

Speaking to the Media

It is recommended that the library board chair and the library manager are the only designated individuals authorized to speak to the media. The library manager may authorize an employee with specific expertise to speak to the media regarding a certain topic on an ad hoc basis. Library managers should be present for all conversations with the media.

When dealing with media or the public, there are several times when “no comment” is appropriate. Generally, board members, managers, and staff must never speak about:

- Matters before the court (lawsuits, etc.)
- HR and labour relations matters (hiring and terminations, labour relations, strikes, lockouts, etc.)
- Criminal investigations or arrests (involving staff or on library property, etc.)
- Deaths of individuals on library property (usually handled by police/RCMP)
- Confidential information, negotiations (sale of land or other capital assets, etc.), proprietary information, etc.

In the event of any of the above occurring at your library (or any other library), it is very important that staff remain neutral and refrain from commenting, speculating, or releasing information without permission. With that in mind, the following are some suggested guidelines you may wish to share with your staff:

- **Do not speak to media or the public** about your library or other organizations about real or perceived challenges they may be facing.
- **Do not offer your opinion** on HR/labour issues or situations occurring at other organizations.
- **Do not speak about any HR issues that may be occurring within your own library.** These are usually confidential matters.
- When speaking publicly, you represent the library, its management, and the board. This happens, for example, when you are promoting a library program and have been authorized to speak with the local newspaper about it. However, **in terms of the above situations**, unless this has been expressly identified as your role, you must refrain from making any comments on these subjects.

What to say if asked...

- I’m sorry, I can’t comment on that. Please speak to [Library Manager/Board Chair – whoever has been designated as spokesperson].
- I’m sorry, I can’t comment on anything happening at another organization/Library.

Keep it simple and keep it short. Repeat the same statement if necessary.

If you need advice on how to handle issues, please contact CEO Lynne Price or COO Laura Taylor for assistance.

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