BY-LAWS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF
THE TOWNSHIP OF PLAINSBORO, NEW JERSEY

Article I – Name

This organization shall be called “The Board of Trustees of the Plainsboro Public Library,” existing by virtue of the provisions of Chapter 54, Title 40 of the Laws of the State of New Jersey, and exercising the powers and authority and assuming the responsibilities delegated to it under the said statute.

Article II – Board Members

Section 1. Board Composition

The Board of Trustees shall consist of nine members, including the Mayor of Plainsboro Township (or another member of the Township Committee designated by the Mayor as his/her alternate). The Superintendent of the West Windsor-Plainsboro School District (or his/her alternate) will hold another seat.

The remaining seven members are appointed by the Mayor. At least four of these members shall be residents of Plainsboro Township. Their appointments are confirmed by the Township Committee. Persons who are interested in serving on the Board of Trustees fill out the Township’s volunteer application (Citizen Leadership Form) available on the Township’s web site, www.plainsboronj.com.

Section 2. Oath of Office

Newly appointed Trustees take an oath of office, as prescribed in N.J.S.A. 40A:9.12, said oath to be administered by the Mayor. In the absence of the Mayor, the oath may be administered by the current President.

Section 3. Term of Office

In accordance with state statute, Trustees appointed by the Mayor serve a term of five (5) years. They can be re-appointed at the Mayor’s discretion. The Trustee designated by the Superintendent of Schools serves a term of one (1) year. They can be re-appointed at the Superintendent’s discretion.

Section 4. Meeting Attendance

Trustees are expected to attend all Board meetings. Trustees shall make every effort to physically attend each meeting of the Board of Trustees. In the event a Trustee cannot physically attend a meeting for a legitimate cause, a Trustee may attend a meeting via electronic means such as, but not limited to, smart phone, telephone, video conference, et. al. A Trustee may not attend a meeting via email, text messaging or the like.

To be able to participate and vote at a meeting, a Trustee attending - by electronic means must have the ability to review all documents and presentations which are being considered at the meeting as well as the opportunity for simultaneous oral communications among all participating
Trustees. Trustees who are unable to attend a meeting should notify the Board President, with a copy to the Director.

When a Trustee is absent for four consecutive regular Board meetings without such absences being excused by a majority of the other trustees, his or her position on the Board will be deemed vacant. However, the Board may not refuse to excuse absences which are due to illness. The Board will notify the Mayor in writing when a determination has been made that such a position is vacant pursuant to the provision of NJSA 40A:9-12.1G.

Section 5. Conflicts of Interest

A Trustee should withdraw from any Board discussion, deliberation, or vote on any matter in which the Trustee, an immediate family member, or an organization with which the Board member is associated, has a financial interest or other conflict.

Section 6. Resignations, Removal, and Vacancies

Trustees may resign at any time by providing written notice to the Mayor, with a copy to the Board President.

A Trustee may be removed from office for cause in accordance with New Jersey law, N.J.S.A. 40A:9-12.1.

A Trustee may be removed from office for violations of the Plainsboro Public Library Board of Trustees Ethics Policy.

The Mayor will appoint a replacement who will serve out the remainder of the unexpired term of any Board member who resigns or is removed from office.

Article III – Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees

Legal responsibility for the operation of the Plainsboro Public Library is vested in the Board of Trustees. Subject to state and federal law, the Board has the power and duty to determine policies governing the library’s operations and services.

Section 1. The Trustees shall:

- Establish and approve policies for the use, governance, and operation of the library
- Recruit, select, supervise, and evaluate a highly qualified library Director and determine compensation for that position
- Work with the Director to set short-term and long-term goals for the library, including formulating/updating a 3-5 year strategic plan
- Review and approve the annual budget
- Approve resolutions designating the library’s auditor, attorney, banks, signatories, and official newspapers
- Review and approve proposed capital projects and contracts, including facility construction and renovation, as well as major purchases of equipment and furnishings
- Oversee library staff’s expenditure of funds collected, donated, or appropriated for the library and approve the annual audit
- Understand the needs of the community regarding library services
• Advocate on behalf of the library with public officials, local citizen groups, and the business community.

Section 2. Each Trustee shall try to be informed about current and emerging issues affecting libraries. The State of New Jersey requires library Trustees to attend one hour of continuing education annually. Such training can be provided at Board meetings, at an off-site location, or via virtual instruction.

Article IV – Officers
Section 1. The officers shall be a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, elected from among the appointed Trustees at the annual meeting of the Board.

Section 2. Vacancies in office shall be filled by election of a successor for the remainder of the officer’s unexpired term, except for the office of President, which shall be filled by the Vice President. Such elections will be held at the first regular meeting after a vacancy occurs.

Section 3. Officers shall serve for a term of one (1) year from the annual meeting at which they are elected. A Board member who fills a vacancy for a partial term shall not be prohibited from being elected to a full term or terms.

Section 4. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Board, appoint all committees, execute all documents or contracts as authorized by the Board, serve as an ex-officio voting member of all committees, and generally perform all the duties associated with that office. The President may vote upon and may move or second a proposal before the Board.

Section 5. The Vice President, in the absence or disability of the President, or in case of a vacancy in that office, shall assume and perform the duties of the President. In the event of the absence of the President from a Board meeting, either the Vice President or a temporary chairperson selected by the members present, shall assume and perform the duties and functions of the President.

Section 6. The Secretary shall keep an accurate account of the proceedings of all meetings of the Board, shall have custody of the minutes and other records of the Board, shall execute documents as required, and perform such other duties as are generally associated with that office. Official copies of approved documents will be maintained at the library.

Section 7. The Treasurer oversees library financial operations in accordance with the Library Financial Policy and presents monthly reports on the financial condition of the library.

Along with the President and the Director, the Treasurer is authorized to sign checks for payment of vouchers approved by the Director. The “bill list” is to be presented to the Board for approval at the monthly meeting. The Treasurer shall perform such duties as generally devolved upon that office. They shall be bonded in such amount as required by N.J.S.A. 40:54-13.

Article V – Meetings

Section 1. The regular monthly meeting shall be held at 7 p.m. at the Library, on the first Tuesday of each month, or such other time as the Board may designate. Notice of the regular meeting dates will be posted in the library and on the library’s website, filed with the Municipal
Clerk, and sent to the official newspapers. All meetings are held in accordance with New Jersey’s Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et.seq., Chapter 231, P. L. 1975).

Section 2. Meetings may be conducted by electronic means in accordance with the Senator Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act which explicitly permits a public body to conduct a meeting electronically during a state of emergency, declared by the Governor per N.J.S.A. App. A:9-33. An electronic meeting shall be considered equivalent to an in-person meeting.

Section 3. Unless otherwise agreed by the Board, the first meeting of the Board of Trustees after January 1 shall be the annual organization meeting, at which time new and re-appointed Board members will take the oath of office. The Board shall also: elect officers as provided in Article IV; (re)approve the official financial institutions and related signing authorities, newspapers, and auditors; and address any other organizational matters that may come before the Board.

Section 4. The order of business for regular meetings shall include, but not be limited to, the following items which shall be covered in the sequence shown as far as the circumstances of the meeting will permit:

a. Announcement of Compliance with Open Public Meetings Act
b. Call to order
c. Announcement of Rules for Public Participation
d. Approval of minutes of prior meeting(s)
e. Treasurer’s Report
f. Action on the bill list
g. Committee Reports
h. Library Director’s Report
i. Old Business
j. New Business
k. Public comment to, or discussion with, the Board (if any)
l. Executive session (if needed)
m. Adjournment

The Board shall be free to hold executive sessions, without any non-members present save those expressly invited, upon compliance with the procedures and criteria of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act.

Section 5. Public comment shall be limited to three (3) minutes per person. The agenda of every Board meeting will provide an opportunity for public comment, under these rules. Members of the public are permitted to speak once they are recognized by the Library Board President. Name and address must be provided for the minutes at public comment periods designated by the Board. Members of the Board, staff, and public are expected to demonstrate courtesy to all meeting speakers.

All Library Board of Trustee members have the right to express their opinion and shall not be interrupted by the public or other Board members when speaking on a particular topic.

Any person who disrupts a meeting by making personal attacks on individual Library Board members, the entire Library Board, or the Library Staff shall be asked to cease that behavior immediately by the Board President. If such improper conduct continues, the person may be removed from the meeting.
The Library Board may go into executive session to discuss any of the following issues: personnel; contracts, including collective bargaining; any matter considered to be confidential by federal or state law; any matter involving the purchase, leave or acquisition of real property; any matter which may involve an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy. Decisions made in the executive session will be voted on immediately after returning to Regular Session. Minutes of Closed Sessions will be approved once the matter discussed is no longer confidential.

Section 6. Special meetings may be called by the President or any two trustees for transaction of business specified in the call for the meeting. No other business may be transacted at a special meeting. Trustees must be notified of the date and time for a special meeting at least three days in advance. Notice of a special meeting shall be posted at the library.

Section 7. A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting shall consist of a simple majority of the Board who must attend in-person or remotely. An affirmative vote of the majority of all members of the Board present at the time shall be necessary to approve any action before the Board. When necessary, members may participate in regularly scheduled meetings remotely and vote electronically.

Section 8. The rules contained in Robert’s Rules of Order, latest revised edition, shall govern the parliamentary procedure of the meetings in all cases in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any statutes applicable to the Board.

Article VI – Committees

Section 1. Standing Committees include Personnel, Finance, Long-Range/Strategic Planning, and Policy. The President shall appoint committee members at the annual meeting in January.

Section 2. The President shall appoint a Nominating Committee consisting of three (3) Trustees no later than November of each year. The Nominating Committee shall present its suggested slate of officers at the Annual Meeting.

Section 3. The President shall appoint other committees for specific purposes, as the business of the Board may require.

Article VII – Library Director and Staff

Section 1. The Board shall appoint a qualified Library Director who shall be the executive and administrative officer of the library on behalf of the Board and under its review and direction. The Director is responsible for day-to-day operation of the building, staff scheduling and supervision, the efficiency of library service to the public, and the operation of the Library under the financial conditions set forth in the annual budget. The director shall have the authority to enter into or renew contractual obligations for the performance of tasks that have been included in the approved budget. The Director may employ such staff as needed to aid the Library in its work, subject to the annual budget.

Section 2. The Director shall attend all board meetings. When the Director’s salary and/or performance review is discussed or decided in Executive Session, the Director shall be excused.
Section 3. The Director will provide a written monthly report to the Board summarizing recent activities, events, personnel changes, and other issues that may require Board input or action.

Article VIII – Amendments

These by-laws may be amended at any meeting of the Board by a majority vote of all members of the Board provided written notice of the proposed amendment shall have been provided to all members at least five (5) days prior to the meeting at which such action is proposed to be taken.

Adopted April 2, 2013
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