



THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD (MCLB) MANUAL



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1. INTRODUCTION & HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL) is the public library system for residents of Montgomery County, Maryland. MCPL currently comprises 21 branches, a branch in the County's correctional facility as well as a virtual services branch.

The Montgomery County Library Board (MCLB) was established on May 31, 1950 and authorized by Montgomery County Code 243 governing the Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL). Establishment of public libraries in Maryland is subject to the terms of Maryland State Code 23-30I:

(a) Establishment and Support: the governing body of each county may establish and appropriate an amount to support a county public library system free from political influence.

(b) Board of Library Trustees: each county public library system shall be governed by a board of trustees. However, a charter county may establish a county library agency and grant it some or all of the powers of a board of trustees; or have a board of library trustees, provide for the board's selection, and determine its powers. (An. Code 1957, art. 77, && 171, 172; 1978, ch. 22, & 2.)

According to Montgomery County Code 2006, Section 246 et seq., the Board is established as an advisory board, but it has authority on its own motion, or on reference from the County Executive, to inquire into matters affecting the County public library system and to provide guidance and advice on a wide range of library matters.

The Montgomery County Library Board (MCLB), was established to assist and advise the County Executive and the Library Director on matters pertaining to the organization and management of libraries. Another responsibility of MCLB is to serve as the voice of the community on library issues in the county and as an advocacy group for public libraries on both local, statewide, and national levels. The MCLB reports its findings and recommendations on these issues to the County Executive through the MCPL Director. In 1953 the MCLB adopted the Library Bill of Rights recommended by the American Library Association and continues to be guided by these Bill of Rights.

The Board originally (1950) consisted of ten members serving for three years. In 1985, the Board membership was expanded to 12 with staggered terms of service to avoid all members' terms ending simultaneously. Two additional ex officio members of the Library Board are representatives from the Montgomery County Public Schools and Montgomery College.

2. MISSION, GOALS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MCLB

The mission of the Montgomery County Library Board is to advise the Montgomery County Executive and MCPL Director on matters related to library policies, services, and facilities.

To fulfill this mission, the MCLB is authorized to:

- Liaise with Library Advisory Committees (LACs) for each Library Branch to maintain effective communications between MCLB and LACs by attending LAC meetings and through other interactions. The Board recommends that each board member serve as liaison to two or more MCPL branches.
- Provide the MCPL Director with feedback from LACs and other interested groups and facilitate communication among MCPL administration, the County Executive's Office, the LACs, library patrons, and the Friends of the Library (FOL)
- Take a lead role in library advocacy activities including testifying before various government bodies e.g. the Montgomery County Council, the Maryland Legislature, the U.S. Congress, and public hearings and meetings, Federal, State, and/or County officials and otherwise support public libraries in Montgomery County, serving as a major "voice of the community" on library issues and policies
- Recruit and involve volunteers from the community to advocate for, and otherwise assist the MCPL.

According to Section 254 of the County Code, the Board is authorized to approve all library fine structures and other administrative rules as appropriate to the conduct of necessary library service in Montgomery County.

The Board will also review the Board manual and revise, as appropriate, in the fall of each year, subsequently voting and approving any modifications at the October meeting of the Board.

3. STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF MCLB

The Library Board is composed of twelve members representing the Montgomery County Community at large, and two additional ex-officio non-voting members, respectively representing Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and Montgomery College. The twelve volunteer members do not receive compensation.

In addition, subcommittees of the Board called Library Advisory committees (LACs) advise the Board and work with local Branch Agency Managers.

All Board members may sit on at least one of the Board's Work Groups. Information on current members, officers, liaisons and their terms are provided at MCPL website (<http://montgomerycountymd.gov/library/about/index.html>).

4. SELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS

a. Vacancy Announcements

The County Executive's Office periodically announces vacancies on the Montgomery County Library Board and calls for applications from individuals interested in serving on the MCLB. Any resident of Montgomery County with an interest in libraries is eligible to serve on the Board. The County Executive Office widely distributes announcements to County Government Offices, public libraries, and on County websites. The announcements generally list the number of vacancies available, the deadline for applying, and direct applicants to submit resumes with a cover letter to the County Executive's Office.

b. Confidential Review of Applications and Selection

The MCLB Chair, in conjunction with the Director of Montgomery County Libraries, invites members of the Board to serve on the Library Board Nominating Committee, which screens and selects candidates to interview. The MCLB Chair also typically serves as Chair of this Committee, though other MCLB members may serve as necessary. Members who are in the final year of their term and are seeking reappointment cannot serve on the nominating committee.

The County Executive's Office sends copies of all applications received to the Library Board Nominating Committee. The Library Director's Office staff contacts the candidates and sets up appointments for interviews to be conducted by the Nominating Committee and the Library Director. The Nominating Committee selects the eligible candidates and ranks them. The Committee may recommend more candidates than available slots to allow the County Executive a wide choice and the opportunity to ensure that their selections help the Board represent the entire County in terms of age, gender, ethnic background, and geographic location. The Nominating Committee Chair reports the committee's recommendations to the County Executive for further review. The County Executive submits the final list of selected candidates to the Council for concurrence. Upon confirmation by the County Council, the County Executive notifies the successful candidates of their appointments and terms of their office.

The new full-term Members usually assume their official duties at the end of September, while those appointed to complete unexpired terms assume duties immediately upon notification.

c. Terms of Service of Board Members

Prior to the end of the initial term of three-years, the retiring members can apply for a second three-year term. Those appointed to fill unexpired terms may apply for a first full term. Their selections will take place according to procedure described above. In no case can a member serve more than a total of eight years.

The terms of service of members of the MCLB are staggered so that each year only four members retire. This assures that all members do not retire simultaneously and that a cadre of experienced members always remain on the Board.

A member is deemed to have resigned from the Board if he/she misses 25 percent or more of scheduled meetings during any six-month period, unless excused by the Board on prior request to the County Executive's office. Voluntary resignations, in writing, must be directed to the County Executive at 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, MD, 20850 or countyexecutive.boards@montgomerycountymd.gov.

d. Orientation of New Members

The new members are provided an orientation by the MCPL Director and/or senior members of the Board. The orientation will focus on the operations and responsibilities of the Library Board, the Library Department, and the relationship to the County government. There are two trainings that all new members are required to take: Maryland Open Meetings Act and Parliamentary Procedures.

e. Ethical requirements

The Montgomery County Library Board members are subject to the provisions of the Montgomery County Public Ethics Law, Chapter 19A of the Montgomery County Code, as amended periodically, the latest effective April 1, 2010. The details of the law can be obtained from MCPL staff.

5. MCLB MEETINGS

a. Library Board Meetings

Library Board and Committee meetings are open to the public and subject to the Maryland Open Meetings Act (available in the MCPL Department). Observers do not ordinarily participate in Board or Committee discussions. However, if time permits, they may be permitted to make a brief statement at the conclusion of the Board or Committee meeting.

The Board holds monthly meetings usually on the 2nd Wednesday of each month except when the Board may recess in summer. The Board may, at its discretion waive a scheduled meeting due to holidays, snow, etc. Meetings generally begin at 7:00 p.m., end at 9:00 p.m., and are held in the Library Board Room of the Montgomery County Public Libraries Administrative Offices. Board members are to be notified in a timely fashion of any changes in the time and place of meetings. The time, place, and duration of the meetings can be changed by the Chair in consultation with the Board and the Director of Libraries. A quorum for transacting Board business is a simple majority of the appointed Board members.

A Library Board calendar is published on the MCPL website. Board Liaisons should provide to MCPL staff, dates of LAC meetings and any other relevant information for inclusion in the Board minutes and calendar.

Seated at the Board table are the 14 members of the Board, the MCPL Director, and a staff member to record the proceedings and serve in a secretarial capacity. Other Department staff or invited guests are called to the table for presentations or clarification of issues.

Tape recordings of the meetings are used for transcription and assuring correctness of minutes, and are kept as a public record for six months.

Montgomery County requires that each department keep a running account of the time volunteers donate. These figures are collected semiannually and are reported to the community. To facilitate this endeavor, Board members are asked to keep track of their time spent on Library Board functions and report the time totals on the volunteer time sheets distributed at Board meetings.

i. Agenda

Prior to Board meetings, an agenda prepared by the Chair with input from the Director is sent to Board members. The Agenda might include, but is not limited to, announcements, approval of the previous meeting's minutes, the Director's Report, and LAC updates, an occasional presentation by an invited guest speaker, committee reports, new or old business.

Library Board agendas are disseminated to LAC Chairs, Department executives and Agency Managers. An agenda is also posted in all branch libraries and the website for public view.

ii. Library Board Minutes

The MCPL Director, with the aid of Department staff, is responsible for providing Library Board minutes.

Board minutes should include the date and place of the meeting and the times the meeting convened and adjourned, whether a quorum was present, the names of Board members in attendance and those absent, Department staff, and guests. The minutes should record whether the previous meeting's minutes were approved.

The minutes should summarize all discussions, including committee, work group and LAC liaison reports, and presentations by invited guests. Summaries of comments by observers should be limited to one very brief paragraph each. For any motions made, the minutes should record the wording of the motion, the members making and seconding the motion, whether the motion passed, and the vote count.

A typed draft of the Library Board minutes is reviewed by MCPL Director and the Board Chair before being presented to the Board for approval. Minutes of Library Board meetings must be approved by a majority vote of the Board. A vote on approval is usually taken at the meeting following the one in which the minutes were taken. Minutes approved by the Board are distributed to Library Board members at each meeting. A copy is posted on the MCPL website within 30 days of Board approval of the minutes.

Copies are also sent by mail to the 3 HHS County Council representatives, the County Council President, and the Office of the County Executive.

The County Code requires that a copy of approved Library Board minutes is filed with the Office of Public Information. These copies are kept for approximately 15 to 20 years, depending on available space. Copies of older approved Library Board minutes are archived and can be reviewed by making a request to the Office of Public Information. Recordings of Board meetings are kept for six months.

6. OFFICERS OF MCLB

Two office-holders, the Chair and the Vice Chair, lead the MCLB. Candidates for office are presented at a Board meeting where members elect the new officers by majority vote for a term of two years. The Chair and Vice Chair may be elected to an additional one-year term. It is expected that the Vice Chair, presuming acceptable performance of duties, will succeed the Chair at the end of either the two-year or three-year term. Election of officers is conducted no later than the July Board meeting of the appropriate year.

a. Duties and Responsibilities of the Chair

The Chair presides at Board meetings and also all other meetings and events sponsored or organized by the Board and will:

- Serve as the official spokesperson for the Library Board. The Chair may designate another Board member to speak on specific issues. When so designated the Board member may not represent his/her own personal opinions but is required to present the position of the Chair of the Board.
- Prepare the agenda with input from the Director for each Board meeting
- Review and edit draft minutes prepared by Director or staff for review and approval by the Board
- Maintain regular contact with Board members and the MCPL Director and keep members informed on issues and activities affecting the Board
- Assign Board members to LACs as liaisons, Board Work Groups, and special “ad hoc” committees and other projects
- Maintain communication with library officials statewide.
- Represent the Library Board at County Council budget hearings, before the State Legislature, and at other forums
- Oversee maintenance of the Board calendars
- Prepare and oversee distribution of Board correspondence
- Ensure that new Board members’ orientation is conducted shortly after their appointments
- Prepare and submit the Library Board's annual report to the County Executive

- Prepare and mentor the Vice Chair for assumption of Chair duties at the end of a term

b. Duties and Responsibilities of the Vice Chair

The Vice Chair will:

- In the absence or at the request of the Chair, the Vice Chair will Preside at Board meetings, as well as other meetings and events organized and sponsored by the Board
- Represent the Library Board at County Council budget hearings, before the State Legislature, and other forums as the representative of the Library Board
- Carry out special assignments or projects
- Carry out any other duties which are normally assigned to the Chair.

7. MCLB WORK GROUPS AND MCLB LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Work groups of board members provide MCLB officers and the Board input on the status and needs in specified areas of the Board's concern. In addition, The County Code establishes subcommittees of the Library Board, referred to as Library Advisory Committees.

a. MCLB Work Groups

The Chair selects and assigns Board Members to the Work Groups at the first meeting of the fiscal year (September), based on input from Board members, balancing the distribution of experienced and new members within each committee. All Board members may serve on one or more the Work Group(s). Each Group elects a Leader.

Currently there are three work groups. The number of work groups can be increased or decreased by the Chair in consultation with the Board, if warranted by on-going needs or future workloads.

b. Work Group Meetings

The Work Groups meetings are convened by the Leaders, when needed to discuss and make recommendations on matters that concern the Group. Board members who do not belong to a Work Group may attend meetings and participate in discussions. Outside observers may also attend the Work Group meetings, but may not participate in discussions.

Library Board Work Groups may meet in conjunction with the Board meetings or separately as needed.

When held separately from the Board Meeting, the Group's Leaders notify the Director's office of the meeting in advance for announcing the dates, locations and times in of the Groups' meetings in accordance with County "Open Meeting" laws.

The Leader of the Work Group will prepare agendas, conduct the meetings following usual parliamentary procedures, and prepare minutes after the meeting. Work Group Leaders or designees are responsible for reporting findings or recommendations of their committee's deliberations to the full Board, and requesting action as a motion, when warranted.

i. LAC Activities Work Group

This Work Group monitors the Board's relations with the LACs and makes recommendations to the Library Board on policy and procedural issues involving the two bodies. This Group is responsible for

- planning and coordinating joint activities and events by the Board and LACs, (e.g. biannual and regional meetings such as ALA Day and Legislative Day in Annapolis).
- preparing materials, when needed, such as handbooks or briefing papers useful for orienting the new LAC members.
- LAC handbooks shall be reviewed and revised each fall.

ii. Legislative and Public Affairs Work Group

This Work Group develops strategies and is responsible for planning activities, events, and campaigns involving the Board's Task include:

- Legislative advocacy efforts, such as coordinating Board and LAC testimonies at public hearings on the County's capital and operating budget and coordinating meetings with elected officials
- Making recommendations on County and Statewide library legislation.
- Representing Montgomery County on the Maryland Library Association Legislative Panels.
- Other activities involving public advocacy groups.
- Coordinate with other advocacy groups in these activities.

iii. Library Policy and Practices Work Group

This Work Group is responsible for reviewing and advising MCPL on library policies and practices and reviewing the long-range Facilities Plan of MCPL. The primary functions of this Work Group are to:

- Make recommendations on the creation of, or changes to, policies, programs and delivery of services that significantly impact library users
- Review and make recommendations about library policy areas such as proposed changes in library service hours, major changes in loan periods and fines, revisions in policy on basic and fee-based services, and major changes in services such as holds/reserves, public awareness campaign, and press relations
- Make recommendations to the library Board and the Department on Program of Requirements (POR) plans for new facilities or library renovations

- Advise on County Capital Improvement Programs (CIP)
- Advise on specific problem area such as parking, lighting, disabled access

iv. Committees: The Board Chair may establish a Nominating Committee or other ad hoc committees as needed.

c. Role of MCLB members on Library Advisory Committees (LACs)

LACs function as the voice of the community surrounding its library. They recruit members to ensure that it adequately represents the community. Working with the Board Liaisons, the LACs advise the Board of its activities, and specific issues, problems, or concerns. The membership of the LAC should, if possible, reflect the demographic of the respective local community. There are 23 Library Advisory Committees, one for each library branch and one representing accessibility needs within the county.

It is recommended that each Library Board member serve as a Board Liaison to two or more Library Advisory Committees. Liaison assignments are made by the Board Chair in September of each year. There is no limit on the number of consecutive terms a member can serve as Liaison. Liaisons will act as the conduits between the Board action from LACs, ensuring LAC adherence to the Board's operational procedures and work to strengthen and improve communications between the Board and the LACs by developing good working relationship with the LAC Chair and the Library Manager.

Liaisons send copies of all relevant Board and Department announcements, reminders of any deadlines for actions requested of the LACs, and encourage timely compliance. Board Liaisons encourage fulfillment of routine administrative responsibilities of LACs by:

- Assisting the LAC in its efforts to acquire a large enough membership to adequately reflect the diversity of the community being served.
- Reminding each LAC to submit its updated LAC membership list to the Director's Office by September for submission to the Board in October.
- Reminding the LAC to hold elections for officers and communicate the election results to the Director's Office before June 1st annually
- Encouraging the LAC to send representatives to the joint Board/LAC/FOL meeting held each year
- Encouraging and promoting communication and cooperation among LACs
- Ensuring the approved LAC agenda template is being used for all meetings.

LACs must hold at least three meetings a year, but many meet more often if deemed necessary. Liaisons are expected to attend all meetings of their assigned LACs. As stated in the LAC Manual, LAC meetings should be held in-person to comply with the Maryland State Open Meetings Act.

At the LAC meetings, Liaisons make reports of the minutes of the Board meetings, on actions taken or planned by the Board, elicit input from each LAC on library issues of concern.

For more details and specific information and guidance on how the LACs function, please see the Montgomery County Library Advisory Committee Handbook.

8. SPECIAL ACTIVITIES OF THE MCLB

During the year, the Board may participate in or host a number of special activities and annual events. A description of these activities is listed below.

a. Meeting with the LACs and FOL Chapters

The Board hosts at least one meeting during the year for the LACs and Friends of the Library, Montgomery County, Inc. The LACs and FOL Board and Chapters are encouraged to take part in developing the program by offering to give presentations. Programming is generally informational and educational.

b. Maryland Library Trustee's Meeting

Each year, the Maryland State Library Agency holds a one-day meeting to which all library trustees in the State of Maryland are invited. The purpose of the meeting is to provide the trustees with updates on issues of interest to libraries across the State. The meeting serves a developmental purpose as session topics and presentations may cover a wide variety of issues important to the development of advocacy skills in library trustees. The meeting also provides a forum for networking by library trustees.

c. Annual Meeting with the County Executive

Selected members of the Board and the Director meet with the County Executive once a year, with Boards, Committees and Commissions. The purpose of the meeting is to update the County Executive on the Board's activities and to provide a briefing on issues the Board would like the County Executive to consider. The date of the meeting, usually in the fall or winter, varies depending on the County Executive's schedule.

d. Legislative Day in Annapolis

During the General Assembly's winter legislative session in Annapolis, the MCPL Director works with the Board's Legislative and Public Affairs Committee to organize a delegation, including representatives of the Library Board, to visit Montgomery County's elected representatives in Annapolis and make a brief presentation. Individual meetings with delegates and senators may also be scheduled.

e. County Council Public Hearings on Budget

The County Executive's Budget Hearings are held in February. The Operating Budget hearings with Council Members are held in April. The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) hearings before the County Council are scheduled during even-numbered years in February. The Library Board coordinates the selection and briefing of individuals from the LACs who will testify at these hearings along with the Board representative.

f. National Library Legislative Day

During April or May of each year, MCPL may organize a delegation of library advocates, including Library Board members, to join with other delegations meeting in Washington, DC for an event hosted by the American Library Association's Washington Office. The event allows delegates to meet with their respective representatives and senators. Individual as well as group meetings with legislators are scheduled throughout the day.

g. Meeting with the Montgomery County Council Members

The Board meets with the County Council members each year. The purpose of the meeting is to provide an opportunity for Board members and Council members to talk informally and for the Board members to advocate for the County Council to approve library priorities, in particular the Operating Budget.

h. Public Forums

Occasionally the Library Board may organize, coordinate, and host one or more public forums or activities to solicit comments from residents on specific library issues. Library Board members are also encouraged to attend meetings of the American Library Association (ALA), Public Library Association (PLA), United for Libraries (Association for Library Trustees and Advocates – formerly American Libraries Trustees Association (ALTA)), the Maryland Library Association (MLA), and the Urban Libraries Council (ULC).

i. Awards

A program of Achievement Awards was initiated in 1995-1996 under which the Library Board may publicly recognize and honor special achievements by its LACs and/or individual members of LACs at an awards ceremony.

9. FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY (FOL)

SEE FOLMC WEBSITE - <https://www.folmc.org/>

APPENDIX - MCLB BYLAWS

THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD BYLAWS

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Montgomery County Library Board was established under the Montgomery County Code to advise the County Executive on library matters. The advice is generally given to the Director of the Department of Public Libraries for transmission to the County Executive, or directly to the County Executive. Refer to County Code Section 2-46 and 2-47 for more information on Library Board composition, powers and duties.
2. The Board serves as a voice of the community on Library issues and has a leadership role in articulating community opinions and concerns about library-related matters to the Department of Public Libraries (MCPL). The Board's primary responsibility is to provide MCPL with the user's perspective on the library system, policies, facilities, and services. The Board may coordinate testimony and advocacy efforts of the local Library Advisory Committees (LACs). The Board may testify before County Council and State legislative bodies with regard to library issues in coordination with the County Executive through the Director of Public Libraries.
3. The Board provides advice and counsel to MCPL and to the County Executive on a broad range of issues including, but not limited to the following: capital and operating budget matters, facilities, library policy and practices, planning initiatives, and legislative and public affairs.
4. The Board has approval authority regarding all changes in book fines, and other appropriate issues. However, the Board does not intervene in personnel or internal operating issues of MCPL. Refer to County Code Section 2-54 for a description of additional administrative responsibilities of the Library Board.

II. MEMBERSHIP ISSUES

1. The Library Board consists of twelve members who are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. There are two ex-officio members representing the Public Schools and Montgomery College. Refer to County Code Section 2-46, for composition and terms of members of the Library Board. Individuals may be invited to participate in Board meetings as liaisons from related organizations.
2. A full term of appointment to the Library Board is three years and each member is eligible for appointment to two full terms of service. Each year, the terms of four members begin. In the event of a resignation before a member's term is completed, a new member will be appointed to fill the unexpired term. Thereafter, the new member

is eligible to apply for appointment to serve two full terms (if the unexpired term is less than two years.) Therefore, the maximum amount of service time by any Board member can be no more than approximately eight years. Refer to County Code Section 2-46 and County Council resolution 13-230.

3. Membership on the Board requires certain responsibilities including the following: serving as liaison to two or more LACs, attending and participating in all regular and special Board meetings, serving on one or more workgroups of the Board, attending and participating in the meetings of Board standing or ad hoc committees as appropriate, attending and participating in special events scheduled by the Board, attending and participating in official functions of MCPL as requested.

III. OFFICERS

1. The officers of the Board shall be a Chair and a Vice-Chair.

2. The officers of the Board shall be elected at the regularly scheduled June or July meeting of the Board, and shall take office the following September. They are elected to a term of two consecutive years.

3. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall not be eligible to succeed themselves in the same offices for a second full two-year term. However, they may be elected for an additional one-year term by a majority vote of the Board membership.

4. The duties of the officers shall be those which are consistent with the functioning of the Library Board as intended in Montgomery County Code.

5. If a Board member fails to meet attendance requirements, the County Executive's office will be notified.

IV. MEETINGS

1. Meetings shall be held monthly at a time and place determined by the Board and open to the public.

2. Special meetings may be called by the Chair or by three Board members.

3. Each Board member acts as a liaison to two or more local Library Advisory Committees and is expected to attend these meetings as well as the Board meetings.

4. Board members serve on at least one permanent Work Group and are expected to attend these meetings. Occasionally members are asked to serve on special committees or task forces, as appropriate.

5. Members are deemed to have resigned from the Library Board if absent from 25 percent or more of the scheduled meetings during any six-month period, as per

Montgomery County Code. Refer to County Code Section 2-148 for meeting attendance requirements of Board members.

V. QUORUM

1. A quorum for the transaction of Library Board business shall be a simple majority of the membership.

VI. WORK GROUPS OF THE BOARD

1. Such standing Work Groups as are agreed upon by the Board shall be appointed by the Chair (President). The Work Groups presently include but are not limited to: LAC Activities Work Group, Legislative and Public Affairs Work Group, and Policy and Practices Work Group.
2. Any special committee created by the Board is automatically dissolved upon completion of its assignment.