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## Carleton Place Public Library

Policy Type: **Governance**

Policy Number: **GOV - 08**

Policy Title: **Board Advocacy**

Initial Policy Approval Date: September 21, 2016

Last Review/Revision Date: September 2022

November 2023

Year of next Review: 2027

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The library board must ensure that the community is aware of the importance of the library and that funding bodies fully understand the important role which the library plays in the community, especially in promoting literacy and the love of reading.

This policy sets out the advocacy responsibilities of the library board and the role of staff in this work.

### **Section 1: Key points**

While advocacy is important, it is also important that these efforts are done in a thoughtful way that strengthens the depth and breadth of support for libraries. Some key points:

1. The goal of advocacy is to promote awareness of the impact and value of public libraries.
2. In the process of advocating for the library, the focus will be on the positive merits of the Carleton Place Public Library's value. Criticism of individuals not sharing this perspective should be avoided.
3. Where appropriate, the library will participate in advocacy efforts with provincial and national library organizations, for example to support independent research that improves the understanding about the impact of libraries and the best practices to achieve that impact.
4. The timing and nature of library advocacy will be careful to avoid the appearance that specific candidates or political parties are being endorsed.
5. In general, the library's formal advocacy efforts will focus on issues that are related to the mission of a public library. For example, efforts to influence the provincial and federal governments will focus on funding or legislation that impact public libraries or libraries in general. This does not preclude the library from participating in or supporting awareness campaigns on issues consistent with our values of respect and inclusion, or, in general, support of issues related to health and wellness and democratic participation.

### **Section 2: Advocacy Strategy**

1. In pursuing its advocacy activities, the library board shall:



- a) ensure that advocacy remains a planned and sustainable ongoing process at the Library, by:
  - i. Forming an Advocacy Committee to advise and recommend the Board's efforts, as per the Carleton Place Public Library Board By-laws.
  - ii. Adopting an Annual Advocacy Plan and reflecting advocacy related goals and actions within its Strategic Plan.
  - iii. Welcoming development opportunities to support and enhance Board members' advocacy-related skills.
- b) Meet with council at least once a year to discuss the Library's resources, services, plans and achievements.
- c) Participate regularly in activities that build relationships with individuals and organizations that share interests with those of the Carleton Place Public Library.
- d) Adopt and implement strategies to ensure that the Library has a 'voice at the table', expanding opportunities for the Library to demonstrate its value, contribute to shared community initiatives and encourage investments in library spaces and services.
- e) Identify and respond to issues, concerns and government policies that may directly or indirectly affect the Carleton Place 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: Communications**

1. In addition to supporting staff efforts to raise awareness of library programs and services, the Library Board will:
  - a. Communicate in one voice, in an informed manner, relaying the unique benefits of the Library to the community.
  - b. Ensure that all messages are positive and consistent.
2. Either the Library Board Chair or the CEO (or their designates) will be the official spokesperson for the Library on advocacy issues, depending upon availability and the nature of the issue. If contacted by the media or stakeholders, Board members should refrain from responding on behalf of the Library and instead coordinate with the Board Chair and/or CEO to ensure appropriate information is shared.
3. All Board members are encouraged to promote the value of the Carleton Place Public Library and its impact on the community by:
  - a. Sharing unedited stories and relevant information about library programs, services and relevance, as initially published by CPPL, across their personal and social media networks. All such posts should be made in alignment with the guidelines of the Carleton Place Public Library Board Code of Conduct (GOV-12).
  - b. Sharing information about the Board's values, vision and strategic plans.
  - c. Acting as an excellent ambassador for the Carleton Place Public Library and advocating within the guidelines of this policy.
  - d. Respecting the confidentiality appropriate to any issues of a sensitive nature.



- e. Supporting the work of the Board's Advocacy Committee by contributing to deliverables or initiatives identified within the Library's Annual Advocacy Plan.
- f. Assisting the Board Chair and/or CEO in officially representing the Library at meetings or other events as requested.

#### **Related documents**

- Carleton Place Public Library Policies – OP-03 – *The Library and Political Elections.*
- Carleton Place Public Library Policies – GOV-05 – *Committees of the Board*
- Carleton Place Public Library Policies – GOV-12 – *Board Code of Conduct*

*With thanks to the Hamilton and Caledon Public Libraries for wording around this policy.*