

## Advocacy

Webster's dictionary defines advocacy as "the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal; the act or process of advocating something". The number one job of a library trustee is to serve as an advocate for your library. Trustees should be sharing the library story far and wide to all they meet.

Advocating at the local level is vitally important. There are many ways for a library to do this. Providing funding agencies with an annual report that outlines the services you offer is one way. Asking to present a "State of the Library address" at a meeting of the City Council and/or County Board is a wonderful way to let them know what's going on at the library. The Library Director should present the report but trustees should attend the meeting to support the director. Trustees should all support the director when s/he is requesting the annual budget from the funding agency.

As an advocate, you can influence decision-makers by:

- speaking to civic groups about library needs and issues
- talking to friends about the library, its role in the community, and its needs
- writing letters to the editor of the local newspaper
- testifying at local and state budget hearings
- talking and writing to state and federal legislators about the needs of the library
- contributing to a library newsletter that is sent to decision makers.

Trustees should also be part of any statewide advocacy efforts. If the American Library Association or the state library association issue a call to action, it is important for trustees to answer the call be it by calling, emailing or tweeting their legislators.

The American Library Association has a whole page devoted to advocacy. There are some great resources available on the page <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/home>. Take some time to look through the resources that are available there. You can also sign up for District Dispatch so you're up-to-date on library issues. Visit ALA's Legislative Action Center at <http://cgrcengage.com/ala/> to sign up for the dispatch or to learn more about current issues and legislation affecting libraries.

## Capital Planning: Before You Begin

When embarking on capital planning of any kind, you, your board, and your library director should familiarize yourselves with any state, county, or city ordinances that place requirements on planning, design or implementation. These local ordinances will supersede anything addressed within this section (of the Trustee Manual).

Capital plans for small and large projects vary in scope. Relatively small projects that are not part of a major renovation of an extensive portion of a library or new construction require a plan that at a minimum lists identified supplies / materials, the estimated costs and an anticipated timeline for completion. Projects qualifying as capital include furnishings and equipment (including computer hardware and software); the replacement of a roof;

heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems; and minor renovations of library buildings such as installing an elevator.

Large projects such as new buildings, additions or a major renovation of an extensive portion of the library require a detailed capital plan and account for the second type of capital plan. Large capital projects will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

### Planning Library Buildings:

As trustees face the challenges of planning library services for the future, increased space and additional locations may become a major consideration. Boards must decide whether to build a new library, renovate or expand current facilities, or find an existing space to be converted into a library. Construction plans should be considered in the context of the total library plan. Trustees need to study service needs, explore alternatives, estimate funding needs, identify potential funding sources, and establish priorities.

Most planning processes will lead to the identification of a probable date when new library space should be in operation.

While having a new building may be the best answer, it is not always the most practical and should be measured against other options: purchase of an existing building, lease of an existing building, remodeling of the library, addition to the library, or in some cases, adding branches. Depending on the library and its services, the addition of a bookmobile or other outreach techniques may be considered in expansion plans.

Because a library board and staff will not have the necessary expertise to deal with all aspects of a building planning project, outside consultants may be used to provide specialized guidance. Consultants can suggest procedures, prevent mistakes, introduce new ideas, and sometimes defuse controversy. Some types of consultants whose services may be needed are: library building consultant, automation consultant, attorney, architect, certified public accountant and library services consultant.

### Building Program:

After the library has completed its community analysis, defined its long-term goals and objectives, and determined the need for additional space; a library building program is developed. The building program defines the specific needs of the library in both quantitative and qualitative terms. The building program should bring together the thinking of the library board, the library director, the library staff, and the community on the purpose, scope, and function of the library building. It is strongly recommended that a library consultant be hired to assist in writing the building program for any major project. The building program should also stress that the building must be flexible and able to respond to future developments. Library functions and spaces should be able to expand and contract as needs develop or diminish. Existing and future technologies should be anticipated. Computerization, miniaturization, electronics, and other factors are already in play and will continue to develop. These technologies have implications for the building's structure, its heating, ventilating, and air conditioning systems (HVAC), its power, lighting,

electronic, and communications systems (PLEC), as well as ergonomic considerations in planning spaces and equipment.

Architect:

The architect should be hired only after a library has completed the preliminary steps of construction planning. The architect can then use the library's building program to aid in designing the building. In hiring an architect, the library should solicit applications, rank them by preference, and then enter into negotiations with the top choice, conducting personal interviews with the person or firm that interests the library board. The past experience of the architect should be considered, as well as the architect's personal philosophy. Final fees are discussed and an agreement is reached. If an agreement cannot be reached with the first choice, the board then declares that is the case and enters negotiations with the next candidate.

Design of the Building:

Once an architect is hired, the actual design of the building can proceed along with final decisions on location, size, addition or all new construction, etc. The general steps that will follow are:

1. preparation of schematic design
2. preparation of preliminary plans and design development
3. preparation of specifications and working drawings
4. advertising and receipt of bids
5. bonding process
6. award of contracts
7. actual construction
8. acceptance of performance
9. move to new building

State laws may require additional steps or procedures to the processes outlined above. Be sure to research federal, state and local regulations on bidding and awarding contracts, as it's important to make sure you adhere to all governance regarding these issues.

Planning Responsibilities:

The State Library or an attorney specializing in construction law, should be consulted for building-related state standards, guidelines, and for general information regarding your building program and the availability of state or federal funding for the project. Trustees, staff, consultants, architects, interior designers, city councils, regional planning departments, and community members all fit into the picture.

### Trustees:

- determine that a new building is needed
- provide leadership in the campaign to inform the community and secure necessary support for the project
- appoint a building committee and assign tasks
- select and hire a library building consultant
- select and hire an architect
- obtain financing for the project
- select and purchase the site
- approve the written building program
- approve preliminary and final architectural plans
- solicit and approve bid documents
- approve all contracts and any change orders to the contract

### Library Staff:

The library director and staff actively participate in planning for construction projects by compiling information, surveys, and statistics; by helping to prepare a written building program; by preparing construction applications and reports; and by maintaining project records. The library director is an essential member of the building team in ensuring a facility that will successfully support the library program.

### Library Building Consultant:

The consultant is usually an experienced librarian who has participated in several successful building projects. The cost of a building consultant can usually be saved many times over in reductions in construction and operating costs. Working with board and staff, the building consultant can provide any or all of the following services:

- survey the library's space needs
- write the library building program
- project future staff and operating costs
- prepare a preliminary project budget
- provide site analysis and recommendations
- provide advice on funding options
- provide assistance in selection of the architect
- review all plans prepared by the architect and provide a written evaluation
- review needs, specifications, and layout for shelving, furniture, and equipment
- provide a final inspection of the facility

### We're Set to Go, What's Next:

- The board with its planning completed, money in hand, and architect in the final stage of plans should consider the following: Review every nuance of the building plan. Decide what features can be optional (bid alternatives) so that separate bids can be taken on these items.
- Review estimated costs so that the construction bids do not lead to surprise costs.
- Follow all local, state and federal, ordinances and structures. Zoning and building codes should be checked as plans are made, but enlist the help of appropriate officials in the plan review and in recommending contractors to be asked to bid.
- Follow correct bidding procedures, legal and ethical. Allow time for bidders to estimate closely. Invite enough bidders so that there is a range.
- Analyze bids ruthlessly. Be sure you are getting what was specified with no unsuitable substitutes. Accept the bid that most closely meets specifications as well as offers good value.
- All bids too costly? You can call for new bids to an amended set of specifications. You can also rule out the optional features (bid alternatives) that proved to be too expensive OR that lead to cost overruns.
- Create a team comprised of trustees, the library director, architect, and contractor to follow progress and to make regular reports.
- Expect some changes. Discoveries will be made about unexpected problems and opportunities. The contractor may suggest, for example, that a new tile may be less expensive and serve just as well as that specified. If so, that's a credit you can apply to something that will cost more (such as discovering poor soil on the site).
- Expect performance. This building is going to be a fixture in the community for a long time and should be properly and expertly built. Some boards find that the contractor has taken the job as a fill-in. Don't accept excuses!
- Watch the expenditure of funds in a professional manner. Payments should be made upon proper evidence, but promptly. If you need financial advice, seek it from a good mortgage banker or an experienced purchaser of construction related materials.
- Meet frequently during the building process. Meetings keep you in touch with progress, permit decisions on changes, and provide the material for ongoing public relations in the community.
- Plan for orderly occupation of the building when it's ready, with festivities and community involvement. Allow plenty of time for moving in, completing the landscaping and other amenities, and then showing off the newest and best community asset.

Keep in the back of your mind how long it took to achieve this objective. Keep "need for expansion" in your planning process so that the next building will arrive when it is needed. There is nothing more satisfying than a new facility that enhances the ability of the board to bring exciting services to an appreciative community.

## Questions about Building / Planning to Keep in Mind Through-out the Process:

### 1. Should the board use a building consultant?

In recent years, numbers of librarians have specialized as building consultants, most often in determining space needs and layout for the purposes the board has approved. A consultant will look at the community data, consult with the librarian, staff, and board, and apply data to recommendations; right down to location and size of a department in the building. Most consultants are not designers, but they provide guidance to the architect who must visualize the structure. The use of a building consultant can be a requirement when using state and federal funding.

### 2. How does a board find an architect?

Boards can visit, or review plans and pictures, of other libraries for clues to find suitable architects to interview. Until a few years ago, there were few architects specializing in libraries, but many in the profession have since found these structures challenging.

The board will need to be satisfied that the architect has some understanding of the functions of libraries, will work closely with the board on designs reflecting what the board feels the community will enjoy, and will provide good supervision in regard to the contractor. Legal counsel should be sought on an appropriate contract.

Even architects experienced in library design need the guidance of specifications for use of the library: space for special purposes, the need for floor loads, extra power, and access for people with disabilities. Directors (and the building consultant) will have noted special needs for public and private areas, for loading, for staff use, and for expansion at a later date.

### 3. How does the board find a contractor?

Specifications created by an architect will be submitted to contractors for bids. It is wise for the board to have the specifications include a number of options so that the board can add or subtract options as cost is known. Library planners who think ahead have often been able to secure inexpensive future expansion space. And the board should be prepared to settle for less luxurious features if costs mount.

The board should interview contractors if it wishes to prequalify them for the bidding. Often the city or town will have a list of those to whom it offers bidding opportunities and regulations governing the bidding process. Multiple bids are needed, but an overly long list may not add to the board's ability to make the decision. Low bid is one factor, probably the most important, but value and evidence of good work elsewhere are considerations.

### 4. Who supervises the building?

Usually the library director is the link from the board to the architect and contractor, and is the person who checks to be sure the library is meeting local ordinances and codes. The director and architect and sometimes the contractor give the board decisions on changes as well as regular reports on progress. The board observes and asks questions. The project is a team effort, which may also involve local officials. The better the original plans and the more precise the specifications, the more likely that construction will run smoothly.

Most library boards, having weathered a building project, report that vigilance on the part of the board, close supervision by the architect, timely performance by the contractor, and surveillance by the director kept the project on time and in good order. Most boards also report relief when the project is completed; as building can be a trying time for all people involved.

5. How does the library keep the public informed?

As construction on a new building progresses, there will be public interest in what's happening. Regular updates through press releases is recommended, and there are times during the process when special events can be held, such as groundbreaking, cornerstone laying (perhaps with a time capsule), the first brick, and topping off. In the case of additions, the public should be carefully forewarned of disruptions or change in service due to construction.

6. How should the board plan well in advance for use of the new facility?

Plan and announce, when it's safe to do so, an occupancy date when the public can see the building. If the community is to be involved in helping to move, set dates and procedures.

Withhold an open house date until the library is really ready, including completed parking areas and landscaping. Make the ceremonies memorable; the date will be the library's birthday for many years.

7. When does the board begin thinking about future needs?

Ideally, the new space will meet the needs for a long time. But not forever! Keep on the planning agenda some space for thinking about what comes next. Most of these elements apply to planning of new space, whether in a new building, an existing building, or a conversion.

Construction Timetable:

Trustees should understand that the planning process for library construction will require a substantial amount of effort by the board, the library director, and the staff. Planning normally takes approximately twenty-four months and delays must be anticipated.

**Sample Timetable for a Building Project**

- Feb. Preliminary determination of a space need
- Mar. Selection of a building program consultant if one is to be hired
- May Building program written
- June Site application completed
- Nov. General and financial application (local funding commitment) completed
- Mar. Architect's contract signed / Title to site transferred

- Apr. Architect's schematic plans reviewed by trustees and director
- May Architect's design development plans reviewed by trustees and director
- July Architect's working drawings reviewed by trustees and director
- Aug. Advertise for bids after approval of architect's final plans
- Oct. Bids are publicly opened and contract awarded to lowest bidder meeting all requirements
- Nov. Construction of library begins

Funding for Buildings:

The need for a new library building or renovation of an existing one is usually evident long before funds are available to begin the project. Good planning, along with the commitment of the board, can help shorten the time between these two points.

There are a variety of sources for financing library buildings. In most cases, more than one source is used. The board and the library director should be aware of the different funding possibilities and be thoroughly familiar with the advantages and disadvantages of each one.

Local Government Appropriation:

The local government is a viable source of funding for capital projects. It is not uncommon for a project to be financed over a period of three to five years, scheduled to accommodate the use of current revenues.

Bond Issues:

Another method is to have a library bond referendum on the ballot to finance the project. This method requires the development of a comprehensive needs statement, convincing the local government of the needs, understanding the electorate, and conducting an effective campaign.

State Funding:

Check with your local State Library to determine the availability of state funds.

Gifts, Bequests, and Foundation Funding:

Gifts and bequests from citizens and corporations, as well as private foundation grants, have traditionally provided funds to supplement other sources of funding. Occasionally, a single benefactor will contribute the full amount or make a substantial contribution to the building fund. As a rule, however, securing funds by this means is a slow process and should not be relied on as the sole funding source.

### Professional Fundraising Campaigns:

Fundraising requires a great deal of time and careful planning. Hiring a professional fundraiser may be expensive, but may be a very worthwhile investment toward mounting an effective building campaign.

### Resources:

Some additional resources, and examples, of how other states, state agencies, and public libraries manage capital planning and construction. While some examples and resources are specific to particular states, each can provide additional input to the planning process and potentially offer insight to steps and planning.

[Rhode Island Public Library Construction Reimbursement](#)

[Public Library Association: Facilities](#)

[American Library Association: Library Buildings & Space Planning](#)

### Bibliography:

[Rhode Island Public Library Trustees Handbook](#)

[Cultivating Pennsylvania's Growing Libraries: Training Resource Kit for Pennsylvania Public Library Trustees](#)