Belmont County District Library

By-Laws of the Belmont County District Library Board of Trustees

Article 1 – Name and Mission

Section 1. The name of the body shall be the Board of Trustees of the Belmont County District Library. This Board is organized under Section 3375.19 of the Ohio Revised Code, and derives its authority from Section 3375.40 and other relevant sections of the Ohio Revised Code.

Section 2. The mission of the Belmont County District Library shall be appended to these by-laws and shall be revised from time-to-time by the Board of Trustees as appropriate.

Article II – Meetings

Section 1. Organizational Meeting: It shall be held in the month of January each year as an organizational meeting for the purpose of election of officers and other such business as may be deemed necessary by the Board of Trustees.

Section 2. Regular meetings will be held on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. or at times, dates and locations as the Board directs.

Section 3. A Records Commission shall consist of the Board of Trustees and the fiscal officer. The commission shall meet at least once every twelve months and shall be responsible for overseeing the Library’s compliance with the Ohio Records Law as described in Chapter 149 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Section 4. Special meetings shall be held at the call of the President, the Director, or on the written request of two members of the Board. To call a special meeting, the Fiscal Officer, Director or Secretary of the Board must give three working days’ notice to all Board members in writing. If the special meeting is of an emergency nature, twenty-four hours notice, either orally or electronically, must be given.

Section 5. A quorum necessary for the conduct of business shall be four trustees with Robert’s Rules of Order serving as the governing structure for the Board except as provided by these By-Laws. One of those present shall be an officer of the board.
Section 6. The Director, in collaboration with the Fiscal Officer and the President of the Board, shall prepare an agenda before the regular Board meeting. The agenda items for each regular meeting shall include, but not be limited to:

- Roll call
- Adoption of Agenda
- Minutes
- Director’s Report
- Fiscal Officer’s Report
- Public Comments
- Announcements, Presentations, and Correspondence
- Old Business
- New Business
- Committee Reports
- Adjournment

Section 7. Posting: To conform to the Ohio open meeting statute (See section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code), all meetings shall be announced by notifying local media. Any person may upon request be notified by e-mail or postal mail by providing a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Section 8. Executive Session: The Board may enter into executive session for purposes as described in the Ohio Open Meetings Act. (i.e. Certain personnel matters, the purchase of property, pending or imminent litigation with the library’s attorney)

An executive session may only be held at a regular meeting, and must always begin and end in an open meeting.

The motion to hold an executive session shall state the specific purpose of such a session, and the motion must be approved in an open meeting in a roll call vote by a majority of the quorum of the board. The Board of Trustees may not vote or take official action in an executive session.

Section 9. Public Participation

Time is set aside at each regular meeting agenda for public participation from the audience. Those wishing to speak must complete a public comments form or tell the Board President prior to the start of the meeting. Speakers must identify any groups or organizations for which they will speak in an official capacity. Those who have filled out the form and wish to address the board will be recognized in the order in which they signed in. Public comments must be addressed to members of the board. All visitors are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the orderly completion of the meeting.
Comments shall be limited to specific operations and services of the library. Comments about a specific staff member must be limited to a written format to protect the staff member and the commenting member of the public from possible defamation of character and/or slanderous comments. Comments regarding a specific staff member will be referred to the Personnel Committee for their review and recommendation when it is deemed appropriate.

The main purpose of board meetings is to conduct the business of the library. In order for the board to fulfill its obligation to complete the meeting agenda in an efficient fashion, a maximum of 10 minutes of public participation is permitted at each meeting. The board president may limit by time the comments of each public participant and will do so by announcing the time limit at the beginning of the meeting, and applying the time limit equally to all participants. Signed written comments of any length will be accepted.

Article III – Membership

Section 1. Appointment: The Belmont County District Library is a county district library under the control and management of the Board of Trustees consisting of seven members. Four Board Members shall be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners and three by the Judges of the Common Pleas Court. They shall serve for a term of seven years without compensation.

- Appointments are staggered such that no more than one (1) trustees’ term is scheduled to expire in the same year.
- A trustee must be a qualified elector of the library’s service district.
- A trustee appointed to complete an unexpired term or to succeed another trustee shall be appointed by the same board or officers that appointed his or her predecessor.
- In general trustees are guided in the performance of their duties by the most recent edition of the Ohio Public Library Trustee’s Handbook.

Section 2. Filling vacancies & Re-appointment: An ad hoc committee of the Board of Trustees shall recommend re-appointment of a trustee or a new candidate to the full board to fill a vacant trustee position. Appointments will be recommended to the appointing authority following a Resolution passed by two-thirds vote of the Board. See Ohio Revised Code 3375.22.
Article IV – Officers

Section 1. The officers of the Board of Trustees shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Fiscal Officer. Each officer shall be elected at the organizational meeting and shall hold office for the term of one year, or until his or her successor shall be elected. All officers of the Board shall hold full voting privileges except the Fiscal Officer.

Section 2. 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 an ex-officio voting member of all committees, and generally perform all other duties associated with the office. The President shall, with the Secretary, sign the minutes of each meeting of the Board.

Section 3. The Vice-President, in the event of the absence of the President, or of a vacancy in that office, shall assume and perform the duties and function of the President.

Section 4. The Secretary shall keep an accurate record of all meetings of the Board, and shall perform such other duties as are generally associated with the office.

Section 5. The Fiscal Officer, or his or her designated representative, shall be the disbursing officer of the Board, co-sign all checks, and shall perform other such duties as are generally associated with the office. The Fiscal Officer and his or her designated representatives shall be bonded as required by the Board of Trustees. The Fiscal Officer does not have voting privileges as granted to all other Board officers.

Section 6. Vacancies in office shall be filled by vote as a regular meeting of the board as soon as possible after the vacancy occurs.

Article V – Committees

Ad hoc or temporary committees may be appointed and charged with specific tasks by the board president as required; such committees are automatically dissolved upon completion of the assigned tasks. Trustees and other committee members are appointed to committees by the president of the board. Committees serve an advisory role and make recommendations to the board; a committee has no other power, unless, by suitable action of the board, it is granted a specific power to act. All committee members are subject to approval by a majority of the board. In general, committees will work in conjunction with the director and fiscal officer.
Article VI – Governance

Section 1. The Board shall hire and fix the compensation of a qualified Director who shall serve as the chief executive and administrative officer of the Library. The Director will have a Master’s Degree in Library Science from an accredited institution. In this capacity, the Director shall be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Library. The Director shall recommend to the Board the appointment and specify the duties of all the other staff and shall be held responsible for: the proper direction and supervision of the staff, the care and maintenance of library buildings and property, the adequate and proper selection of materials and information in keeping with the stated policies of the Board, the efficient and prudent provision of library service to the public, and its financial operation within the fiscal limitations as determined by the Board of Trustees. The Director shall be expected to attend all meetings of the Board and to meet with all committees unless otherwise agreed to with the President and committee chair.

Section 2. The Board shall appoint and fix the compensation of a qualified Fiscal Officer who shall serve, under the Board’s review and at its discretion, as the chief financial officer of the Library. In this capacity, the Fiscal Officer shall be responsible for the day-to-day fiscal operations of the Library. The Fiscal Officer shall be responsible for the certification of Library monies, collected or in the process of being collected, and the appropriate expenditure of these monies. The Fiscal Officer shall be the treasurer of all Library monies and shall deposit all monies received according to the statutes of the State of Ohio. A full financial accounting of Library receipts and disbursements, as determined by the Board, shall be made by the Fiscal Officer at the regular meeting of the Board.

Section 3. The Board, collectively, shall serve as the policy making body of the library. Additionally the Board shall assume those powers given it by relevant sections of the Ohio Revised Code 3375.40 and shall perform such other duties as are generally associated with this office. The policies approved by the board shall remain in effect until changed or rescinded by further action of the board. These policies shall be administered by library staff. The Business Office shall maintain a file of all policies established by the board for consultation and distribution as directed by the board and required by law.

Section 4. Members of the Board are expected to be regular and timely in their attendance and performance of duties of the position to which they have been appointed. Failure to do so may result in notification of such conduct by the President to the appropriate appointing authority.
Article VII – Ethics

The Board of Trustees subscribes to the statement of principles promulgated by the American Library Trustee Association as listed below, and is bound by applicable statutes of the Ohio Ethics Law and the rulings of the Ohio Ethics Commission.

ETHICS STATEMENT FOR PUBLIC LIBRARY TRUSTEES

- Trustees in the capacity of trust upon them shall observe ethical standards with absolute truth, integrity and honor.
- Trustees must avoid situations in which personal interest might be served or financial benefits gained at the expense of library users, colleagues, or the institution. ORC 3375.35 states that “No member of a board of library trustees shall have any pecuniary interest in any contract entered into by such board.”
- It is incumbent upon any trustee to disqualify himself/herself immediately whenever the appearance of a conflict of interest exists.
- Trustees must distinguish clearly in their actions and statement between their personal philosophies and attitudes and those of the institution, acknowledging the formal position of the board even if they personally disagree.
- A trustee must respect the confidential nature of library business while being aware of and in compliance with applicable laws governing freedom of information.
- Trustees must be prepared to support to the fullest the efforts of librarians resisting censorship of library materials by groups or individuals.
- Trustees who accept library board responsibilities are expected to perform all the functions of library trustees.

Article VIII – Amendments

Section 1. Amendments to these by-laws must be presented in writing and read at a regular meeting of the Board. They may be adopted at any subsequent meeting of the Board by two-thirds affirmative vote of the Board.

Article VIII – Indemnification

Members of the Board of Trustees are covered by the library’s Director’s and Officer’s Liability Policy, including their liability resulting from either institutional or individual lawsuits.

Approved at the Board of Trustees meeting on July 22, 2014.
Belmont County District Library Mission Statement

Mission Statement
People of a free nation, in order to make wise choices, to develop intellectual competence, and to function as thoughtful and clear-thinking citizens, must have available a large body of reliable information, opinion and thought on issues and questions influencing themselves, their community and their nation. The Belmont County District Library, through its Main Library in Martins Ferry, its five Branch Libraries, and its outreach service, has the responsibility of providing such library and information services to people of all ages, all educational levels, and in all areas of Belmont County and its surrounding communities. The staff and Board of Trustees view each person and element of our service population as equally needful of such library service. Within the limitations of budget and space, the role of the Belmont County District Library is to provide books, periodicals, audio, video and graphic materials, electronic information sources, and other types of library information on all subjects in which residents of Martins Ferry and Belmont County may claim an interest or for which they may have a need.