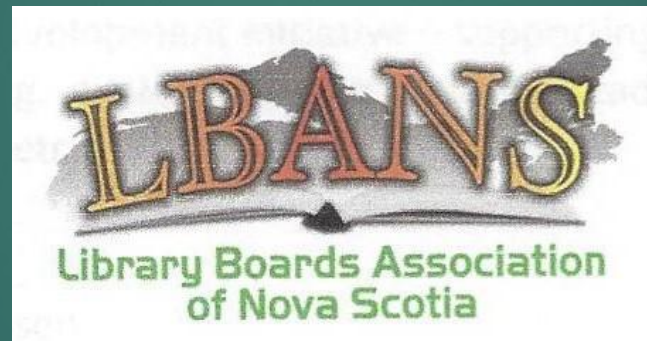


LIBRARY BOARD TRUSTEE DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Library Trustees: What Role? What Future? Identifying the key governance issues



**PAUL W. BENNETT, PAST CHAIR, HALIFAX REGIONAL LIBRARY BOARD
DENISE COREY, CHIEF LIBRARIAN, CUMBERLAND PUBLIC LIBRARIES
SARA LOCHHEAD, LIBRARY TRUSTEE, SOUTH SHORE REGIONAL LIBRARIES**

**LIBRARY BOARDS ASSOCIATION OF NOVA SCOTIA
FINAL REPORT- APPROVED AT LBANS AGM - SEPTEMBER 30, 2017**

LIBRARY TRUSTEES: WHAT ROLE? WHAT FUTURE?

IDENTIFYING THE KEY GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Purpose of the Report

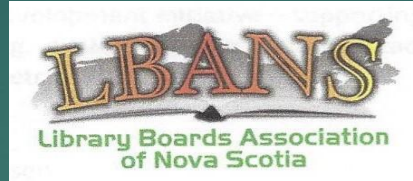
- ▶ To review the initial LBANS/CORL series of Library Trustee Governance Workshops held across Nova Scotia in all nine regional board districts from April to September 2017.
- ▶ To identify the common governance issues raised in the LBANS Library Trustee Development Workshops and to make recommendations for further Library Trustee development.

Background and Context

- ▶ The idea of holding Library Board Development Workshops, initiated and hosted by LBANS, was raised at the recent November 26, 2016 Executive Meeting held in the Truro Public Library in Truro.
- ▶ A three person LBANS-CORL team was assembled in February 2017 and an introductory Workshop module was developed for presentation to all nine library boards

LIBRARY TRUSTEES: WHAT ROLE? WHAT FUTURE?

IDENTIFYING THE KEY GOVERNANCE ISSUES



Initial Goals of the Workshops:

To engage Library Board members in an initial session focusing on the Public Role and Responsibilities of Library Trusteeship, and to begin identifying the key governance issues faced by Nova Scotia Library Boards. Without replacing or duplicating the induction or initial 'on boarding' programs, the LBANS workshop would look at broader questions, including What is the Trustee's role?, what works in Chair -CEO relationships?, and what are our biggest governance challenges?

To model best practice in Good Governance by being designed by Library Trustees – explicitly for Library Trustees. The focus would be on topics and issues identified and framed by Library Board members themselves. They would be offered by Library Board members with support from CORL, and senior staff who might add depth or new perspectives to the discussions.

Issue 1: Are Public Libraries in Crisis?

“The Crisis in Public Libraries in Rural Nova Scotia”

The Nova Scotia Advocate, March 30, 2016

“Budget pressures are bringing public libraries in rural Nova Scotia to their knees. Staff hours are reduced, entire programs are eliminated, and branches are cutting back on opening hours. Things can’t possibly get much worse, library workers tell the Nova Scotia Advocate.

“We will have to cut hours,” says Eric Stackhouse, chief librarian for the Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library. Which in turn will cause a lot of part time staff to lose their benefits, because of the way the insurer contract is structured.”

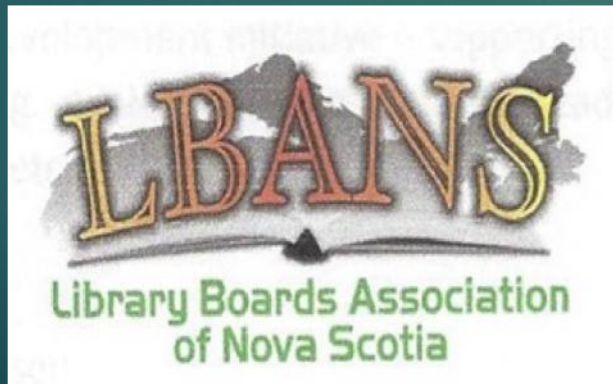


YES - Public Libraries Do Not Rank High in Funding Priorities

The Condition – Flatlined Funding and Benign Neglect

“Advocacy is a major responsibility of a library board” (LBANS, 2004)

Response: Leaving advocacy up to the Chief Librarians is not a winning strategy, Library Trustees can and should play a bigger role in the public domain.



Library Advocacy Now!

Canadian Association of Public Libraries, (CASPL, 2011)

Mission: To champion advocacy for public libraries

Goals:

To ensure universal access to information and to empower information professionals and trustees

To advance public libraries to the top of the political agenda

To mobilize a national movement of library advocates

To mobilize friends of libraries to speak out in the public domain

To ensure that there is a positive public perception of libraries

Who Are We?

Overview of Library Board Governance

Regional Library Boards: 9

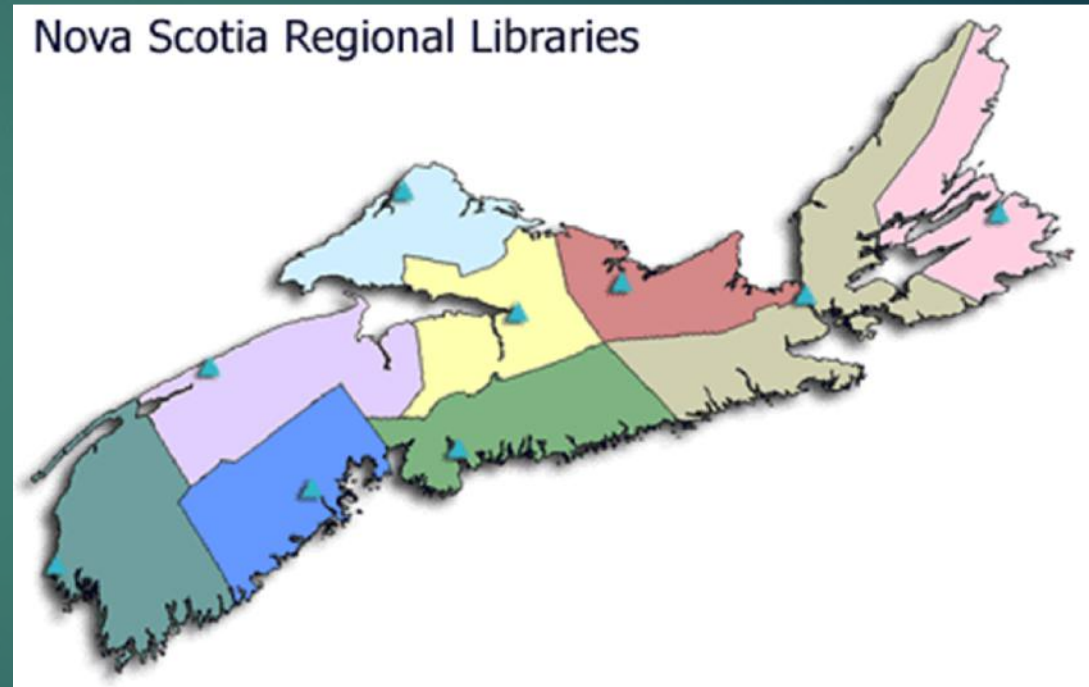
- ✓ Total Number of Trustees: 95 (Currently 91)
- ✓ Average No. of Trustees per Board: 10.5

Composition of LBANS Membership

- ✓ All Library Trustees are deemed members of LBANS
- ✓ A majority of the Library Trustees (95) in 2016-17 were councillors or town appointed representatives: 54 (56.8 %) and the balance were appointees: 41 (43.2 %)
- ✓ 41 appointees, including 18 provincial appointees (2 per board)

Regional Library Branches

- ✓ 80 physical libraries (66 outside HRM)
- ✓ 11 alternative library services such as bookmobiles, home delivery.



What is Library Trusteeship?

An LBANS Checklist of Good Governance

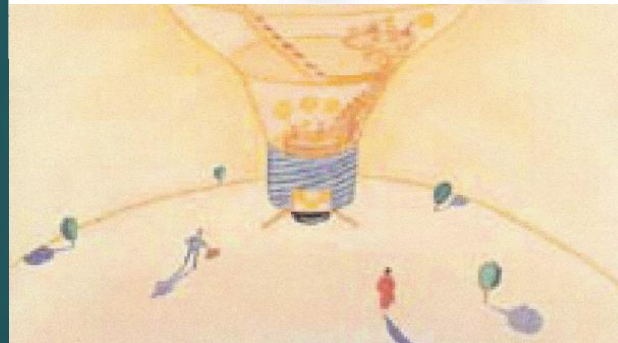
When someone is appointed to the Library Board of Trustees, they come with skills, beliefs, time and commitment to act in a responsible manner:

As a Library Trustee, they

- ✓ share their knowledge, skills and expertise with the Board
- ✓ come prepared, having read minutes and reports
- ✓ know the Board's mission statement, goals, bylaws
- ✓ ask lots of questions; take part in the discussions
- ✓ represent and share the views of the groups that appointed them to the Board
- ✓ become an advocate for Public Libraries

AND, when trustees are making decisions about the regional library system, they make those decisions in the best interest of the *entire region*.

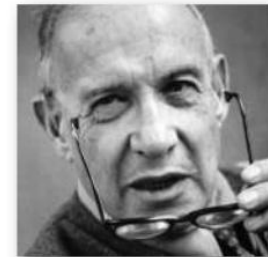
Issue 3: What's Our Governance Philosophy?



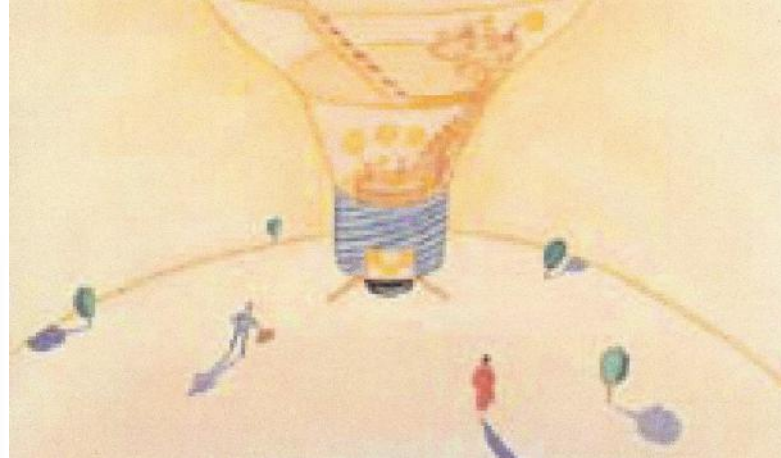
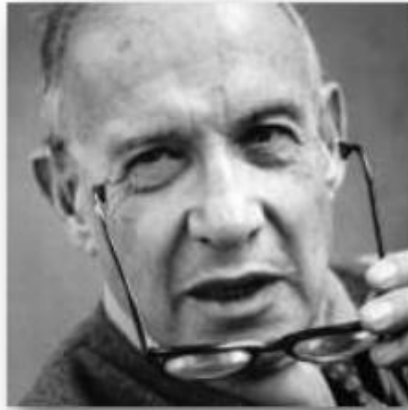
“There is very little governance theory. We don’t think about or debate governing; we just do it.”

Richard P. Chait, William P. Ryan, and Barbara E. Taylor, “Governance as Leadership,” *Board Member* (June-July, 2004). *Board Source*

Leadership is
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BoardSource

What's the Role of the Library Board?

(The Governance Framework)

- ▶ The Regional Library Board is a *governing board*.
- ▶ Governing boards are legal entities and have the authority to make overall policy and govern the affairs of the organization;
- ✓ exercise decision-making and legal authority for the organization

- ▶ The Board is expected to:

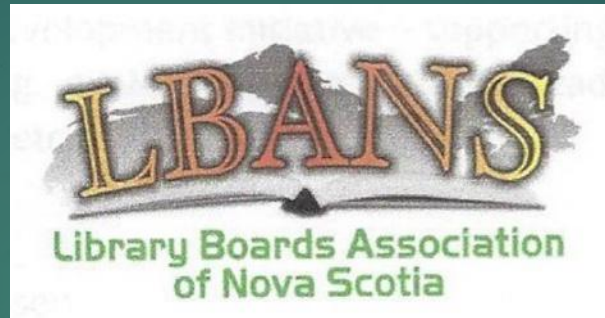
Take the strategic view, and make decisions affecting the long term functioning of the regional library.

- ▶ *Set the overarching policies and priorities for the library system, but NOT have direct responsibility for operations or programming.*

Be proactive, focused on the future and on the relation of the Library system to the community it serves.

Report to Municipal Councils and the Provincial Library, but accountable to all the people served by the Library.

Issue 4: What's the Library Board's Role in Strategic Planning?



- ▶ **LBANS Trustee Handbook 2004**
- ▶ Nova Scotia Library Board members are responsible for overseeing the business of the Library Board, including but not limited to this list of responsibilities (LBANS Trustee Handbook, 2004).
 - ▶ First responsibility: *Establishing strategic and operational plans*

Proposed Correction:

Establishing strategic directions and entrusting to the Chief Librarian responsibility for developing and implementing operational plans.

Issue 4: What's the Library Board's Role in Strategic Planning?

Stages in the SPLAN Process:

Whose Role – the Chief, the Board, or Both?

- ▶ Initiating the SPAN Cycle – When to Start?
 - ▶ Setting the Broad Parameters – Themes and Timelines
- ▶ Overseeing the Planning Process – Establishing the Check-in Points
 - ▶ Guiding the Development of the Actual Operational Plans
- ▶ Deciding on Regularity of Reporting – to the Board and the Public
 - ▶ Monitoring the Progress and Achievement of Stated Goals
- ▶ Identifying any 'Shortfalls' and Authorizing 'Mid-Term' Corrections
 - ▶ Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Planning Process

Library Board Size and Composition

Nova Scotia – as of September 1, 2017

Board	No. of Branches	No. of Trustees	Councillors	Appointees
AVRL	11	11	5	6
CBRSB	12	9	4	5
CEHRL	5	10	7	3
CRL	7	9	5	4
ECRL	10	7	5	2
HRL	14	10	2	8
PARL	7	9	8	2
SSRL	4	15	6	9
WCRL	10	10	7	3
Totals	80	91	49	42

The Real Work of Library Boards

Frequency and Length of Board Meetings

Regional Library Board	Frequency of Meetings	Length of Meetings	Strategic Plan	Composition
AVRL	5 times/yr plus committee meetings	2-2.5 hrs	In process of update	5 councillors / 6 appointees
CPL	5 times/yr	1.5 hr	Yes – in pause mode	4 councillors / 5 appointees
CEHPL	6 times/yr	2 hr	No	7 councillors / 3 appointees
CBRL	Quarterly	2 hr	Annual goals	4 councilors/5 appointees
ECRL	Monthly (except summer)	2 hr	No	5 councillors / 2 appointees
WCRL	Quarterly	2 hr	Yes	7 councillors / 3 appointees
SSPL	Monthly (except summer)	0.5 hr (Changing)	Yes - 10 year	6 councillors / 9 appointees
PARL	Quarterly, Monthly Committees	2 hr	No	8 councillors/ 2 appointees
HPL	Monthly (except summer)	2 hr	Yes - 5 year	2 councillors / 8 appointees

Issue 7: What Works – in Board Chair- Chief Librarian Relations?

- ▶ **Who's in Charge?:** Model Shared Leadership – in setting Board Agendas
- ▶ **Chief Librarian Evaluation:** Establish Regular, Implementable Model, stay on track
- ▶ **Respect the Boundaries:** Board Chair respects CEO responsibility for operations
- ▶ **The Rogue Trustee:** Board Chair is responsible for reigning in 'rouge' activities
 - ▶ **Emergency Measures:** Call a Chair-Head Meeting or summon Executive Committee
- ▶ **Levels of Commitment:** Strive to Understand Demand on Councillors' Time
- ▶ **Succession Planning:** A Clear Strategic Priority – for Staff Leadership and Board Composition Renewal

Why Focus on Governance?

Good governance is more critical than ever to the viability of public libraries. We count upon the Library Boards of Nova Scotia, through their members, structure and processes, to advance the system's mission, vision, and long-term sustainability.

Changes in governance reflect new and growing demands for flexible, agile decision-making and more public accountability.

Today's Library Boards are expected to carry out three main functions:

- 1) strategic and policy oversight;
- 2) fiduciary oversight, including CEO evaluation;
- 3) generative policy-making.

It's good healthy practice to ask -- how do we measure up and what might we do better? That's a worthy ongoing challenge.

LIBRARY TRUSTEES: WHAT ROLE? WHAT FUTURE?

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The State of Library Trusteeship

- Genuine enthusiasm about, and interest in, the “Who Are We?” discussion and in future opportunities for getting to know colleagues from other Library Boards
- Turnover of Library Trustees on a three-year municipal cycle is a factor making it difficult to build upon expertise.
- Many and possibly most Library Trustees were unfamiliar with LBANS beyond its acronym and unaware that every Trustee was a member of the organization.

Recommendation 1:

That Library Boards support LBANS by making Board Governance and Trustee Development a higher priority and urge the province to work with LBANS in addressing the identified issues.

Recommendation 2:

That the LBANS Executive, in collaboration with the Provincial Library/CCH, develop and maintain a complete LBANS membership roster with contact information.

Recommendation 3:

That LBANS, in collaboration with the Provincial Library/CCH, examine Library Trustee turnover, including municipal cycles, provincial appointments, and term limits.

LIBRARY TRUSTEES: WHAT ROLE? WHAT FUTURE?

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Trustee Development

- Clear priorities of our Library Trustees: 1) Board Development 2) Advocacy 3) Fund Raising 4) Provincial Funding 5) Strategic Planning.
- Overwhelming support (over 90 per cent) for holding more Library Trustee Board Development Workshops
- Critical need to update and revise the *Nova Scotia Trustee Handbook*, last produced by the Education Department in 2004

Recommendation 4:

That the LBANS-CORL Governance Workshop Series be continued in 2018 with a focus on addressing the identified issues and engaging more Library Trustees in the process.

Recommendation 5:

That the LBANS Executive take the lead in initiating a complete revision of the Library Trustee Handbook, funded by CCH and drawing upon findings from this round of Trustee Development Workshops.

LIBRARY TRUSTEES: WHAT ROLE? WHAT FUTURE?

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Emerging Issues and Concerns

- Widely varying Library Board composition needs to be examined, particularly the current variable mix of municipal councillors and citizen appointees
- Current number of Library Boards (9) sparked discussion and whether that overall structure was sustainable over the longer-term.
- Provincial appointments process is a major concern because of lag time in securing replacements and prevalence of 'vacant' seats
- Visible minorities and marginalized groups are almost totally unrepresented on our provincial Library Boards

Recommendation 5:

That LBANS take the lead in initiating (in cooperation with CCH) a full study of the current Library Board structure, incl. numbers of boards, board composition, governance practices

Recommendation 5:

That the provincial appointment process be improved to secure more timely appointments and replacements and allow provincial appointees to serve until replaced by successors.

Recommendation 7:

That Nova Scotia Library Boards be challenged to find ways of improving the representation of minorities and marginalized communities

LIBRARY TRUSTEES: WHAT ROLE? WHAT FUTURE?

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

New Ideas and Future Directions

- First round of Trustee Workshops has already sparked thinking and a few changes at the individual board level in current governance practices, including strategic planning, length of meetings, and leadership succession
- Support follow-up Workshops to propose and discuss a possible framework for Good Governance practice, including best practice in CEO Evaluation, Strategic Planning, Leadership Succession, and Public Advocacy.
- Strong interest in strengthening the LBANS connection and in engaging Municipal Councillors more, possibly through UNSM

Recommendation 8:

That LBANS collaborate with CORL is developing a proposed framework for Good Governance practice, supported and funded by CCH, and vetted in an upcoming round of Library Trustee Workshops.

Recommendation 9:

That the LBANS Executive take the lead in proposing a USNM Annual Meeting Workshop for Municipal Library Trustees and encourage UNSM to establish a formal Municipal Library Trustee Interest Group.