

Governance Policy

The Board of Trustees of the Reuben Hoar Library is the elected governing body with legal responsibility to the Town of Littleton for the operation of the Reuben Hoar Library. The Board manages all funds appropriated for or donated to the Library, establishes policies to govern and guide all aspects of library operations, and develops plans to enhance and broaden library services for the community.

Authority

The Board of Trustees exists by virtue of the provisions of the Reuben Hoar Trust created in 1885 by William Stevens Houghton, modified as to memberships on the Board by decree of the Supreme Judicial Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in September, 1972, case number 7647, arising out of a petition by Eugene R. Milliken et al. vs. the Registrars of Voters of the Town of Littleton, and also by virtue of the provisions of c. 78, §§10-13 and §21 of the Massachusetts General Laws (G.L.) and the By-laws of the Town of Littleton.

Election of Members

The Board of Trustees is composed of six members, two of whom are elected each year at the annual town elections, as provided for in G.L., c. 78, §. 10.

Trustees serve without compensation for a term of three years. Trustees may be reelected.

Any member may resign by written notice filed with the Town Clerk, as provided for in G.L., c. 41, §109. Upon receipt of the notice, the Town Clerk will notify the remaining members of the Board. If a vacancy occurs, the Board shall recommend a suitable replacement or replacements to the Select Board. The vacancy is filled by a majority vote of the Select Board in accordance with the G.L., c.41, §11.

Responsibilities

The primary responsibilities of the Board are defined in G.L., c. 78, §11: "The board shall have the custody and management of the library and reading room and of all property owned by the town relating thereto. All money raised or appropriated by the town for its support and maintenance shall be expended by the board, and all money or property which the town may receive by gift or bequest for said library and reading room shall be administered by the board in accordance with the provisions of such gift or bequest. The board of any library, for the purpose of improving the services of said library, may enter into an agreement with the board or boards of any neighboring library or libraries, to pay for services in common, such payments to be shared in accordance with terms of such agreement."

The Board selects, appoints, specifies the duties of, and recommends the salary of the Library Director and promotes library interests.

Officers

Officers are elected from among the Board members usually at the first regular meeting of the Board following the annual town elections. The term of office is one year.

In the event of a vacancy in any of the officers' positions during the year, that vacancy is filled by a vote of the Board. In the absence of an officer at a meeting of the Board, a temporary officer may be appointed by the members present.

The officers of the Board are a Chairperson, a Clerk, and a Treasurer as required by the G.L., c. 78, § 10, and such other or additional officers as the Board may desire.

The Chairperson conducts all meetings, appoints all committees, serves as the official representative of the Board, and fulfills all legal functions on behalf of the Board that are not specifically assigned to other members.

The Clerk ensures that a true record of all meetings of the Board is kept as required by law.

The Treasurer advises and assists on financial matters affecting the library. The Treasurer provides regular reports to the Trustees regarding library investments, and receipts and expenditures from such funds.

Meetings

Regular meetings are held monthly at a time and a place determined by the Board.

Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson or at the request of a majority of members.

A quorum consists of four members. A trustee who cannot attend a meeting is expected to give advance notice to the Library Director and Chairperson.

All meetings of the Board are subject to the State's Open Meeting Law as contained in the G.L., c. 39, §23A-23C. All records of minutes of meetings are available in the Library and the Town Clerk's Office for public inspection.

All meetings will be held under Roberts' Rules of Order. 5.6 The Board will follow the record retention recommendations of the Massachusetts Secretary of State's Office.

Special Committees

Committees for the study and investigation of special problems or for the performance of especially assigned tasks may be created as needed by the Board.

The Board of Trustees may make appointments to these special committees from the Board of Trustees, the Library Staff, the community at large, or a combination thereof. Such committees shall function as ad hoc committees under the authority of the Board and at its pleasure.

Record Retention

The Board will follow the record retention recommendations of the Massachusetts Secretary of State's Office.

Approved by
Reuben Hoar Library Trustees
December 9, 2025