

Policy 6150

Conflict of Interest	
Approved	May 14, 2020
Revision Approved	
Most recent review	

The Okotoks Public Library Board is committed to the highest standards of integrity, ethics, honesty, and governance. High standards of ethical conduct shall be maintained by persons serving on the Board to promote and maintain public trust and confidence. It is fundamental that the public perceives that all policies and decisions of the Okotoks Public Library Board of Trustees are fairly and impartially determined.

Standard of Conduct

In undertaking responsibility for the governance of the Okotoks Public Library, Trustees must comply with all applicable legislation ([At a Glance Conflicts of Interest Act, Requirements for Public Agencies, Jan. 2018](#)) and Board approved policies. In discharging their duties and exercising their power, Trustees are expected to:

- Act honestly and in good faith in the best interest of Okotoks Public Library.
- Avoid being placed in a position that could result in a real, potential or perceived conflict between personal interest and the interests of Okotoks Public Library.

Confidential Information

Confidential information that trustees receive through their position must not be divulged to anyone other than persons who are authorized to receive the information. A Trustee must not use information that is gained due to his or her position which is not available to the general public in order to further any private interest.

Conflict of Interest Definitions

An “interest” is defined as a commitment, obligation, or duty associated with a particular social role.

A conflict of interest may be defined as:

- (a) a situation where judgement or actions regarding a primary interest may be unduly influenced by a secondary interest such as personal, social or financial benefits, or
- (b) a situation that has the potential to undermine the impartiality of a person because of the possibility of a clash between the person’s self-interest and the public interest, or
- (c) a situation in which an individual has competing interests or loyalties because of their duties to more than one person or organization and it is not possible for both of them to be treated equally and fairly at the same time.

The Okotoks Public Library Board will ensure that all Board members are aware of what constitutes a conflict and that appropriate procedures are followed when a conflict is perceived or declared.

Conflict Situations

The situations in which a conflict may arise between a person's private interest and public responsibility are many and varied.

The following are examples of conflict but not intended as a comprehensive list of all conflicts:

- membership in an interest group seeking to influence Board policy;
- membership in a group whose interests are incompatible with the interests of the library;
- participation in decision making about an issue when the person has a direct pecuniary interest in the outcome;
- participation in decision making about an issue affecting the employment, remuneration or profit of a spouse, family member, close relation or friend;
- acceptance of gifts, accommodation, equipment or travel from a company which has or seeks to establish a close working relationship with the Board;
- use or release of confidential information for personal interests;
- use of Board property, equipment or resources for personal interests or profit.

Board members shall declare a conflict of interest, whether personal, business or financial, when such interests may influence or may appear to influence the policies and decisions of the Board and the Library.

Procedures

Citizens whose immediate family members are Okotoks Public Library employees who have regular, direct contact with the Board are ineligible for appointment to the Board.

When a Board member perceives that he/she may have a conflict of interest, pecuniary or otherwise, he/she shall declare the conflict prior to discussion of the issue before the Board. The Chair shall rule as to whether the declaration constitutes a conflict. If the Chair rules that a conflict exists, the member shall not engage in discussion, or vote, and shall leave the part of the meeting during which the matter is under discussion.

When a Board member perceives that another Trustee may have a conflict of interest, pecuniary or otherwise, which has not been declared, the Board member may request the Chair to rule. While the Chair determines whether or not a conflict exists, all debate on the issue before the Board will cease. If the Chair rules that a conflict exists, the Trustee shall not engage in discussion, or vote, and shall leave the part of the meeting during which the matter is under discussion.

In the event that the Chair has a conflict or perceived conflict the Vice-Chair will fulfill the role of investigating and ruling on the conflict.

Every disclosure of a potential conflict of interest and the nature thereof shall be recorded in the minutes of the Board meeting.

Failure to Comply

Trustees must be perceived to display honesty and integrity at all times. In order to protect the Okotoks Public Library's reputation, a breach of this policy by a Trustee will result in actions commensurate with the magnitude, nature and seriousness of the breach.