



## Otonabee – South Monaghan Public Library

Policy Type: **Governance**  
Policy Title: **Board Advocacy**

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Chair Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The OSM Public Library Board must ensure that the community is aware of the importance of the Library. Funding bodies should fully understand the important role which the Library plays in the community, especially in promoting literacy and the love of reading, as well as responding to a wide variety of community interests.

This policy sets out the advocacy responsibilities of the Library Board in this work.

### Section 1: Key points

While advocacy is crucial, it is essential that these efforts are conducted thoughtfully to enhance the depth and breadth of support for OSM Public Library. Key points include:

1. The primary goal of advocacy is to raise awareness about the impact and value of public libraries.
2. Advocacy efforts will emphasize the positive aspects of the Library's value, avoiding criticism of those who may not share this perspective.
3. When appropriate, the Library will collaborate with provincial and national library organizations to support independent research that enhances understanding of libraries' impact and best practices.
4. The timing and nature of Library advocacy will be carefully managed to avoid any appearance of endorsing specific candidates or political parties.
5. Generally, the Library's formal advocacy will focus on issues aligned with OSMPL's mission as a public library. For instance, efforts to influence provincial and federal governments will concentrate on funding or legislation affecting public libraries. This approach does not prevent the Library from participating in or supporting awareness campaigns on issues consistent with its values of respect and inclusion, or broadly supporting health, wellness, and democratic participation.

### Section 2: Advocacy Strategy

1. In pursuing its advocacy activities, the Library Board shall:
  - a) Prepare a biannual advocacy plan
  - b) Inform Council of the needs of the community, as relevant to the development of library services, plans and achievements by means of reports
  - c) Meet with Council once a year to review progress and discuss funding needs

- d) Participate regularly in activities that build relationships with individuals and organizations that share interests with those of the OSM Public Library
- e) Identify and respond to issues, concerns and government policies that may directly or indirectly affect the OSM Public Library and ensure that government decision-makers at all levels are aware of the value of the Library and its benefit to individuals and to the community

### **Section 3: Roles**

1. The **Board chair** (or delegate) shall be the official spokesperson for the OSM Public Library on issues approved by the Library Board, including being a media spokesperson.
2. All **Board members** are encouraged to promote the value of the OSM Public Library and its impact on the community. This is done by:
  - Sharing stories and relevant information about Library programs, services and impact.
  - Sharing information about the Board’s values, vision, and strategic plans.
  - Being an ambassador for the Library and advocating consistent with this policy.
  - When requested, assisting the Board Chair in officially representing the Library at meetings or other events.
  - Respecting the confidentiality appropriate to all issues of a sensitive nature and understanding that it is the Chair’s role to represent and speak on behalf of the Board.
  - Coordinating with the Board Chair and Library CEO to ensure appropriate information is shared. Because of their roles the Board Chair and CEO, if contacted by the media are responsible for responding to media inquiries. This role may be delegated to others, but the delegation requires the approval of the Board Chair or CEO.
3. The **Library CEO**:
  - May speak on behalf of the Library in matters relating to the operation and procedures of the Library and may speak on behalf of the Board in cooperation with the Board Chair.
  - Shall identify and maintain effective relationships with appropriate stakeholders such as other libraries, governments, agencies, businesses, media, non-governmental organizations, and community leaders.
  - Will periodically report to the Library Board on the status of advocacy efforts undertaken by staff, especially those which support the overall advocacy activities of the Library Board.
  - Make the Board aware of ongoing and current issues or trends that require attention.

### **Related documents**

- OSMPL Library Policies – OP-03 – *The Library and Political Elections*.