

Stoughton Public Library Board By-Laws

Approved by Library Board 3-20-24



Article I - Identification & Introduction

The name of this organization is the Stoughton Public Library, located in Stoughton, Wisconsin, existing by virtue of the provisions of Chapter 43 of the Wisconsin Statutes, and exercising the powers and authority and assuming the responsibilities delegated to it under statute. (See attachment A)

The provisions most relevant to the municipal library board are found in Section 43.52 (municipal libraries), 43.54 (municipal library board composition) and 43.58 (powers and duties of library boards).

Library boards have greater autonomy than other departments, functioning independently of their governing body. Library systems have the ability to expel or reduce aids or services to libraries not complying with Chapter 43 (see Attachment A). The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction also monitors Chapter 43 compliance and has held that if any municipality adopts a charter ordinance, their library would no longer be eligible for system membership. A "charter ordinance" refers to a local ordinance which attempts to over-ride any portion of Chapter 43. Currently all Wisconsin libraries are system members.

Board members must be aware of and support these key philosophical statements presented at the beginning of State Statute, Chapter 43:

- the importance of free access to knowledge, information, and diversity of ideas for all residents of this state;
- the critical role played by public, school, special and academic libraries in providing that access;
- the major educational, cultural, and economic asset that is represented in the collective knowledge and information resources of the state's libraries;
- the importance of public libraries to the democratic process; and
- that the most effective use of library resources in this state can occur only through interlibrary cooperation among all types of libraries and the effective use of technology. (Wis. Stats 43.001)

Article II -Board Composition (Chapter 43.54)

Section 1 The library board will be composed of a minimum of seven members, including: one city council representative selected by the mayor; the superintendent of schools or his/her designated replacement; and five members at large from the City of Stoughton appointed by the Mayor with recommendations from the library director and/or the library board. Up to two additional members may be appointed by the mayor or the county executive from among the residents of the City of Stoughton or Dane County to represent the interests of non-resident county patrons who use the library per Wisconsin Statutes, Chapter 43.60(3). There shall also be one non-voting high school

student trustee member who will be chosen yearly by the Library Board from applications received.

Section 2 The library director is a permanent non-voting member of the board, who will attend meetings and serve in an advisory/resource capacity.

Section 3 A quorum will be required to pass any motions presented for a vote. A quorum is defined as a majority of the membership of the library board. In order to facilitate payment of bills, a quorum may be three members for this purpose only.

Section 4 Terms of office (Chapter 43.54(b) “upon their first appointment, the members shall be divided as nearly as practicable into 3 equal groups to serve for 2 – 3 and 4 – year terms, respectively. Thereafter, each regular appointment shall be for a term of 3 years.”

Vacancies shall be filled for un-expired terms in the same manner as regular appointments are made. If a person is appointed to serve an unexpired term of office and serves more than 50% of the unexpired term, it shall be considered a full term of office.

Members may serve no more than three consecutive three-year terms. A former board member may be reappointed once after a lapse equal to one term (3 years). If this is the case, the person may serve an additional three consecutive three-year terms.

Section 5 No compensation shall be paid to library board members except for:

- Reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred in performing duties outside the municipality if authorized by the Board.
- Members may receive per diem, mileage (per city’s rates) and other necessary expenses incurred if authorized by the library board and the municipal governing body.

Section 6 Officers shall consist of a president and a vice-president, elected by the Board. The Board president may either appoint a nominating committee or contact Board members to determine their interest in serving. Nominations may be made at the annual meeting before the election.

Election of the president and vice-president will take place in May of each year, with the term of office commencing with the June meeting. Vacancies in office shall be filled by vote at the next regular meeting after the vacancy occurs. No Library Board member shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive years in the same office. Officers’ duties shall be as follows:

A. President

- Shall preside at monthly meetings. In the absence of the president, the vice-president shall preside.
- Shall represent the library when appropriate.
- May call or authorize special meetings as deemed necessary.

- Appoints all committees.
- Executes all documents authorized by the board.
- Oversees and coordinates all business of the board.
- The president may vote upon, move or second a proposal before the board.

B. Vice-president

- Shall preside at monthly meetings in the absence of the president.
- Performs all the duties of the president in the president's absence.

Section 7

There will be one non-voting high school student trustee member who will be chosen yearly by the Library Board from applications received. The selection process for the Student Trustee position will begin in the spring of each academic year and shall be completed no later than April 30. The Student Trustee is expected to serve during the academic year with the option to begin serving on June 1st. The student trustee term shall be one academic year, from September through May. Student trustees may serve one term, reapply, and be reappointed at the discretion of the Library Board.

The purpose of the position is for the Library to obtain input on library services, policies, and collections from a significant group of library users; to encourage young people to consider librarianship as a career; to encourage use of library services by teens; and to provide practical experience for teens in the operations of local government.

Student trustees are subject to the same standards, responsibilities, expectations, and conflicts of interest cautions as regular Library Board members. The student trustee will be given a copy of the City of Stoughton Code of Ethics which they must read and abide by. See Article V, Section 2 and Article VI. The student trustee may serve on committees if and when it is deemed necessary by the Library Board. See Article IV.

Article III - Meetings

Section 1

A regular board meetings shall be held each month with the date and hour to be set by the board at its annual meeting. Any proposed agenda items shall be presented to the Library Board president at least one week before the meeting. Amendments to the agenda shall be at the discretion of the president.

Section 2

The annual meeting, which shall be for the purpose of the election of officers, shall be held at the time of the regular meeting in May of each year. Appointment of committees shall take place at the following regular meeting in June.

Section 3

The order of business for regular meetings shall include, but not be limited to, the following items (* = potential action item):

- Call to Order
- Review of Agenda (formerly Approval of/Amendments to the Agenda)
- Recognition Opportunities *

- Review/Approval of Minutes *
- Public Comment Period (limited to no longer than 5 minutes)
- Review/Discuss Correspondence
- Education
- Board In-Service
- Review/Approve Financial Statements *
- Review/Approve Bills *
- Director's Report
- Committee Reports
- Friends of the Library Report
- Unfinished/Old Business *
- New Business *
- Pending Agenda Items
- Adjournment *

Section 4 Special meetings may be called by the president, or at the written request of three board members, for the transaction of business as stated in the call for the meeting. Except in cases of emergency, a least 48 hours' notice shall be given. In no case may less than 2 hours' notice be given.

Section 5 All Board meetings and all committee meetings shall be held in compliance with Wisconsin's open meetings law (Wisconsin Statutes Sections 19.91 to 19.98.)

Section 6 Parliamentary Authority: Library Board meetings shall be professionally conducted using basic and reasonable standards of parliamentary procedure based on the "Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure" by Alice Sturgis, in all cases in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any statutes applicable to this Board.

Article IV – Committees

Section 1 Standing Committees

There shall be four standing committees: Policies, Finance, Personnel, and Planning. These committees shall have a minimum of three members appointed by the President and announced at the June meeting. Each committee shall elect a chair at their first meeting.

An official committee meeting shall require the attendance of a majority of the members of the appointed committee.

Policies Committee

- a. Reviews and revises existing policies every three years or as needed and recommends changes to Library Board
- b. Creates new policies and recommends their adoption to Library Board

- c. Reviews and updates board by-laws biannually or more often as needed and recommends changes to Library Board.

Finance Committee

- a. Reviews and recommends the annual budget to the Library Board
- b. Recommends any mid-year budget adjustments, as necessary to the Library Board
- c. Reviews and recommends changes to the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Personnel Committee

- a. Reviews staff hours and wages and recommends changes to Library Board
- b. Reviews Library Work Rules and recommends changes to Library Board
- c. Evaluates the Director

Planning Committee

All activities and initiatives by Planning Committee shall align with the Stoughton Public Library's established Strategic Plan.

- a. Facilitates the strategic planning process, conducts periodic reviews of strategic plan progress and ensures completion or revision of action steps.
- b. Establishes and recommends to Library Board annual goals to be accomplished by individual trustees and the board as a whole, ensures completion or revision
- c. Facilitates board self-evaluation.
- d. Establishes annual calendar of work to dictate meeting in-service topics, ensures completion or revision.

Section 2 Ad Hoc Committees

Ad Hoc committees for the study of special problems may be appointed by the president, with the approval of the board, to serve until the final report of the work for which they were appointed has been filed. These committees may include staff and public representatives who may be voting members. Examples of ad hoc committees are Long-range Planning and Fundraising.

Section 3 All committees shall make a progress report to the library board at each of its meetings.

Section 4 No committee will have other than advisory powers unless, by suitable action of the board, it is granted specific power to act.

Article V - Responsibilities

Section 1 Library Board shall:

- Determine the policies of the library and develop the highest possible degree of operating efficiency in the library.
- Select and appoint a competent library director. Set salary levels for all employees.
- Advise in preparation of the budget, approve it and make sure that adequate funds are provided to finance the approved budget.

- Through the library director, supervise and maintain buildings and grounds, as well as regularly review various physical and building needs to see that they meet the requirements of the total library program.
- Study and support legislation that will bring about the greatest good to the greatest number of library users.
- Cooperate with other public officials and boards and maintain vital public relations.
- Be familiar with Chapter 43 of the Wisconsin State Statutes as it pertains to statutory requirements.

Section 2 Board Members shall:

- Attend the monthly meetings and special meetings as necessary.
- Serve on at least one committee.
- If unable to attend, contact either the Library Director, Library Administrative Assistant, or Library Board President at least 48 hours in advance of a meeting, except in dire, unavoidable circumstances which prevent notification.
- After three absences in a 12 month period, meet with the library board president to discuss his or her attendance and review a written notice to that member stating the requirements for attendance. After a fourth absence in a 12 month period, the situation will be brought before the Library Board for a mutually agreeable resolution which may include resignation or dismissal from the Board.
- Take all library policies/board bylaws seriously and abide by City of Stoughton Code of Ethics (Attachment B).

The qualities that make an individual an effective library trustee include:

- awareness of the community;
- willingness to devote time and talents;
- ability to think clearly, question objectively, and plan creatively; and
- skill in communicating and cooperating.
- awareness and appreciation of the library's past, present, and future role in the community;
- willingness to become more knowledgeable about library services and standards of operation;
- ability to represent the library in public forums, to act as an advocate for the library, and to reflect the concerns of the public at library board meetings; and
- skill in developing library policies.

The library's board of trustees shall strive to collectively represent:

- a diversity of interests;
- a balance of age, race, sex, and socioeconomic levels; and
- a variety of occupational and personal backgrounds.

This body will then effectively serve its community through its commitment to and enthusiasm for a vigorous public library capable of providing access to information, education, and enhanced leisure to the broadest spectrum of users.

Section 3 Library Director

The library director shall be considered the executive Officer of the board and shall have sole charge of the administration of the library under the direction and review of the board. The director shall be held responsible for the care of the buildings and equipment, for the employment and direction of staff, for the efficiency of the library's service to the public, and for the operation of the library under the financial conditions set forth in the annual budget. The director shall attend all meetings but shall have no vote.

Article VI – Conflict of Interest

Section 1 A Board member shall not in their private capacity negotiate, bid for, or enter into a contract with the Stoughton Public Library in which they have a direct or indirect financial interest.

Section 2 A board member shall withdraw from Board discussion, deliberation, and vote on any matter in which the Board member, an immediate family member, or an organization with which the Board member is associated has a substantial financial interest.

Section 3 A board member shall not receive anything of value that could reasonably be expected to influence his or her vote or other official action.

Article VII – General

Section 1 An affirmative vote of the majority of all members of the Board present at the time shall be necessary to approve any action before the Board. The president may vote upon and may move or second a proposal before the Board.

Section 2 Any rule or resolution of the Board, whether contained in these bylaws or otherwise, may be suspended temporarily in connection with business at hand, but such suspension, to be valid, may be taken only at a meeting at which two-thirds (six) of the members of the Board are present and two-thirds of those present so approve.

Section 3 These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Board by majority vote of all members of the Board, provided written notice and text of the proposed amendment shall have been mailed, electronically or otherwise, to all members at least five days prior to the meeting at which such action is proposed to be taken.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Stoughton Public Library on the 20th day of January, 2021.

Adopted November, 2001
Revised June 12, 2003
Revised September 9, 2003

Revised May 13, 2004
Revised September 13, 2006
Revised March 14, 2007

Revised January 13, 2010
Revised March 10, 2010
Revised August 17, 2011
Revised February 15, 2012
Revised September 19, 2012
Revised April 17, 2013
Revised June 19, 2013
Revised September 17, 2014

Revised November 18, 2015
Revised October 19, 2016
Revised October 18, 2017
Revised May 16, 2018
Revised June 20, 2018
Revised January 20, 2021
Revised March 20, 2024

ATTACHMENT A: Wisconsin Statutes, Chapter 43: Libraries

For a current copy of WI Chapter 43, **please visit** <http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/43> .

ATTACHMENT B: City of Stoughton Municipal Code, Chapter 2.2 Code of Ethics. You may view an electronic copy of the Code of Ethics at the City of Stoughton Web site.

https://www.municode.com/library/wi/stoughton/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=MUCO_CH2AD_ARTIINGE_S2-2COET