



## **CODE OF ETHICS SACHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 806 of the General Municipal Law and the Non-Profit Revitalization Act (2013), the Board of Trustees promulgates these rules of ethical conduct for the members of the Board of Trustees of the Sachem Public Library. These rules shall be in addition to any prohibition of Article 18 of the General Municipal Law, the Library Trustees Handbook or any other general or special law relating to the ethical conduct of municipal officers and its employees.

### **DUTIES OF TRUSTEE**

A Trustee must act in good faith and exercise the degree of diligence, care and skill that an ordinary prudent individual would use under similar circumstances in a like position. To conform with this standard a Trustee should:

- become acquainted with the “Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State.”
- regularly attend and participate in board meetings and committee meetings.
- read, review and inquire about materials that involve the Library, including Board minutes, Director and Assistant Director Reports, Treasurer Reports, and any additional reports that involve the Library.
- have a fiduciary responsibility for the assets, finances and investments of the Library.
- exercise good judgment in analyzing matters that impact the Library.
- review the performance of the Director in accordance with established procedures.
- under normal circumstances, not be involved in the day-to-day activities of the Library nor make use of library property or confidential information for private purposes.

### **PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

Maintaining the public trust is an essential element to meet the Library’s mission.

- Trustees owe allegiance to the Library and must act in good faith with the best interest of the Library in mind. They should not seek to benefit personally from any business derived from the Library. They must avoid conflicts of interest or engage in actions that give the appearance of such. Trustees should disclose to the Board in open session any possible conflicts.
- Trustees have a responsibility to ensure that the resources of the Library are dedicated to the fulfillment of its mission. Trustees also have a duty to ensure that the Library complies with all applicable laws and does not engage in any unauthorized activities.

- Trustees should express their individual viewpoints but work harmoniously with the other Trustees to arrive at a consensus.
- Trustees should speak with “one voice” once a decision is reached and a resolution is passed by the Board.
- Trustees are honor bound to maintain the confidentiality of matters discussed in executive session. The recording of executive session proceedings, including but not limited to, audio, video, or written minutes is strictly prohibited.
- Trustees may not speak on behalf of the Library unless that authority is specifically granted by the entire Board in an open session.

## STANDARDS

Trustees must promote a high level of Library service while observing ethical standards:

- Trustees may not directly or indirectly solicit or accept entertainment, gifts, preferential treatment, or personal favors that could in any way influence, or appear to influence, business decisions in favor of any person or organization with whom or with which the Library has, or is likely to, have business dealings.
- Trustees may not have an interest in any contract over which they have the power or duty to authorize, approve or audit.
- Trustees may neither derive direct or indirect financial or material benefit, nor possess or acquire investments or engage in private employment that would require more than sporadic recusal or abstention.
- Trustees may not disclose confidential information acquired in the course of official duties, or use such information to further personal interests.

## FULL DISCLOSURE

The primary goal of a public library Trustee is to ensure that the public has access to the highest quality of library service possible. In the exercise or performance of their official powers and duties, trustees must hold their position to serve and benefit the public and not to obtain unwarranted personal or private gain. To this end, Library Trustees should observe ethical standards with truth, integrity and honor.

- Trustees or persons seeking to be elected to the position of Trustee shall disclose all campaign contributions in excess of one hundred dollars.
- Trustees may not be related to staff or administrators during their term of office.
- Trustees shall disclose information which might indicate interest in investments, private employment, or personal relationship that conflicts with any matter pertaining to the Library. This disclosure must be made prior to the initial election of the Trustee or as soon as the conflict arises thereafter. Once elected:
  1. Disclosure shall be made publicly at a meeting of the Board, with a written statement describing the nature of the conflict of interest together with any resolution of the disclosure documented in the records and submitted for inclusion in the Board minutes.

2. Disclosure shall be made as soon as the Trustee becomes aware of the interest requiring disclosure, and annually thereafter at the annual Board organizational meeting in July.

A Trustee who has indicated a conflict of interest may not participate in any decision or take part in any official action with respect to that matter, nor may the Trustee be present or participate in Board deliberations or vote on the matter. If the discussion is to be held in Executive Session, the Trustee shall be excused from the session.

- Trustees may engage in political activity, as long as in so doing, they do not identify themselves as a member of the Board acting in an official capacity or purport to represent the Board when engaging in such activity or soliciting contributions.
- Trustees shall be governed by all policies and procedures promulgated by the Library, including the Nepotism Policy, Whistleblower Policy, and Travel Procedures, whether they are written or implied.
- Alleged violations should be referred to the Board President for consideration by the entire Board minus any necessary recusals. Violations of this policy may constitute a breach of fiduciary responsibility that could result in personal liability, censure, fine, suspension or removal from office.

**Definitions:**

For the purpose of this policy:

*GIFT* shall mean services, loan, travel, entertainment, hospitality, influence or any promise of a gift.

*CONFLICT OF INTEREST* shall mean direct or indirect financial or material benefit not available to other district residents or taxpayers, including when Trustees, Trustees' spouses or members of their households are owners, partners, members, officers or employees, or directly or indirectly own or control more than 5% of an organization's outstanding stock.

*RELATIVE* shall mean a spouse, parent, step-parent, sibling, step-sibling, sibling's spouse, child, step-child, child or step-child's spouse, grandchildren, in-laws, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, first cousin, or household member of the Trustee, and individuals having any of these relationships to the spouse of the Trustee.