

Ethics – Board of Trustees Policy

Purpose

It is in the best interest of Timberland Regional Library (TRL) to avoid the reality or appearance of improper influence, favoritism, and conflicts of interest. TRL establishes this policy to establish and clarify rules for Trustees when dealing with incidents, making choices that may pose a conflict of interest, and using TRL resources.

Scope

Applies to every TRL Trustee while performing duties as a Trustee. Trustees have the same library privileges as all library patrons.

Policy

Conflict of Interest - Trustees will assure that their actions are fully consistent with the requirements of RCW 42.23. Situations that may appear to be a conflict of interest include, but are not limited to:

Employment

- Where the trustee would have direct or indirect authority or practical power to hire, appoint, remove, promote, discipline, or terminate an employee.
- Where, to avoid the reality or appearance of improper influence or favor, or to protect its confidentiality, TRL must limit the employment of close relatives, spouses or significant others, owners or policy level vendors, competitors, regulatory agencies, or others which whom the employer deals.

Volunteering

- Trustees may volunteer to assist for storytimes, programs, or promotional/marketing events such as building openings, fairs, parades, or other non-paid public events that support TRL.
- No Trustee can be a member or officer of another Library Board.
- No Trustee can volunteer to work in a library, kiosk, mobile service, TRL service point, or Administrative Headquarters.
- As a Trustee, it is the opinion of TRL that the conflict of interest of serving as a Trustee and volunteering as a Friend of the Library, might interfere with, or appear to interfere with, the independent exercise of judgement of performance of duties or present the potential of undue influence upon actions by the Trustee. Therefore, no Trustee can be member, officer, or volunteer of a Friends of the Library group while serving as a TRL Board of Trustee.

Financial Conflict of Interest

- Any action, that in the opinion of TRL would create a real or perceived appearance of improper influence or favor that would not ensure confidence in government, as guardians of public facilities and public funds, no actual or perceived conflict between the public trust and private interest can exist.

- No Trustee may use their position to obtain financial or other gain for their own benefit, or to benefit a relative or significant other, or an entity in which the Trustee or their relative or significant other has a significant ownership interest.
- No Trustee shall use their position to influence the purchase of, removal of, or overturn a purchase of library resources.
- TRL Trustees may not seek or accept any gift, favor, special condition or price, loan, retainer, entertainment, meal, travel expense, compensation, or other things of value from any vendor or supplier doing business or seeking to do business with TRL, unless the offer is part of an organized service available to others and agreed upon by TRL.
- These references to gift or things of value, meals, entertainment, and expenses do not include such things as memorials, trophies, plaques, or advertising materials of little or no economic value, or awards for a bona fide, nonrecurring ceremonial occasion or official recognition. Nor does it include food or other items of nominal value offered generally to a large group.

Solicitation

- TRL Trustees may not make personal solicitation anywhere, nor may they sell, or exhibit items for sale in libraries.

Use of TRL Resources

- TRL Trustees who use TRL resources are responsible for using the resources in an ethical and legal manner. TRL resources are provided to Trustees as tools to help them conduct TRL business. Except as provided herein, Trustees are not to use TRL equipment, services, information technology, staff time or other resources for personal purposes or gain.
- Timberland resources are not to be used to promote discrimination based on race, creed, color, gender, religion, disability, and sexual orientation; to sexually harass others; to infringe copyrights; to advance personal political or religious beliefs; or to engage in unlawful activity.
- Library facilities are to be used to conduct TRL business. Reasonable use of library facilities by TRL Trustees during non-open hours is permitted to conduct duties as TRL Trustees.
- TRL Motor Vehicles are to be used only for the business of TRL. Personal use of TRL vehicles is not allowed.
- TRL Trustees are to checkout and return the library materials they borrow, for personal use, within the same time limits set for the public. Policies governing circulation and renewal apply to Trustees' use. Trustees may not renew library materials when a hold has been placed on the material by another library user, may not change their place on the hold queue or keep materials for an extended period.
- TRL telephones or cell phones are to be used for TRL business purposes. Limited personal use that does not result in additional cost to TRL is allowed. Trustees are expected to exercise good judgement in both the duration and frequency of personal calls. Trustees traveling for TRL business may place brief calls to communicate safe arrivals and changes to itinerary.
- TRL electronic communications, including social media, email, listservs, voicemail, fax, and similar systems, are generally to be used for TRL business purposes only. Limited personal use of TRL electronic communications that does not result in

additional cost is allowed. Trustees are trusted to exercise good judgement in the duration, frequency, and content of such use.

- TRL computers are to be used for TRL business only.

Definitions

Conflict of Interest - Any action, that in the opinion of TRL, might interfere with, or appear to interfere with, the independent exercise of judgment of performance of duties or present the potential of undue influence upon actions by the Trustee.

TRL resources include, but are not limited to books, other library materials, information technology assets such as computers, workstations, data resources, electronic communications, software, software licenses, fax machines, telephones and cell phones and internet connections or accounts; documentation; copyrighted material; photocopiers; print shop equipment; facilities; vehicles; credit cards; supplies; the TRL mail service; furniture; equipment; and all similar systems.

Electronic communications include, but are not limited to, social media, email, internet, voicemail, and all similar systems.

References

Communication Guidelines – Online Trustees Documents/Manual.

Public Library Trustee Reference Manual – Code of Ethics.

Code of Ethics of the American Library Association.

Citations

RCW 42.17.310.

RCW 42.23.

Effective 4/26/2023

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Policy Number: 020

By the enactment of this policy the Board of Trustees of Timberland Regional Library is concurrently rescinding any prior policy or procedure within TRL that is either in conflict with or expansive of the matters addressed in this policy.