

# WELCOME!

As you begin your service as a trustee of the Grand County Library District (GCLD) you will have many questions about the libraries, the staff, the board and your role on it. This manual is designed to answer many common questions and to help you confidently navigate your first few months of service. Also included are additional, in-depth resources and links for you to refer to in the future.

You also have your own personal mentor. \_\_\_\_\_

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will be setting up a meeting with you after you have had a chance to look through these materials to provide any further information you need and to introduce you to the district staff and that of any libraries you would like to tour. Please don't hesitate to call upon your mentor, any member of the board or the executive director (their contact information is included in this booklet) for help. We want your transition to be smooth and comfortable. You have been chosen to serve because we believe you have valuable skills and knowledge which we need to continue to provide excellent library service to the people of Grand County.

## THE DISTRICT AND ITS LIBRARIES

As a trustee, you will govern five modern libraries brimming with information resources in many forms, from paper to digital to musical. They are located in Granby, Hot Sulphur Springs, Kremmling, Fraser and Grand Lake. You can read more about these libraries by accessing the district's public website at [gclid.org](http://gclid.org). This website has a wealth of information about services and resources available through our libraries, as well as access to the library catalogue. The district also has a central administration office which is located at 225 E. Jasper Ave. in Granby. The phone number is 887-9411. The executive director and public services coordinator have offices there. Accounting, ordering, cataloging, information technology services and maintenance for all five libraries are done from the district office.

This extensive system had humble beginnings in small community lending libraries begun by residents who shared books among themselves. These tiny collections were housed in various community buildings and even in private homes. The county eventually established a tax-supported library to act as a central reservoir of knowledge for its citizens. Under this system, the library was governed by an appointed board of trustees, but operational funds were appropriated through the county budget and were limited.

In 1994, a dedicated group of citizens calling themselves the Committee to Protect the Library proposed the creation of a special taxing district for the libraries, which was approved by voters. The Grand County Library District (GCLD) was formed in 1995. The tax rate upon which the district would operate was set at 2.41 mils, which provided approximately 2 million dollars for our libraries in 2008. The mil rate remains steady, though the district's operating funds rise, and fall, with changes in the county's assessed valuation. The only way to increase the rate of taxation would be through a referendum and vote of the citizens.

GCLD is a special taxing district governed by Colorado Library Law and in many respects, Colorado Special District Law. Colorado Library Laws are included in the appendix to the policy manual which you have received. You have also received a Special District Association of Colorado (SDA) Board Member Manual and will also be receiving the SDA Legislative Digest. You do not need to know every in and out of these laws, but they do dictate many of our policies and procedures. When there is a question about these laws, the board consults with their lawyer.

As a special district, GCLD has a great deal of autonomy, but it is still ultimately answerable to the County Commissioners. The interests of the taxpayers who fund the district are exerted through the commissioners. While you were recruited, interviewed and proposed for a position as a trustee by current members of the board, the commissioners must approve the appointment. The county collects the district's taxes and turns them over to the district after a fee for that service. While the district's budget is formulated by the trustees and staff of the district, the commissioners hold the right of final approval.

## THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Within the structure outlined above, the board serves as the taxpayer's eyes, ears and voice within the district. The taxpayers are effectively owners of the libraries, but they, as individuals, cannot watch over their investment effectively. The board acts in their place and governs the district with their interests in mind.

So what do the owners want from their investment? Primarily, they want to know that their money is being spent effectively and that their investment is providing the services they need and want. Those two desires form the basis of the board's role in governing the district.

To fulfill that role, the board must know and articulate what the public wants the library to do. They do this first by listening to the expressed desires of the taxpayers they represent. Do they want a new or better facility in a particular town? Do they want greater access to the internet? Do they want the library to play a greater role in education or entertainment? Do they want less money spent on books or more on expanded hours of service?

With knowledge of the public's desires and needs, the board, along with the district's staff, formulates a broad vision of what they want the library district to be, as well as a statement of its mission or purpose. With those as guiding principles, they then create a strategic plan outlining specific goals that further the mission. Those goals are funded through the budget process, over which the board has authority. How that budget is created and spent is outlined in a later section of this handbook.

To further the goals of the district, the board also formulates and approves policies which govern how the libraries are operated and how staff performs their duties. Further information on this process is presented later.

So, as taxpayer representatives, the board governs the library by formulating and directing missions and plans, budgets and policies.

## POLICY GOVERNANCE

Just how does the board exercise its authority over the district on behalf of the taxpayer? There have been dozens of models and theories put forth to guide boards in governing effectively. The trustees have chosen to follow John Carver's policy governance model.

You have been given a copy of Carver's book for study and reference, as well as a lighter and more easily digested expansion on Carver's model, entitled "The Imperfect Board Member." But we will hit the high points to get you started.

At the heart of Carver's model is the distinction between governance and management. As seen above, the board governs through missions, plans, budgets and policies. They do not manage the libraries by exercising executive, administrative or supervisory functions. To fulfill these functions, the board hires an executive director. This director is the board's ONLY employee and the only member of staff over which the board exerts control.

Another way to think of this is in respect to ways and means. The board provides the means for the district to operate through financial control and by setting performance expectations through policies, missions and plans. They set the standards and goals they want the district to meet for the good of the taxpayers.

Their employee, the executive director, is completely in charge of the ways those standards and goals are met. She/he employs and directs all other staff, makes choices about how to spend money appropriated in the budget, oversees the physical facilities and creates and administers procedures for the daily operation of the district. She/he is answerable to the board, while the rest of the district's employees are answerable to the director. The director's job performance is evaluated annually with regard to how well the district has met the standards and goals set by the board, not on the ways those accomplishments were achieved (with the exception that the ways must comply with legal and ethical standards and policies as set by the board).

How does this policy governance model work in reality? After a few months of service, you will probably have a pretty good feel for what it means, but in the meantime, a few illustrations:

1. The board has no say in the selection of library materials, hiring of staff, or any day-to-day operations of the library. They are kept apprised of these matters through monthly reports, but they do not take action with regard to them.
2. The board does not handle public complaints or problems, unless a policy revision is needed or when there are legal ramifications.
3. The board does not handle staff grievances or problems, unless a policy revision is needed or when there are legal ramifications.
4. If there is board dissatisfaction with the management of the district, its recourse is through its employee, the director, only.

## THE BOARD'S JOB

From the above, we can see that the board, as a whole, has certain responsibilities. Some of them are:

1. Determine the district's mission and purpose.
2. Select the executive director.
3. Support the director and review her/his performance.
4. Serve as an advisor to the director, when requested.
5. Ensure good planning for the district.
6. Secure adequate funding.
7. Manage funding to the benefit of taxpayers.
8. Monitor the district's programs and services.
9. Promote the district and its services to the public.
10. Evaluate its own performance.

## YOUR JOB AS TRUSTEE

As a member of the board, you will have many responsibilities, and no special privileges or individual authority. Your ideas, thoughts, time and work will be directed toward the collective action of the board. Expectations are high for you, and meeting those expectations creates a lively, creative, and useful board and assures that your work is to good purpose.

You should commit yourself to:

1. Attend monthly board meetings, committee meetings as assigned, and all special board functions.
2. Listen to the taxpayers you serve.
3. Know the district's mission and goals, policies and services, strengths and needs.
4. Serve in leadership positions and undertake special assignments.
5. Serve on at least one committee, as assigned by the president.
6. Come to all meetings having read and considered all pertinent material.
7. Make your positions on issues clear, vote your conscience, and agree to support majority decisions, even if they differ from your opinion.
8. Maintain confidentiality of the board's executive sessions and speak for the board or district only when authorized to do so.
9. Serve as an advocate for the district within your community.
10. Participate in fundraising efforts.
11. Govern, don't manage.
12. Ask questions and suggest actions.
13. Keep an open mind....and a sense of humor.
14. Conduct yourself ethically.
15. Participate in continuing education for yourself as a member of the board.

## DOWN TO THE NITTY GRITTY

While all the information above is extremely important for you to know and understand, how do things work in the day-to-day operations of the district? The following is the detailed who, what, where, when and how of your service as a trustee.

### STAFF WEBPAGE

You can find the most current information about just about anything having to do with GCLD by accessing the district's staff webpage at [www.staff.gclcd.org](http://www.staff.gclcd.org). This site is password protected. Please ask your mentor or the executive director for the password if it has not already been provided.

Take some time to browse through the many resources and needed information available on the site. You will be directed to specific areas of the site in following sections of this manual.

### OUR MISSION

To create exceptional libraries which provide convenient and universal access to quality information resources, while committed to the highest ideals of library service for personal lifelong enrichment and inclusive community involvement.

### OUR VISION

To be the ***Peak of Excellence*** in mountain libraries, spanning the divide.

### OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

At least every five years, board and staff members hammer out a new strategic plan for the district. This plan is the roadmap for decisions concerning allocation of both time and money. It sets forth goals and objectives we want to accomplish and a timeline for activities directed toward those goals. The plan is reviewed at least annually, and adjusted as current conditions dictate. Attainment of stated goals plays a large part in the annual evaluation of the executive director.

A copy of the strategic plan is included in this packet and you may view it and any changes as they are made on the staff webpage. Click on *Misc.* at the top left and then on *Finalized Strategic Plan.*

### OUR BUDGET

Planning for the next year's budget takes place throughout the year. The executive director, with the assistance of the financial administrator and with the strategic plan timeline in mind, plans expenditures for the coming year. Branch staff have input in this process. During the summer, the board's finance committee meets with the director and finance administrator to begin fine-tuning the budget. Actual tax revenue is not known until values are certified in December, but estimates are used until that time.

A preliminary budget is presented to the full board at the September meeting for study and discussion. At the October meeting, the board approves the preliminary budget. A public hearing on the budget is held at the November meeting. In December, after final tax revenues are determined, the board passes resolutions to levy those taxes and approves expenditures through the budget. The budget is submitted to the county commissioners for their final approval.

To safeguard the district from fluctuations in revenue, the board has followed the practice of maintaining healthy operating reserves. In addition, one year's payment on the lease-purchase agreement which funded construction is held in reserve.

By far the largest district expenditure is for wages and benefits for staff. The board periodically looks at wages paid in comparable districts to keep wages in line with our "competition." Attracting and retaining excellent staff is a high priority.

You may be surprised at the relatively smaller expense for library materials; however, GCLD spends more of its budget on this line item than many other comparable districts.

A copy of the most recent budget is included in this packet and you may access this and previous year's budgets on the staff webpage at any time. [Click on Misc. at the top left and then on the current year's Final Budget.](#)

## OUR LIBRARIES

When the district was first formed, all five libraries were housed in leased facilities at minimal cost. Since that time, the district has built three new libraries to serve our growing population in Fraser, Granby and Grand Lake. They were built with a combination of individual donations, grants, tax revenue reserves and loans in the form of lease-purchase agreements. The Fraser library has been completely paid off, while GCLD is making \$400,000 a year payments to retire the debt on the Granby and Grand Lake projects. The Kremmling and Hot Sulphur libraries continue to occupy leased spaces.

The board holds one meeting a year in each of our libraries so that they may view the premises, meet with interested residents, and hear more about the libraries' individual operations.

## OUR STAFF

The district's staff is its greatest asset. Without their dedicated work, our libraries would be lifeless buildings housing unread books. In addition to competitive salaries and generous benefits, the board encourages, and funds, further education for the district's employees.

Please remember that direct board interaction with the staff is limited to the receipt of information from them. Requests by the board for staff action must be placed through the executive director. We do not employ the staff and they are not answerable to us.

A copy of the staff organizational chart is included in this packet, as well as a list of contact information for all staff members. This information is updated on the staff webpage and also viewable there. For the organizational chart, click on *Misc.* at the top left and then on *Staff Organizational Chart.* For contact information, click on *People* at the top near right and then on *Staff.*

## OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The board is comprised of seven members, two each from each of the county's three districts and one at-large member. Trustees are appointed by the county commissioners for three year terms and there are no term limits. While trustees are chosen from districts for their knowledge of, and contacts within, those districts, they serve the district as a whole. A list of the board members and their contact information is included with this packet. This list is also available on the staff webpage. Click on *People* at the top near right and then on *Trustees.* The board is led by officers elected for two year terms.

## BOARD COMMITTEES

Every trustee is expected to serve on at least one committee, as appointed by the president. These committees are advisory to the board. They generally meet only as needed. The structure of these committees and their current members may be viewed at the staff website. Click on *Misc.* at the top left, then on *Trustee Organizational Chart.* Standing committees and their duties are:

### Finance

This committee, chaired by the board treasurer, is responsible for working with staff to create the budget. It also oversees and directs the district's investments and fundraising efforts. Approval of the budget and investments is a function of the board as a whole.

### Policy

Working with staff, this committee creates and updates the district's policies and presents them to the board as a whole for approval. It is also responsible for creating methods for evaluation of the director.

### Public Relations

This is the outreach arm of the board, responsible for promotion of the district and its services. Working with staff, this committee creates and administers public relations efforts on the board's behalf.

### Strategic Planning

This committee annually reviews the strategic plan and makes adjustments as current conditions dictate. They present these changes to the board as a whole for approval. The creation of a comprehensive plan, done every five years, is a joint effort of staff and the entire board.

### Committees of the Whole

The functions of board development and evaluation, and technology oversight, fall to the board as a whole and are addressed either during regular meetings or special meetings as called by the president.

## OUR MEETINGS

Meetings are held monthly, generally on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 5:30 p.m., except in October and December, when they are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday to meet budget deadlines as set by the county commissioners. The May through September meetings are held at the district's libraries. The meeting schedule is set for the following year at the November meeting. A list of meeting times and places is included with this packet and it may be viewed at the staff webpage. [Click on \*Calendars\* at the far right and then on \*Board Meetings\*.](#)

To prepare for meetings, you must go to the staff website to read all the various information you will need to understand the items of business for the month. At the staff website [click on \*Board\* and then each of the subcategories.](#) This is vitally important to effective service as a trustee.

Generally, you do not need to print these reports or bring them to the meeting. Any of them under discussion are shown on a screen during the meeting. You may retain files of this information if you choose, however all such reports back to 2006 are available at the staff website. [Click \*Past Reports\* and then the \*year\*.](#)

Dinner is served at these meetings, so come a little early to fill your plate!

Roberts Rules of Order are followed. You should note that the board receives information about items upon which they must act at one meeting and do not vote on that issue until the next meeting, unless there is a pressing time concern. This is to give members a chance to gather further information as needed and to carefully consider their choices.

Lively discussion and debate are welcomed and different opinions help clarify choices. Members treat each other with respect and address issues, not people, when they disagree. After a vote is taken and the majority has ruled, they put aside our differences and always speak with one voice.

## LET THE SUN SHINE

In accordance with the state's Sunshine Law, and as a matter of ethical governance, all board meetings are open to the public. Minutes are kept and proceedings are recorded. When three or more members discuss board matters, either verbally or in writing (for instance, via email), a public record must be kept. Always speak as though the world were listening.

The exception to open meetings is when the board meets in executive session to discuss either personnel or legal matters. A separate record of these meetings is kept. Any actions arising from discussions in executive session must be taken when the group reconvenes in a public session.

## ETHICS

Included in the policy manual is an ethics statement for public library trustees, which outlines parameters of conduct as a trustee. You must never use the district or its resources for your personal advantage or the personal advantage of your friends or

relatives. If there is a conflict between your personal life and your position on the board, you must leave the room when there is discussion of items of potential conflict and abstain from voting upon those items. An example of this type of conflict: A board member's brother works for a contractor who has bid on a district project. The board member may not participate in the discussion concerning the bidders and may not vote to award the bid. In a small community like ours, the potential for conflict of interest is great. There is nothing wrong with having a conflict of interest, as long as it is promptly acknowledged.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

You are encouraged to learn more about the art of trusteeship through workshops and conferences. The annual Colorado Alliance of Libraries Conference in November offers trustee workshops which you are encouraged to attend. Expenses for this and other educational activities approved by the board are usually paid by the district.

## WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

Not much, aside from knowing that you are performing a vital service for your community. You will enjoy the pleasure of working with other dedicated people toward a worthy common goal. You will have the opportunity to learn and to use that learning to good purpose. But perks? There are a few:

1. You do not have to pay fines for overdue materials, but you must pay for items you have lost or damaged. You do not have priority for access to materials.
2. You may buy items for your personal use through the district, if such are available through normal vendor channels. Once ordered, they must be accepted. Items must be paid for before they are released to you.
3. Travel and other necessary expenses incurred by you for district business may be paid by the district.
4. You are protected from any liability arising from your actions as a trustee by Errors and Omissions insurance.
5. Free meals at monthly meetings and some other district events, such as the Holiday Party in December.

## GRAND COUNTY LIBRARY FOUNDATION

As part of its strategic plan, the board formed the foundation in 2007 to ensure the district's long-term financial stability. While it is expected that sufficient operating funds can be generated from property tax revenues, future building projects or expansion of services will require additional funds. The foundation's charge is to see that the district's funds are wisely invested and to build a long-term donor base, thus generating capital upon which the district may grow.

At present, this foundation is in its formative stage and members of the board of trustees also serve on the foundation board. In the future, the foundation will be an entirely separate entity. The foundation meets about twice a year.

## FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

The Friends of the Library are an important source of support for the district's libraries. A dedicated group of volunteers, they engage in fundraising for library programs within their communities. For instance, they hold book sales, quilt raffles, pie sales and progressive dinners. The board of trustees has no formal ties with the Friends, but cooperates with them and fully supports their activities.

## CHECKLIST OF ITEMS FOR NEW TRUSTEES

Items with \* should be returned at the end of your service

1. New Trustee Handbook \_\_\_\_\_
2. Policy Manual (online) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Strategic Plan \_\_\_\_\_
4. Staff website username and password \_\_\_\_\_
5. Nametag \_\_\_\_\_
6. Special District Association (SDA) Board Member Manual \_\_\_\_\_
7. Colorado Public Library Board & Trustees Pocket Manual \_\_\_\_\_
- \*8. "Boards That Make a Difference" by John Carver \_\_\_\_\_
- \*9. "The Imperfect Board Member" by Jim Brown \_\_\_\_\_
10. Trustee contact information \_\_\_\_\_
11. District Office and Branch Librarian contact information \_\_\_\_\_
12. Current budget \_\_\_\_\_
13. List of board meeting dates and times \_\_\_\_\_
14. List of annual recurring events \_\_\_\_\_