

# TRUSTEE TIPS

Issue 3

January 2020

## What's inside:

### Deputy CEO Column

Marigold Deputy CEO Laura Taylor encourages libraries to speak out about their efforts to create a safe and inviting place within their communities.

### Governance:

Our trustees take on many responsibilities in various aspects of our communities. But what happens when those lines get blurred? This issue addresses the importance of knowing when you are acting in the best interest of your organization and when you need to step back.

### Procedures:

Think you know all there is to know about "in camera" meetings? Flip the page and find out when it's appropriate to hold a closed session meeting and what's required.





## What you need to know...

### Changes to General Holidays

Changes for the eligibility and payment for general holidays took effect on September 1, 2019.

- ▶ Employers **no longer** have to pay all employees for all general holidays.
- ▶ Library employees are now only entitled to general holiday pay if:
  - Worked for the same employer for at least **30 workdays** in the **12 months** prior to the holiday
  - Work their scheduled shift before and after the holiday (unless employer consent is given for the absence)
  - Work on the general holiday if required and are scheduled to do so
- ▶ When a **part-time** or **on-call** employee has worked **5** of the **9 weeks** preceding the holiday, it's considered to be a regular day of work and they are entitled to be paid.
- ▶ **General holidays** include: New Year's Day, Alberta Family Day, Good Friday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Labour Day, Thanksgiving Day, Remembrance Day, Christmas Day

For information on pay rates, optional holidays, and more:

[alberta.ca/alberta-general-holidays.aspx](http://alberta.ca/alberta-general-holidays.aspx)

## Focusing on your resolutions in the New Year



**Laura Taylor**

Marigold Deputy CEO

As I write this column, the windchill outside feels like -38 degrees Celsius. On days when weather is extreme, and in some instances like today - dangerous, it is good to know that the public library is a place where anyone can go to seek shelter and access a multitude of services regardless of their current circumstance.

During the recent cold snap in January, the Strathmore Municipal Library shared an important reminder on their Facebook account. They encouraged anyone to direct those out and about in the extreme weather to the library. The library offered free hot beverages, computer and wifi access, and activities. The response from the community was overwhelming and even resulted in a donor providing the funds for free coffee at

the library. Does your community know the benefits of your public library and how it is a community gathering place for all? Sometimes, inspiring stories that take place in the library are never shared publicly. If this is happening at your library, this is an opportunity to turn things around and capitalize on positive advocacy. Talk about the great things that take place in your library, how your staff are delivering exceptional services and programs for residents of your community.

The new year is often a time to celebrate the accomplishments and successes of the previous year, but it is also an opportunity to reflect on what could have gone better and what underlying challenges need to be resolved. Many people will set resolutions that are over before they even begin, but others can set a resolution and be able to achieve success on what they hope to improve or accomplish for themselves or for others. Often boards set a goal to become more efficient and effective, especially when conducting board business

such as meetings. The January Trustee Tips focuses on two key topics that often result in a lot of uncertainty and generate a lot of questions including in camera (closed sessions) meetings and what hat each board member should be wearing.

It is recommended to always follow best practices that are outlined in parliamentary procedure such as *Robert's Rules of Order*. Make sure you have a copy for your board meeting proceedings, and familiarize yourself with some of the common motions and meeting proceedings. Appoint an individual on your board to be the Parliamentarian so that they can be the person to provide guidance based on what is suggested by the experts. On occasion, a board member will have sound parliamentary procedure guidance from experience and participation on other boards or as a member of council.

Thank you for your work as a Library Trustee.

Remember to keep advocating to the province and your community about the importance of public libraries.



## Tip for thought

The Libraries Regulation section 5 requires that all Board meetings be open to the public. You can only call a private (or "in camera" - now referred to as closed session) meeting for reasons identified in the FOIP Act. Some of these include legal matters, security, personnel matters, or labour relations. Discussions in camera do not become public and should be kept confidential by board members.

# Fashion Faux Pas: Wearing too many hats at once



Board trustees often wear many different hats; from volunteer to ambassador to municipal councillor. Often board members are involved in other organizations, have their own businesses, or play a political role in their local government. Yet wearing too many hats at once can have a negative effect on staff members and possibly reduce the effectiveness of your organization. Therefore, when making decisions as a board member, it's important to always consider the organization's best interests first and foremost—other personal and/or business interests are put aside. Each Trustee that is appointed to the municipal library board is appointed as a member-at-large of the community, regardless of their position in the community. For example, if a councillor is appointed to the library board, they have the same role and responsibilities as the other board members and should not be referred to as a "Council Representative" or something similar.

## Blurred lines

Alberta municipal library boards are governing (not advisory) boards. They are not involved in the day-to-day operations of the library. Rather, they focus on advocacy, governance, and setting direction for the library through the creation of a plan of service (strategic plan), library policies, and budget. The role of the library manager is to oversee library operations and customer interactions in accordance with the policy and direction set by the board. Generally speaking, it is preferable for board members not to take charge of operational matters that are the purview of the library manager. If a board members volunteers in the library or is given a specific operational responsibility by the board as a whole, it is important for that board member to be cognisant that the library manager has been hired to do certain tasks and to manage the library. Becoming too involved in operations can result in mixed messages and confusion for staff, discontent for the library manager, and disruption in day-to-day management of the library. Teamwork between board members and library manager and staff produces powerful results. For information on board roles visit the *Libraries Act* and *Libraries Regulation* on the PLSB website.

Written by: Laura Taylor



## Behind closed doors: What's the deal with closed sessions

An "in camera" or a closed-session meeting, is a private conversation between board members where the CEO, other senior staff, observers, advisers, lawyers and auditors are required to leave. Allowance can be made, however, to include any parties the Board requires for the specific issues being discussed. While it may be viewed as contradictory to the principles of openness and transparency, it can be a strategic tool to protect individuals and sometimes the organization. A closed-session meeting involves a confidential meeting, or a portion of a meeting, that is designed to handle sensitive issues that **cannot** be discussed publicly. These meetings serve three core functions:

- Assures confidentiality
- Allows for higher degree of self-management, Board independence and oversight
- Enhances relationships among board members

A closed session should never be abused or used unnecessarily. All members are bound by a duty of confidentiality and all

information presented or discussed should be treated with confidentiality and care. Some matters where a closed-session meeting may be called, include:

- Security of the property of the organization
- Financial information that, if made public, could be beneficial to the competition or be detrimental to the organization
- Intimate, personal or financial details with respect to an individual or entities
- Acquisition or disposition of property
- Decisions with respect to negotiations with employees
- Litigation affecting the organization
- Matters deemed confidential by legislation
- Information relating to the regulation (admission or discipline) of named individuals or entities
- Reports or recommendations received by third parties who have a reasonable expectation of privacy (award nominees, letters of support, etc.)

### **GUIDELINES:**

The Chair will ask for and secure a motion and second for the motion and take a vote. The Chair will state for the minutes the time that the Board went into the closed session.

Confidential items should not be included on the agenda of an open meeting.

All agendas, including all attachments, and minutes will remain confidential until the committee resolves otherwise.

It is recommended to not record discussions or take minutes while in a closed session. If necessary, minutes should be on decisions made by the committee. Comments should not be attributed to individuals and verbatim minutes should be avoided.

If discussion summaries are recorded, they should be kept to a minimum, in concise point form, avoiding the identification of who said what.

All confidential minutes should be stamped confidential.



November 16, 2019 Board meeting in Carseland

Don't miss these links:

**Parliamentary procedure:**

<https://www.boardeffect.com/blog/roberts-rules-of-order-cheat-sheet/>

**Roles and responsibilities:**

<http://sectorsource.ca/managing-organization/board-governance/roles-requirements>

<https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/board-roles-and-responsibilities>

**Robert's Rules FAQs:**

<https://www.robertsrules.com/faq.html>

**Running meetings/effective meetings:**

<http://literacybasics.ca/board-governance/effective-board-meetings/>

**Effective minutes:**

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/industry-leadership/board-operations/pubs/meeting-minutes-factsheet.pdf>

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## Helpful Resources

Marigold ensures Marigold board members have access to reliable and pertinent information by making them available on our website. You can find the following information at [marigold.ab.ca](http://marigold.ab.ca):

- Meeting Dates & Minutes
- Board Policy Manual
- Board Committees
- Board Development Training
- Roles and Responsibilities

*\* For information on the Libraries Act and Regulations, Public Library Network Policy, Resource Sharing Operational Policy for Public Libraries, and much more, check out our [Trustee Resources](#) tab on our website.*

**Have a topic question or  
issue you want to know  
more about?**

**Send us a message!**



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