



Angela Zimmermann <angela.zimmermann@racinelibrary.info>

HR question

Schultz, Shannon M. DPI <Shannon.Schultz@dpi.wi.gov>
To: James O'Hagan <james.ohagan@rplboard.info>
Cc: Angela Zimmermann <angela.zimmermann@racinelibrary.info>

Fri, Jun 9, 2023 at 2:20 PM

Good afternoon, James; thank you for the nudge.

The statutes are quite clear that the board oversees the director, but the director oversees staff and, by law, the board should not have oversight of employee issues. It is extremely important to keep in mind that a public library board in Wisconsin is a governing board, not a managing board. As such, library boards should refrain from getting involved in daily matters and should keep their focus at a high level. In my opinion, the best practice you seek is in improved communication with your director. If the board as a whole feels completely left out of the loop regarding staff and is then expected to step in and help resolve issues, then the solution would be to set expectations or communication guidelines with the director about staffing issues. The board should not override or circumvent the director, as that will only undermine the director's authority with staff. All improvements that the board wants to see must happen with and through the director. This could be as formal as a performance improvement plan, or as informal as having discussions during board meetings about the state of staff culture. Regardless of the formality, the board must define the expectations of the director and make them known.

It also seems to me that there is a trust issue. Clearly defined roles and consistent, reliable behaviors on all sides builds trust. You may want to be certain that individuals are not crossing lines of responsibility. To help you with these discussions, I have attached three documents for your review: Trustee Essential 2: Who Runs the Library?, Trustee Essential 7: The Library Board and Personnel, and the Roles and Responsibilities Matrix. They each have some overlap and I doubt any of them are new to you, but it might pay to review them through the lens of the questions you asked me.

Just a heads up: I am leaving on vacation in about an hour and will be out of the office until the end of June, but I am happy to pick this back up with you when I return.

Shannon M. Schultz

Public Library Administration Consultant

DLT/DPI

P: 608-266-7270

From: James O'Hagan <james.ohagan@rplboard.info>
Sent: Thursday, June 8, 2023 4:25 PM
To: Schultz, Shannon M. DPI <Shannon.Schultz@dpi.wi.gov>
Cc: Angela Zimmermann <angela.zimmermann@racinelibrary.info>
Subject: Re: HR question