

Belmont Literary and Historical Society Free Library By-Laws, Powers and Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees

Mission Statement:

The Belmont Literary and Historical Society Free Library is a cornerstone of community connection, knowledge, and opportunity. We strive to provide free and open access to resources, technology, and services that empower individuals and strengthen our community. As a safe and inclusive space, we foster learning, creativity, and social acceptance. Through collaboration with local organizations, schools, and other libraries, we work to enrich lives, promote literacy, and encourage civic engagement. Together, we aim to recalibrate our community by inspiring lifelong learning and meaningful connections for all.

Preamble:

The Board of Trustee (hereinafter designated as the “Board”) of the Belmont Literary and Historical Society Free Library, a corporation created under a charter granted under section 253 of the New York State Education Law by the Board of Regents (Secretary of State) of the State of New York, dated February 9th, 1893, shall be governed by the laws of New York State, the regulations of the Commissioner of Education and by the following bylaws.

By-Laws:

1. Name of the Organization
 - a. The name of the organization shall be the Belmont Literary and Historical Society Free Library.
2. Purpose
 - a. The purpose of the organization is to provide quality library services to the residents, adults and children, of the communities of the Village of Belmont and the Township of Amity.
3. Fiscal Year
 - a. The fiscal year of the library shall be the calendar year, from January 1st to December 31st.
4. Board of Trustees
 - a. The library shall be governed by a Board of Trustees. The Board shall consist of nine (9) members, elected for terms of three (3) years each. Newly elected members shall take office at the first meeting following the annual meeting.
 - b. Eligibility for office shall be limited to adults residing within the geographical limits of the library’s chartered service area.
 - c. Absence from three (3) consecutive meetings shall constitute automatic dismissal from the Board unless the Board defers this dismissal by majority vote. The President shall inform the absent Board Member in writing that he/she/they is no longer on the Board. If dismissal is deferred by Board action, the President shall inform the absent Board Member in writing the conditions of this deferral.

- d. Any vacancy shall be filled by special election by the remaining members of the Board for the remainder of the term of that particular position.
- e. The Board may remove a Trustee for misconduct, incapacity, neglect of duty, or refusal to carry into effect the library's education purpose as provided in Education Law 226; subdivision 8.
- f. Each Trustee shall have one vote, irrespective of the office held.
- g. A Trustee must be present at a meeting to have his/her/their vote counted or meet the provisions of New York State's Open Meetings Law.
- h. A majority of the whole Board (including vacancies) is required for any motion to pass
- i. All actions of the Board shall be of the Board as a unit. No Board member shall act on behalf of the Board, on any matter, without prior approval of the Board. No Board member by virtue of his/her office shall exercise administrative responsibility with respect to the library, nor as an individual, command the services of any library employee.
- j. All trustees must comply with continuing education requirements outlined in Section 260-d of New York Education Law.
- k. All trustees must comply with the Sexual Harassment Prevention training requirements in New York State Human Rights Law.
- l. New Board members should be active for a period of three (3) months prior to holding an office.
- m. The officers of the Board shall be the President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, elected annually by the Board at the annual meeting. These officers shall serve for a period of one year, or until their successors have been duly elected.
- n. Duties shall be listed in the "Duties and Responsibilities of the Board and Library Director" section of his policy book.

5. Committees

- a. Committees for specific purposes may be appointed by the President. Such committees shall serve until the completion of the work for which they were appointed.
- b. All committees shall make a progress report to the Board at each of its meetings.
- c. No committee will have other than advisory powers unless, by suitable action of the Board, it is granted specific power to act.
- d. The President shall be, ex officio, a member of all committees, with the exception of a nominating committee.

6. Meetings

- a. Regular meetings shall be held monthly at dates and times to be established by the Board. All meetings shall be in compliance with New York State Open Meeting Law.
- b. A special meeting of the Board may be called at any time by the President, or by the request of three (3) members for a specific purpose. No business may be transacted at such a special meeting except the stated business. All meetings shall be in compliance with New York State Open Meeting Law.
- c. The Annual Meeting shall be held in June of each year. The business transacted at this meeting shall include the election of officers and any new trustees.

- d. The operating and financial reports for the previous year shall be presented at the regular meeting in the first month of the library's fiscal year.
- e. The preliminary budget for the subsequent calendar year shall be presented for approval at the regular meeting in September, with the final budget presented for approval at the regular meeting in November.
- f. A simple majority of the whole Board (including vacancies) shall constitute a quorum for the conducting of all business. A majority of the whole Board (including vacancies) is required for any motion to pass. If a quorum is not present at a regular meeting, the attending members may set a date for another meeting to be held in one week, and the presiding officer shall notify the absent members of this specially called meeting.
- g. The order of business for regular meetings shall include, but not be limited to, the following items which shall be covered in the sequence shown unless circumstances make and altered order more efficient:
 - i. Call or Order and roll call of members
 - ii. Approval of prior meeting minutes
 - iii. Correspondence
 - iv. Treasurer's Report
 - v. Director's Report
 - vi. Old Business
 - vii. New Business
 - viii. Public Comment
 - ix. Other Business
 - x. Date of future Board Meeting
 - xi. Adjournment

7. Amendments

- a. Amendments to these Bylaws may be proposed at any regular meeting and shall be voted upon at the next regular meeting. Written notice of the proposed amendment or amendments shall be sent to all absent members at least ten (10) days prior to the voting session. A simple majority of the whole Board (including vacancies) shall be sufficient for adoption of an amendment.
- b. All rule or resolution of the Board, whether contained in these Bylaws or otherwise, may be suspended temporarily in connection with business at hand, but such suspension, to be valid, may be taken only at a meeting at which two-thirds of the members of the Board shall be present and two-thirds of those present shall so approve.

8. Termination of a Trustee

- a. The Board of Trustees hold the option to terminate tenure of a Trustee for cause, which includes, but is not limited to the following reasons:
- b. Excessive absenteeism – defined by three consecutive unexcused absences without notification of just cause.
- c. Behavior unbecoming would reflect badly upon the Library and/or the Board.
- d. Breach of confidentiality.
- e. Demonstrated lack of interest in Library policy or concerns.

- f. Conflict of interest with the Board of Trustees Purpose.
- 9. Procedure
 - a. All procedures not specifically mentioned herein shall be in accord with Robert's Rules of Order, Revised.

Duties and Responsibilities of the Belmont Literary and Historical Society Free Library Board of Trustees

1. The Board has a Duty of Care, Duty of Loyalty, and a Duty of Obedience as outlined in the Handbooks for Library Trustees of the State of New York.
2. Create and develop the mission of the library and be prepared to articulate it clearly and concisely.
3. Regularly plan and evaluate the library's service program based on community needs.
4. Select, hire, and regularly evaluate a qualified library director.
5. Secure adequate, sustainable funding for the library's service program.
6. Exercise fiduciary responsibility for the use of public and private funds.
7. Adopt and regularly review policies and rules regarding library governance and use and defend them when challenged.
8. Maintain a facility that meets the library's community's needs
9. Promote the library in the local community and society in general
10. Attend all board meetings and be prepared to participate by reading all board meeting materials in advance.
11. Conduct the business of the library in an open and ethical manner in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, the ALA Core Values, and with respect for the institution, staff and public.

President:

1. Preside at the meetings
2. Prepare an agenda
3. Authorize calls for any special meetings
4. Appoint all committees and serve as ex-officio voting member of all committees.
5. Sign official documents
6. Represent the board in public capacities.

Vice President:

1. Preside at meetings in the absence of the president
2. Assume and perform the duties and functions in the absence of the president

Secretary:

1. Record the minutes of all meetings
2. Issue notice of all regular and special meetings
3. After approval of minutes, file a signed correct copy for the library records.
4. Take care of correspondences as directed by the board
5. Meeting minutes must be made available within two weeks of a meeting, regardless of approval status, in order to comply with New York State Open Meeting Law.

Treasurer/Finance Officer:

1. Monitor internal financial controls
2. Ensure all board members are provided with understandable financial reports and be available to answer questions from trustees.
3. Prepare monthly reports to the board of receipts and disbursements

Library Director:

1. The board shall appoint a Library Director who shall be the chief executive officer of the library and shall have charge of the administration of the library under the direction and review of the board.
2. Responsible for the following:
 - a. care of the building and equipment
 - b. selection and management of staff
 - b. efficiency of library service to the public
 - c. operation of the library under the financial conditions contained in the annual budget
3. Submit reports to the board and attend all board meetings
4. Recommend policies and procedures to improve the efficiency and quality of library services
5. Other responsibilities of the Director are listed under the heading of "Job Description"

Amended and approved March 20th, 2025