MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Onondaga Free Library is to provide access to all for lifelong learning, innovative programs and services, and to promote the literacy and well-being of the community.

ONONDAGA FREE LIBRARY
2026 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Yvonne Slate, President
Joe Campbell, Vice President
Margaret Farrell, Treasurer
Pat Forken, Secretary
Steve Dunham, Trustee
Charlotte Garofalo, Trustee
Liz LaRochelle, Trustee
Diane Leshinski, Trustee
Rob Price, Trustee

Non-Voting Members

Susan Morgan, Library Director
Scott Lipkowitz, Assistant Library Director
Ellen Magnarelli Terrien, Town of Onondaga Liaison

Board Meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:00 pm at the library. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Comprised of the Board Officers, this committee reviews and makes recommendations to the Board on such items as budget, proposals, major purchases, etc.

FINANCE COMMITTEE - Supervises financial affairs and makes recommendations concerning investment of permanent funds. Receives the annual budget from the Director, and upon approval authorizes its presentation to the Board.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE – Periodically inspects the library building and grounds, and reports back to the Board any concerns and recommendations for improvement or repair.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE- Presents candidates for Trustees and slate of officers.

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE – Reviews innovations in technology and determines their relevance to library service and function. Makes recommendations to the Board based upon their findings.

VOLUNTEER AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – Addresses issues concerning library staff and volunteers such as pay, benefits, job descriptions, and recognition.

CONSTRUCTION AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE – Ad hoc committee. Assists in planning expansion project.

CONSTITUTION
OF THE
ONONDAGA FREE LIBRARY

1988
(REVISED MARCH 23, 2005)

ARTICLE I – NAME

This organization is and shall be known as the Onondaga Free Library existing by virtue of the provisions in the Absolute Charter, Number 10,722 granted by the Regents of the University of the State of New York on February 24, 1972, and exercising the powers and authority and assuming the responsibilities delegated to it under said charter.

ARTICLE II – MANAGEMENT

1. Membership – the library is maintained solely as a public service for the benefit and free use on equal terms by all the people of the community. All residents of the Town of Onondaga are members.

2. The business and affairs of the Onondaga Free Library shall be managed and conducted by a Board of Trustees that shall be no fewer than seven and no more than fifteen in number elected by members of the library at the annual meeting from a list of names submitted by a nominating committee and/or additional names nominated from the floor. Trustees shall come from the area served by the library.

3. The term of office for members of the Board of Trustees shall be limited to three successive terms. A trustee may be reappointed or re-elected for any additional successive term(s) after a one year interim.

4. Vacancies which occur for reasons other than expiration of term shall be filled for the balance of the unexpired term by the Board of Trustees. Any trustee who misses three consecutive regular meetings of the board shall be deemed to have resigned as a trustee, and the vacancy shall be filled at the next regular meeting.

ARTICLE III – OFFICERS

1. The officers of the Board of Trustees shall be elected at the first regular meeting following the annual meeting and they shall be a President, a Vice President, a Secretary and a Treasurer elected from among the Board of Trustees.

2. The officers shall serve a term of one year from the regular meeting at which they are elected and until their successors are duly elected. Tenure of the President, Vice President and Secretary shall be limited to two consecutive full terms of one year each. Tenure for the Treasurer may be four consecutive terms of one year each.

3. The President shall preside at all meetings of the board, authorize calls for any special meetings, appoint all committees, execute all documents authorized by the board, serve as ex-officio voting member of all committees, and generally perform all duties associated with the office.

4. The Vice President, in the event of the absence or disability of the President, or of a vacancy in the office, shall assume and perform the duties and functions of the President.

5. The Secretary shall keep a true and accurate record of all meetings of the board; and shall perform such other duties as are generally associated with that office.

6. The Treasurer shall be the chief disbursing officer of the board. He/she assists the Director in financial and budget preparation. Oversees bookkeeping functions and presents monthly financial statements to the board; also prepares or supervises preparation of annual financial statements and tax returns as required. The Treasurer submits vouchers to the town authorities for any monies receivable. An Assistant Treasurer who need not be a Trustee may be selected by the board to assist the Treasurer in the performance of his duties. (Either shall be bonded in an amount as may be required by a resolution of the board.)

ARTICLE IV – MEETINGS

1. Regular meetings shall be held normally once a month, time and place to be established by the Board of Trustees at the Annual Meeting. Written notice thereof shall be sent to all trustees by the Secretary at least one week prior to such regular meetings, and a public notice shall be posted on the library bulletin board.

2. A quorum consists of a majority of the total number of Trustees. A quorum must be present to conduct business.

3. Special meetings may be called by the Secretary at the direction of the President, or at the request of at least one third of the Trustees, for the transaction of business as stated in the call for the special meeting.

4. A duly publicized meeting of the Library Association shall be held once a year at a time and place to be determined by the Board of Trustees to elect trustees in accordance with this Constitution. The Board of Trustees shall issue a public notice of the annual meeting at least two weeks prior to any such meeting.

5. Roberts Rules of Order shall be used in conducting meetings.

ARTICLE V – COMMITTEES

1. The President shall appoint a Nominating Committee, a Building Committee, a Finance Committee and such other committees as the business of the board may require from time to time. These committees shall consist of one or more members and shall be considered to be discharged upon completion of the term of office of the President.

2. The Nominating Committee shall carry out two functions:
    a. to present a list of candidates for trustees at the Annual Meeting or at any regular meeting when a vacancy occurs, and
    b. to present a slate of officers at the Annual Meeting

3. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. The Executive Committee will be at the discretion of the President. The Committee shall review and make recommendations to the Board on such items as budget, major proposals, major purchases, etc. The Executive Committee can be empowered to act on behalf of the Board of Trustees on any item so deemed necessary by the Board of Trustees.

4. The Building and Grounds Committee shall periodically inspect the physical plant and grounds of the library and report important matters to the board with recommendations for improvements or correction of any faults found.

5. The Finance and Resource Committee shall have general supervision over the financial affairs of the library and shall make policy recommendations to the Board of Trustees concerning investment of permanent funds received. This committee shall receive the annual budget for the maintenance and operations of the library from the Library Director and upon approval shall authorize its presentation to the Board of Trustees.

6. The Resource Committee shall be the fund raising arm of the library board. Fund raising includes establishing programs for the purpose of raising funds; establishing contact with area organizations to share resources with; proposing and writing grants to acquire foundation funds; and exploring other alternatives for financial support.

7. All committees shall make a progress report to the board at each of its meetings. No committee shall have other than advisory powers unless the board has delegated specific power to act upon its behalf pending a subsequent meeting of the board for confirmation.

ARTICLE VI – DIRECTOR

1. The board shall appoint a qualified Library Director or Librarian who shall be the executive and administrative officer of the library on behalf of the Board of Trustees and under its review and direction.

2. The director shall have authority to appoint, promote or dismiss all library employees, providing that such appointments are reported at the next board meeting.

3. The director is responsible for the proper direction and supervision of the staff, for the care and maintenance of the library property, for an adequate and proper selection of books and other media in keeping with the stated policy of the board, for the efficiency of service to the public, and for operation within the budgeted appropriation. The director shall also prepare a written annual report to be submitted to the Board of Trustees before the Annual Meeting.

4. The director shall attend all meetings, may participate in the discussion and offer professional advice, but is denied a vote upon any question.

ARTICLE VII – AMENDMENTS

1. The Board of Trustees may amend these by-laws by a majority vote of all members provided notice of the amendment has been sent or delivered to each member of the board thirty days prior to the meeting.

Trustee Duties and Responsibilities

To act for someone else's benefit with special responsibilities for the administration, investment of assets that belong to someone else. -- New York State Not-for-Profit Corporation Law

A trustee is a person to whom property is legally committed in trust. A library trustee's commitment is to both the physical property and resources of the library and to the services it provides. The library board has the final responsibility to see that its library provides the best possible service to its community. In the words of New York's Not-for-Profit Corporation Law, *Directors and officers shall discharge the duties of their respective positions in good faith and with that degree of diligence, care and skill which ordinarily prudent men would exercise under similar circumstances in like positions.*

The duties of trustees are broad in scope. They are:

- Create and develop the mission of the library;
- Select and hire a qualified library director;
- Secure adequate funding for the library's service program;
- Exercise fiduciary responsibility for the use of public and private funds;
- Adopt policies and rules regarding library governance and use;
- Regularly plan and evaluate the library's service program;
- Maintain a facility that meets the library's and community's needs;
- Promote the library in the local community and in society in general;
- Conduct the business of the library in an open and ethical manner in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Every trustee makes a personal commitment to contribute the time and energy to faithfully carry out these duties. Although the board is legally responsible for all aspects of the library as an institution, it is unreasonable to expect a trustee or the whole board to be expert on every activity or concern that affects the library. Sometimes the most important thing a board can do is acknowledge that it does not have enough information or resources, and to ask for help. A trustee must make decisions based on the best information available. It is often wise to consult specialists such as lawyers, accountants, architects, computer analysts and other experts and to act upon their advice.

Under New York State law, library boards have broad and almost exclusive powers and authority to administer the library. The board should not only be concerned with the internal operations of the organization but also alert to external trends and changes that can affect the library's program of services. Being proactive and open to change is imperative in order to survive and thrive in a world in which change is the only constant.

Checklist for Effective Library Trustees:

- Be active and informed about library matters in general and of those affecting your library. Ask questions of the director and study the issues.
- Attend all board meetings and be fully prepared to participate knowledgeably.
- Question issues until you understand. Don't be reluctant to vote no on a proposal you don't understand or are uncomfortable about.
- Be a team player and treat your fellow board members with respect.
- Support board decisions even if you disagree. A democracy works by the rule of the majority. Seek reconsideration in the future if circumstances change.
- Understand the roles of all involved - the board, director, staff, Friends, patrons, etc.
- Conflicts of interest by any board member are the concern of all members of the board. A trustee or family member may not receive any gain, tangible or intangible, in dealing with the library.
- Advocate for the library in every manner possible.
- Support competitive salaries in order to attract and retain qualified staff. Appropriate compensation is a direct measure of the commitment and respect a community has for the institution and its staff.
- Understand and respect the role of the director and support the director's administrative decisions.
- Always remember that your job is to provide the highest quality library service possible for your community.