

**Ad Hoc Discussion Group on Recruiting New Members for the Vermont Board of Libraries  
11/30/2022**

**Via Teams**

Present: Maxie Ewins, Debbie Granquist, Linda Saarnijoki

- I. We wrote a job description, meant to function as an information sheet for interested or recruited candidates. (attached as an addendum at the end of this report.)
  
- II. We began with a discussion of the qualities and characteristics of effective Board members. We reviewed the backgrounds of current Board members (having requested bios from them) to help us determine the following as valuable attributes:
  1. Interest in libraries and willingness to advocate for them
  2. Having time and interest to be on the State Library Board
  3. Critical thinking skills, willingness to participate, willingness to listen, willingness to be flexible, willingness to talk
  4. Understanding the value of community in our local towns and how libraries can contribute to that.
  5. Understanding and appreciation of good governance
  6. Strong leadership skills
  7. Understanding the issues facing libraries in the state and generally
  8. Having an interest in history, culture and geographic naming issues

The following we felt are also helpful attributes that should be represented on the Board, but as the State Librarian has said, this Board functions as a citizens' advisory council and should have strong representation of everyday users of libraries.

1. Work in a library or have library education
2. Serve on a library board
3. Involved in state or local government

We emphasized the desirability of geographic, gender, and cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity.

- III. We had extensive discussion about what we should do with the list of attributes and how to facilitate the selection of new Board members, either through the State Librarian, the Agency of Administration, or the Governor.

How much input from the Board itself is appropriate or desired? Should we be finding our own replacements? We need to discuss this with the State Librarian.

- IV. We listed the following methods for locating potential candidates

1. Contact Libraries in areas of the state not represented on the Board.

2. Ask the Working Group for suggestions
3. Press Release—from the Agency of Administration or Governor's Office?
4. Use the State Library listserv to announce vacancies.

V. We then had a general discussion about the role or mission of the Board.

1. Are we a group that looks inward to assist the State Library and Librarian OR should we be facing outward to libraries in communities, advocating for them, helping to speak for them, representing and assisting them?
2. We identified these key issues for the Board:
  - Advocating for Libraries
  - Advocating for the place of libraries in the digital age
  - Addressing issues of censorship

*Minutes submitted by Linda Saarnijoki*

## **Addendum**

### **Job Description for Members of the Vermont State Board of Libraries**

**11/29/22**

The Vermont State Board of Libraries is looking for additional members:

*The Governor is looking for talented, hardworking individuals with fresh ideas and who are good managers, proven leaders and recognize they will be held to the highest standards of conduct when they accept the responsibility of public service to their fellow Vermonters.*

### The Purpose of the Board of Libraries

The State of Vermont Board of Libraries serves in an advisory capacity to the State Librarian, as stated in the Establishing Statutes

(<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/22/013/00602>). The Governor appoints the seven members of the Board of Libraries to four-year terms. The State Librarian serves as Secretary to the Board of Libraries but is not a member of the Board and does not vote on board matters.

In addition to advising the State Librarian, the Board of Libraries is responsible for naming geographic locations including mountains, streams, lakes, and ponds in the State of Vermont (<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/10/009/00152>).

### Expectations

The Board meets quarterly on the second Tuesday of January, April, July and October at 10:00 AM via an online meeting platform, at the Midstate Library Service Center in Berlin, or occasionally at libraries around Vermont. Special meetings are also occasionally called. Board members are expected to have read all of the material received prior to the meeting.

Most volunteers who are not otherwise receiving a state salary for board or commission service will be eligible to receive a per diem of \$50 per day for their service.

### Structure of Meetings

Because this Board is a citizens' advisory council for the State Library, at each of its meetings the Board receives the State Librarian's report regarding programs, services, personnel changes, and projects that the State Library is engaged in. Discussion follows, enabling the Board to learn more about specific aspects and to make additional recommendations that will enable the State Library to serve the libraries and citizens of Vermont even more fully.

Geographic Naming petitions are submitted to the State Library. At one of its scheduled meetings, the Board will hear from petitioners and any other interested parties. Following guidelines established by the state and by the [United States Department of Geographic Naming], the Board will then decide on the naming petition.

### Membership

The Board is made up of interested citizens, some of whom have experience as trustees of libraries, members of library friends' groups, or librarians. All have an abiding love of libraries and a desire to assure that everyone in Vermont has access to excellent libraries and library resources.

For more information:

[https://libraries.vermont.gov/about\\_us/board](https://libraries.vermont.gov/about_us/board)