

**BY-LAWS  
OF THE TRUSTEES  
OF THE BELLINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY  
BELLINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**

**Article I. Name and Authorization**

This organization shall be called “The Board of Trustees of the Bellingham Public Library” (“Trustees”), existing by virtue of the provisions of Chapter 78, Section 10-13, 21 of the General Laws of Massachusetts (M.G.L.A.). The Board shall have all of the powers and duties which are given to Boards of Library Trustees by M.G.L.A., by the charter adopted by the Town on May 1, 1993, by Town By-Law, or by other Town Meeting vote.

**Article II. Trustees**

**Section 1. Number and Qualifications**

As determined by Town Charter, there shall be a Board of Library Trustees consisting of five (5) members.

**Section 2. Term of Office**

Board members shall be elected for terms of three (3) years each, so arranged that the term of office of as nearly an equal number of members as possible shall expire each year.

**Section 3. Resignations**

Any member of the Trustees may resign by written notice filed with the Town Clerk Select Board of the Town of Bellingham, and with the Chair or the Secretary of Trustees.

**Section 4. Vacancies**

In the event of a vacancy or vacancies on the Trustees prior to the end of the individual(s) term(s) of office, applications will be accepted at the Select Board’s Office until a replacement is appointed. Appointments shall be made at a joint meeting of the Trustees and the Select Board, by a majority vote of the combined Boards. Such appointments shall be valid until the next town election, when any remaining portion of a term of office shall be filled through election.

**Article III. Officers**

**Section 1. Officers**

The officers of the Trustees shall be Chair, a Vice-Chair and a Secretary. The Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary shall be elected by the Trustees at the Reorganization Meeting of the Board following the Annual Town Election. They shall hold office until the next Annual Reorganization Meeting of the Board or until their respective successors are elected.

**Section 2. Duties of the Chair**

1. To serve as presiding member of all meetings of the Trustees.
2. To call special meetings of the Trustees.
3. To serve ex-officio as a member of all committees of the Trustees.

### **Section 3. Duties of the Vice-Chair**

To perform the duties of the Chair of the Board of Library Trustees at the request of the Chair or in the Chair's absence.

### **Section 4. Duties of the Secretary**

To keep a true and accurate record of all meetings of the Trustees and to perform such other duties as are generally associated with the office.

## **Article IV. Library Director and Staff**

The Trustees shall appoint a certified library director who shall be the executive and administrative officer of the library on behalf of the Trustees, under its review and direction. The director shall recommend to the Trustees the appointment (excluding appointment of those positions outlined in the Powers & Duties of the Trustees section of this document) and specify the duties of other employees and shall be held responsible for the proper direction and supervision of the staff, for the care and maintenance of library property, for an adequate and proper selection of books and other library materials in keeping with the stated policy of the Trustees, for the efficiency of library service to the public and for its financial operation within the limitations of the budgeted appropriation. In the case of part-time or temporary employees, the director shall have interim authority to appoint without the approval of the Trustees provided that any such appointment shall be reported to the Trustees at its next regular meeting. The library director shall attend all duly constituted Trustees' meetings.

## **Article V. Committees**

### **Section 1.**

The Chair shall appoint committees of one or more members each for such specific purposes as the business of the Trustees may require from time to time. A committee shall be considered to be discharged upon the completion of the purpose for which it was appointed and after the final report is made to the Board.

### **Section 2.**

All committees shall make a progress report to the Trustees at each of its meetings.

### **Section 3.**

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

## **Article VI. Meetings**

### **Section 1.**

The Trustees shall meet at least once a month at the Bellingham Library or at the place designated at the preceding meeting. The first meeting after town election shall be the reorganization meetings.

### **Section 2.**

Open Meeting Law. All meetings of the Trustees shall be subject to the Commonwealth's Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25. In particular: all meeting shall be open to the public unless held in executive session in accordance with the Law; notice of all meetings, except in the case of emergency, shall be filed with the Town Clerk and posted at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting; notice of the meeting shall

include a description of all topics reasonably anticipated to be discussed; and all records and/or minutes of the meetings shall be available for public inspection.

### **Section 3.**

Special meetings of the Trustees may be called by the Chair, or upon written request of four members, for the transaction of business as stated in the meeting request. Notice stating the time and place of any special meeting and the purpose for which called shall be posted as required by the Commonwealth's Open Meeting Law and given to each member of the Trustees at least two days in advance of the meeting.

### **Section 4.**

A quorum for transaction of business shall consist of a simple majority.

### **Section 5.**

If for any reason a board member cannot attend a scheduled meeting, such member shall give at least 24 hours' notice in advance to the Board Chair, the Library Director or other designated officer of the Board.

## **Article VII. Powers and Duties of the Trustees**

The Board of Library Trustees shall have the custody and management of the public library and of all property of the Town related to said library. All funds of money and property that the Town may receive by gift or bequest for the purpose of library support or maintenance shall be administered by the Board in accordance with the provisions of any such gift or bequest.

Specific duties are as follows:

1. Engage in an ongoing planning process which assesses the needs of the library and role of the library in the community; and insure that the library develops to meet those needs.
2. Select, appoint and regularly evaluate a library director.
3. Select and appoint other full time professional staff.
4. Prepare a written employment contract for the Director, detailing the basic conditions for employment, as provided by Mass. General Laws, Chapter 78, Section 34.
5. Prepare a written employment contract for other full time professional staff.
6. Establish a written policy for the selection of library materials and the use of library materials and facilities which is accord with the current standards of the American Library Association, as provided for by the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 78, Section 33.
7. Determine the policy of the library and maintain a written record thereof.
8. Advise in the preparation of the budget, approve it, and secure adequate funds to finance the approved budget.
9. 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.
10. Attend meetings with municipal finance and administrative boards.
11. Speak and act as an advocate for libraries in the community and maintain vital public relations.
12. Study and support legislation which will bring about the greatest good to the greatest number of libraries.
13. Be available to review and if necessary, sign library bills on billing cycle between meetings. If unable to sign, library director must be notified.
14. Attend minimum of 8 of 12 trustee meetings in any 12 month period.

## **Article VIII. Collective Authority of the Trustees**

1. All the decisions of the Trustees are made by the Trustees as a collective body. No individual member may make decisions or act for the Trustees unless specifically authorized to do so by a vote of the Trustees.
2. Except as provided for by these by-laws, the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern.

## **Article IX. Amendments**

Those by-laws not governed by the provisions of Chapter 78, Section 10-13, 21 of the General Laws of Massachusetts, the Town Charter, by Town By-Law, or other Town Meeting vote may be amended at any regular meeting of the Trustees with a quorum present, by a majority vote of the members present, provided the amendment was stated at the preceding meeting or was sent to members at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting.

**(Approved by the Board of Library Trustees on February 9, 2006, amended September 20, 2012, amended April 12, 2018, amended April 13, 2023)**