

Putnam County Library Board of Trustees Nomination and Appointment Policy

1. Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to establish a transparent, fair, and merit-based process for the nomination and appointment of members to the Putnam County Library Board of Trustees. This policy supports effective governance, compliance with Tennessee law, and public confidence in the stewardship of the Putnam County Library.

This policy is intended to complement the Library Board Trustee Position Description and to ensure that individuals nominated and appointed to the Board possess the qualifications, judgment, and temperament necessary to serve as public officials responsible for library governance.

2. Legal Authority: The Putnam County Library Board of Trustees is established pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated (TCA) Title 10, Chapter 3, and operates under an interlocal agreement between Putnam County and the City of Cookeville. Appointment authority rests with the respective County and City legislative bodies in accordance with TCA § 10-3-103 and the interlocal agreement.

3. Board Composition and Eligibility

- **Residency:** Candidates must be residents of Putnam County, Tennessee.
- **Statutory Requirements:** Board composition shall comply with all requirements of Tennessee law and the interlocal agreement, including:
 - Number of board members
 - Term length and limits
 - Restrictions on public officials serving on the Board
 - Gender balance requirements
- **General Qualifications** Candidates should demonstrate:
 - Commitment to the mission and values of the public library
 - Interest in literacy, education, and community service.
 - Ability to serve the entire library service population rather than a single constituency or appointing authority.
 - Ability to work collaboratively with diverse viewpoints and stakeholders.
 - Willingness to fulfill the duties and ethical obligations of a Library Board Trustee.
 - Prior board, civic, or nonprofit governance experience will be considered but is not required.
- **Preferred Knowledge and Experience:** Experience in one or more of the following areas is desirable:
 - Applicants are encouraged to share and explain how their unique background will contribute to the Board
 - Finance, budgeting, or accounting
 - Law, public administration, or compliance
 - Education, literacy, or youth services
 - Community engagement, communications, or public relations
 - Strategic planning, facilities management, or technology
 - Library operations or library-related experience

4. Public Notice of Vacancies

- **Advance Notice:** The Library Director shall publicly announce upcoming vacancies at least thirty (30) days prior to the expiration of a trustee's term, or as soon as practicable in the case of an unexpired term. When a trustee has completed a first term and is in good standing, that trustee shall be given first priority for reappointment to a second term if they are willing to continue serving. In such cases, the position shall not be opened for displacement by other applicants.
- **Method of Notice:** Vacancy announcements shall be made available through: The Library's official website and/or other appropriate public communication channels.

5. Nomination Process

- **Eligibility to Nominate:** Any resident of Putnam County may submit a nomination, including self-nominations.
- **Submission Requirements:** Nominations shall be submitted in writing to the Library Director. Submissions can be a resume but should include:
 - A statement of interest
 - Relevant background and experience
 - Acknowledgment of the Trustee Position Description and expected duties
- **Submission Deadline:** Sufficient nomination deadlines shall be clearly stated in the public notice of vacancy and the Board reserves the right to extend the deadline if qualified applicants are not received.
- **In the event there are no submissions** the Library Board shall be able to nominate.

6. Evaluation and Board Recommendation

- **Evaluation Criteria:** The Library Board shall evaluate nominees based on:
 - Alignment with the Trustee Position Description
 - Demonstrated governance mindset and ethical judgment
 - Ability to work collaboratively and impartially
 - Contribution to the Board's overall balance of skills, experience, and perspectives
- **Review Process:** The Board shall review nominations of qualified candidates, which may include conducting interviews, in a properly noticed public meeting or as otherwise permitted by law.
- **Board Action:** Following evaluation, the Board shall vote in a public meeting to recommend one or more candidates to the appropriate appointing authority. The Board Chair or Library Director shall then forward recommendations in writing to the County or City legislative body no later than thirty (30) days prior to the anticipated appointment date, when practicable.

7. Appointment Authority

- **Final Appointment:** Final appointment authority rests solely with the appointing Putnam County or City of Cookeville legislative body, consistent with Tennessee law and the interlocal agreement.
- **Board Role:** Board recommendations are advisory and are intended to assist appointing authorities by identifying qualified, governance-ready candidates.

8. Orientation and Onboarding

- Upon appointment, new trustees shall participate in a Board orientation covering:
 - Governing laws and bylaws
 - Trustee roles and responsibilities
 - Ethical obligations and open meetings requirements
 - Library policies, including collection development and materials reconsideration

9. Commitment to Transparency and Public Trust

The Putnam County Library Board of Trustees is committed to maintaining a nomination and appointment process that is transparent, inclusive, and focused on the long-term governance needs of the library. This policy is intended to encourage broad civic participation while ensuring that trustees are selected based on qualifications, integrity, and readiness to serve.

10. Review and Amendment

This policy may be reviewed and amended by formal action of the Putnam County Library Board of Trustees, consistent with applicable law and Board bylaws.