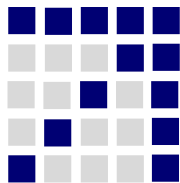


Fostering Positive Library- Municipality Relations

Alberta Library Conference 2013

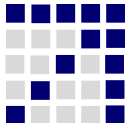
Ian McCormack



Strategic Steps

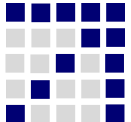
Outline

- * Introductions & Expectations
- * Roles Overview
- * Identifying Positive Relations
- * The Problem
- * The Fix
- * Keep it Up
- * Recap, Resources & Close



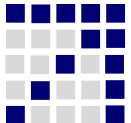
Introductions

- * Name
- * Library
- * Your role with the library or board
- * Expectations for the next hour



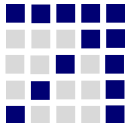
Roles – Public Library Board/Staff

- * Libraries Act Section 7 - Board duties
 - * *The **municipal board**, subject to any enactment that limits its authority, **has full management and control of the municipal library** and shall, in accordance with the regulations, organize, promote and maintain comprehensive and efficient library services in the municipality and may co-operate with other boards and libraries in the provision of those services.*



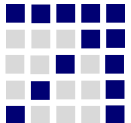
Roles – Public Library Board/Staff

- * Create a library and operate independently or as part of a system
- * Govern the library, including retaining, directing, managing and evaluating the board's employee
- * Create, modify and renew policy
- * Respond to stakeholder (community) needs
- * Advocate on behalf of the library
- * Stay informed about library issues
- * Respond to legislative requirements (*Alberta Libraries Act*)
- * Obtain adequate funding & review spending



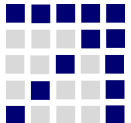
Roles - Municipality

- * Establish the board under the *Libraries Act* through a municipal bylaw
- * Appoint trustees
- * Ratify the library bylaw(s)
- * Agree to annual estimate of local appropriation
- * Signatory to the library system (if present)



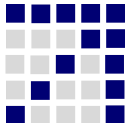
Positive Relations

- * What do positive relations look like?
 - * Councillor/alderman attendance and contribution at board meetings
 - * Open communication – elected officials return calls and accept meetings
 - * Municipality sees the library as a core part of serving its citizens, but not as a municipal department
 - * Library is an asset within other municipal plans



Positive Relations

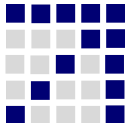
- * What do positive relations look like?
 - * Elected officials are aware of library successes
 - * Elected officials do not attempt to micro-manage the library (budget, material selection, staffing)
 - * Library is invited to municipal events & vice versa
 - * Elected officials participate in strategy development (i.e. plan of service) if requested
 - * Library board sees itself positively as a responsible service provider



PR For Libraries

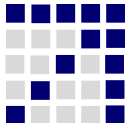
“Library staff (and boards) know the value they provide. They understand the social, educational role, and creative roles they fill in their communities. Unfortunately, not everyone in the community knows what they do. For some – too many – libraries are still merely warehouses for books.”

- Ian Chadwick, *PR for Libraries, Getting Your Message Out*, Municipal World, April 2013.



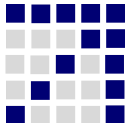
The Problem

- * What are the symptoms of negative or neutral relations?
 - * Unable to get meetings with elected officials
 - * Poor elected official attendance at library board meetings and other functions
 - * Overbearing municipal representative
 - * Overly detailed questions about library allocation at budget time



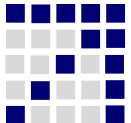
The Problem

- * Lack of confidence in the library and board emerges around presentation of annual report to council
- * The library is treated like a municipal department, making it difficult to respond to community needs
- * Boards are not able to present annual reports to council
- * Library systems find it difficult to attain the 2/3 approval for a rate increase from member municipalities



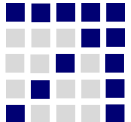
The Problem – So What?

- * So what? We have poor relations, but why does it matter?
- * Your ideas?
 - * Lack of advocacy means library may suffer in the eyes of the citizens, attendance and circulation drops
 - * Library budget is more difficult to defend and may drop
 - * Difficulty getting municipality to approve bylaw or annual appropriation



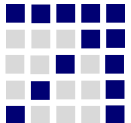
The Fix - Ideas

- * How do you improve the relationship? Practical examples from your experience.



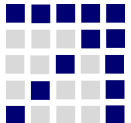
The Fix - Overall

- * Be conscious of your actions. Think strategically. Why would an attempt at improving relations resonate?
- * Be authentic. Speak passionately about why you support the library. Why should anyone else be an advocate if you're not?
- * All trustees must share the same message
- * Look for shared interests & quick wins



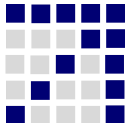
The Fix - Overall

- * Show all member municipalities the value you provide (system libraries)
- * Build and nurture relationships
- * Publicize how the library is active in the community
- * Actively promote citizen engagement
- * Library provides opportunities for community members to be involved, some for the first time



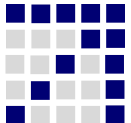
The Fix – Short-term

- * Regular informal meetings between board members and their own elected officials.
 - * Create consistent messaging around the value the library provides to the community and a vision of the library.
- * Invite elected officials and municipal officials for a tour of the library
- * Host speakers and programs that are of interest to the wider community



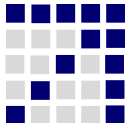
The Fix – Short-term

- * Attend municipal events and other community group events – become a more integrated part of the community and show how the library adds value
- * Align the plan of service to community needs, including municipal economic development plan and strategic plan
- * Build alliances with the Chamber of Commerce and service clubs



The Fix – Long-term

- * Create and distribute advocacy packages for candidates for office. Highlight how the library can be valuable to them
- * Host election forums
- * Encourage library supporters to seek elected office
- * Encourage community opinion leaders to join the library board



*Your Key to
the Heart of
the Community*



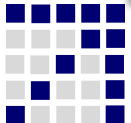
Your Voters Care About Their Library

Between 2008 and 2010,
Strathcona County citizens
opened their hearts and their wallets
to raise \$1.5 million to furnish and
equip the new library



Strong Communities are Engaged Communities

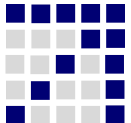
Library programming for
adults tackles compelling issues
and provides opportunity for active
dialogue among community
members



The Fix – Long-term

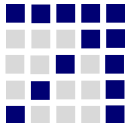
- * Build your brand. Show how the library contributes to the community.
- * Tell the story. Make annual reports more than just statistics.

“Stories humanize the numbers, they put faces to the static list of services or usage figures.”



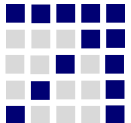
The Fix – Culture Change

- * Keep in mind that this is not a quick fix. Culture change takes time
- * Board members need to understand that they are adding value to their community
- * Library board is not a fallback choice for people who apply to sit on municipal boards & committees
- * Be clear on roles – board, municipality
- * Libraries & municipalities serve the same people



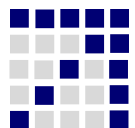
Keep it Up

- * Look back & celebrate the strides you've made
- * Refrain from slipping back into the negative
- * Set measures for your library – what does success look like?
- * Continue to communicate



Resources

- * ALTA (<http://www.librarytrustees.ab.ca/>) / LAA (<http://www.laa.ca/default.aspx>)
- * Alberta Libraries Act (<http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/L11.pdf>)
- * Libraries Regulation (http://www.qp.alberta.ca/1266.cfm?page=1998_141.cfm&leg_type=Regs&isbncln=9780779732661&display=html)
- * Municipal Government Act (<http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/m26.pdf>)
- * Public Library Services Branch libraries@gov.ab.ca (http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/mc_libraries.cfm)
 - * Library Board Basics
- * Alberta Culture's board development program (<http://www.culture.alberta.ca/bdp/>)
- * Your own plan of service & policies



Recap & Close

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