levy. The Board's Treasurer typically serves as the chair of this committee.

## Building & Grounds Committee

The Building & Grounds Committee is tasked with ensuring that the Library's building and grounds are properly maintained. Ensuring functional, safe, and beautiful building and grounds is essential to the Library's operations. The Library Director has the discretion to make purchases up to \$5,000 without prior approval of the Board. The Committee will be consulted on all projects costing over \$5,000. The only exceptions to this would be situations in which the Board President feels that it is prudent to bypass the committee and take an item directly to the full Board for direct approval. This committee is particularly important in overseeing projects that will cost more than \$25,000, for which the Library is required by law to engage in a formal bidding process.

This committee typically meets 2-3 times per year as needed.

## Fundraising Committee

The purpose of the Fundraising Committee is to raise funds for the Library to expand the patron experience by enriching the facilities, programming, collections, and services that the Library provides to the community.

This committee typically meets 2-3 times per year, or as often as is needed to plan projects.

## Long Range Planning Committee

The Long Range Planning Committee is responsible for making recommendations related to the Library's Strategic Plan. This involves the development, review, and implementation of the plan itself. This also includes formulating the Library's mission and technology plan.

This committee typically meets once per year, although they will meet more often in years when the Library is particularly focused on updating its Strategic Plan.

## Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is responsible for nominating Trustees to serve as officers in a given year. According to the Board's by-laws, these nominations are submitted to the Board in August and are voted on in September. Officers serve one year terms beginning each September.

This committee typically meets once per year prior to the August meeting so that it can make its recommendations.

## Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee is tasked with providing guidance regarding the Library's staff. This committee performs the annual performance review of the Library Director. It also makes recommendations regarding staff-focused policies and employment issues that affect staff. While specific personnel decisions fall under the day-to-day operations performed by the Library Director, the most pressing issues that affect the staff as a whole are taken up by this committee.

This committee meets as needed, typically once per year.

## Policy Committee

The Policy Committee is responsible for maintaining the policies of the Library in accordance with the law and with best practices in the industry. The Library's policies essentially constitute its rule book. Library Policies are dictated solely by the Board lay out how the Library will operate with regard to staff, patrons, or other constituent groups. Some policies are required by federal, state, or local laws. Other policies are standard for local government entities or public libraries. Still others arise from needs specific to this Library and community. In all cases, policies are tailored to this Library's specific needs.

Policies remain in place until rescinding or superseded by other policies. In general, all policies are reviewed by the Board periodically, typically every 1-3 years depending on the topic. In most cases, the Library Director will draft a policy or specific policy changes to be reviewed by the committee, who then make specific recommendations for approval by the full Board.

This committee often works in conjunction with other committees to develop policies that fall specifically within their areas of responsibility. Examples include developing personnel policies in conjunction with the Personnel Committee or financial policies with the Budget & Finance Committee.

This committee meets as needed, typically at least once per year. Often, members of this committee will be asked to review policy changes individually, and their individual recommendations will be compiled by the chair for presentation to the Board.

In addition to its standing committees, the Board also has the following liaisons:

## City Council Liaison

The City Council Liaison is responsible for communicating Library business to City Hall and reporting back to the Board about things happening with the City that affect the Library. This includes occasionally attending City Council meetings to keep abreast of issues. It also entails occasionally speaking at City Council meetings on behalf of the Library Board. Communication with the Mayor's Office is also occasionally required. The Library Director will typically handle the normal business that is transacted between the Library and the City, for example issues related to the Library's budget, levy, and

appropriation. However, this liaison is responsible for communicating with the City when the highest level of Library administration is called upon.

## Ethics Chair

The Ethics Chair is a position that the Library Board is required by law to maintain. This person is responsible for tasks related to the ethical guidance of the Board. This includes ensuring that annual Statements of Economic Interest are filed by each Trustee in a timely manner. It also includes ensuring that all FOIA requests are answered in the appropriate manner and that the Open Meetings Act is followed at all times.

## Friends of the Library Liaison

The Friends of the Library Liaison is the official line of communication between the Board and the Friends of the Library, who work hard to raise a lot of money for the library each year. While the Library Director also maintains close contact with the Friends and attends all of their meetings, the Friends also want to have strong ties to the Board. This liaison exists to maintain those ties and to communicate to the Board what is happening with the Friends.