

**Bethlehem Public Library**  
**451 Delaware Avenue**  
**Delmar, NY 12054**

**BYLAWS**

**Article I—Name**

This organization is and will be known as Bethlehem Public Library, existing by virtue of the provisions of the Absolute Charter Number 9827 granted by the Regents of the University of the State of New York on November 22, 1968, and exercising the powers and authority and assuming the responsibilities delegated to it under said charter. Original charter 2745 was granted by the Regents of the University of the State of New York on September 10, 1931. The charter was amended by the Board of Regents on December 16, 1994 to increase the maximum authorized number of trustees from five (5) to seven (7), and to recite in the charter that the library's service area is coextensive with the Bethlehem Central School District.

**Article II—Mission statement**

Bethlehem Public Library serves the residents of the Bethlehem Central School District and the surrounding Capital Region of Albany, New York. As a leader in the library community, Bethlehem Public Library provides equal and uncensored access to resources in a wide range of formats to enhance and encourage professional growth, lifelong learning, cultural enrichment and quality of life.

**Article III—Board of trustees**

*Description*

The business and affairs of Bethlehem Public Library will be managed and conducted by a board of trustees consisting of seven (7) members elected by the voters of the Bethlehem Central School District.

*Qualifications*

A candidate for the board of trustees must be a resident of the Bethlehem Central School District and at least 18 years of age.

*Terms of office*

Except for instances of special appointment or election as described in *elections and special appointments* below, terms of office will end on June 30 of the fifth year following election.

*Attendance*

Any trustee who fails to attend three (3) consecutive regular meetings of the board without a valid excuse will be deemed to have resigned as trustee, and the vacancy will be filled in the manner of *elections and special appointments* as described below.

### *Elections and special appointments*

Beginning in 2005, vacancies on the board of trustees will no longer be filled as separate and seat-specific. A vacant seat will be filled by the highest vote-getter. If an election is held to fill a seat for a full five (5)-year term in addition to a seat for an unexpired term of less than five years, the highest vote-getter will fill the full term, the next highest vote-getter will receive the shorter term.

Vacancies which occur for reasons other than expiration of a full term may be filled by board appointment until the June 30 immediately following the next annual election. At that election, the board member elected to fill the vacancy will serve a partial term beginning on July 1 and ending on the last day of the departed trustee's term.

The board will make every effort to fill a vacancy which occurs more than three (3) months before the next election. A candidate may be appointed by majority vote of the board at a regularly scheduled board meeting, or the board may choose to conduct a formal search by soliciting applications from residents of the community.

## **Article IV – Officers**

### *Officers*

The officers of the board of trustees will be a president, a vice-president, a secretary, a treasurer and an assistant treasurer.

### *Election of officers*

The nominating committee will present a slate of officers to be elected at the July meeting. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. The vote for officers will be by secret written ballot if two (2) or more trustees have been nominated for one office.

### *Terms of office*

Officers will serve a term commencing from the date of their election until their successors are elected at the next July meeting.

### *President*

The president will preside at meetings of the board, appoint committees, execute documents authorized by the board, serve as ex-officio member of all committees except the nominating committee, represent the board before the public, and generally perform all duties associated with that office.

### *Vice-president*

The vice-president, in the event of the absence or disability of the president or a vacancy in that office, will assume and perform the duties and functions of the president.

### *Secretary*

The secretary will see that a true and accurate record is kept of all meetings of the board, issue notice of all regular and special meetings, sign bank reconciliations, personnel reports, budget change resolutions and transfers, and perform other duties generally associated with that office. An assistant secretary may be selected by the board to act for the secretary when the secretary is unavailable.

### *Treasurer*

The treasurer will sign all payroll journals and monthly financial statements after their approval by the board, and perform other duties generally associated with that office. The assistant treasurer will act for the treasurer when the treasurer is unavailable.

### *UHLS representative*

A board-appointed representative will attend all meetings of the Upper Hudson Library System board of trustees, serve on UHLS standing committees as required, and regularly report to the board on UHLS activities.

## **Article V – Meetings**

### *Regular meetings*

Regular board meetings will be held monthly, usually on the second Monday. Written notice will be sent to all trustees and a public notice posted according to law.

### *Special meetings*

Special meetings may be called by the secretary at the direction of the president, or at the request of at least two (2) trustees, only for the transaction of business as stated in the call for the special meeting.

### *July meeting*

The board meeting in July is the first regular meeting of the fiscal year. In addition to conducting regular business, it is designated for the election of officers.

### *Quorum*

A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting will consist of four (4) trustees. In the absence of a quorum, the trustees present will adjourn the meeting to a date determined and written notice will be sent to all trustees. In special circumstances, a phone or email poll of the trustees may be conducted to enact items of business requiring immediate action. Such actions must be confirmed at the next regular meeting.

### *Executive session*

All regular meetings of the board of trustees are open to the public as specified in New York State Open Meeting Law. Executive session may be held when necessary to discuss litigation, contract negotiation and/or personnel or any other matter allowed by Open Meeting Law. Executive session must be approved in open meeting by a majority vote and the purpose of the session recorded in the minutes of the open meeting.

### *Agenda*

The business for regular meetings will include, but not be limited to, the following items. The president may vary the order of business.

- Call to order
- Public participation
- Approval of previous month's minutes
- Financial report
- Director's report
- UHLS report
- Old business
- New business
- President's report
- Officers' reports
- Public participation
- Adjournment

### *Public participation*

As parts of its agenda, the board will provide two periods for citizen comment, each not to exceed fifteen (15) minutes. The first, at the beginning of the order of business, is available for any concern to be addressed. The second, at the end of the meeting, is reserved for comment related to the meeting's agenda.

## **Article VI—Committees**

### *Standing committees*

The president will appoint trustees to serve on any of the four (4) standing committees of the library board: nominating, building, finance and personnel. Other standing committees will be appointed as the business of the board may require. Committees will consist of one or more members and will be considered discharged upon completion of the term of office of the president.

### *Nominating committee*

A nominating committee composed of two (2) members will be appointed by the president after the school district election to designate a slate of officers to be elected at the July meeting.

### *Building committee*

The building committee will periodically inspect the physical plant of the library and report important matters to the board with recommendations for improvements or correction.

### *Finance committee*

The finance committee will generally oversee the financial affairs of the library. The primary responsibility of this committee will be to work with the director and any other designated staff members on preparation of the annual library budget.

### *Personnel committee*

The personnel committee will prepare an annual performance evaluation of the director and periodically review with the director the personnel policy, job descriptions and salary structure.

All committees will make a progress report to the board as necessary. No committees shall have other than advisory powers unless the board delegates specific power to act on its behalf, pending a subsequent meeting of the board for confirmation.

## **Article VII—Director**

### *Appointment*

The board will appoint a qualified library director who will be the executive and administrative officer of the library, acting on behalf of the board and under its review and direction.

### *Responsibilities*

The director will be responsible for: proper specification of duties, direction and supervision of staff; care and maintenance of library property; adequate and proper selection of library materials in keeping with stated policies established by the board; efficient service to the public; and operation within the budget appropriation.

### *Authority*

The director will have the authority to appoint, promote or dismiss all employees. Such changes are reported at the next regular board meeting.

### *Board meetings*

The director or the director's designee will attend all meetings of the board of trustees, may participate in discussion and offer professional advice, but cannot cast a vote.

## **Article VIII—Parliamentary authority**

The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* will guide the business of the board in all matters to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws.

## **Article IX—Amendments**

These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the board of trustees by a majority vote, provided the amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting.

Adopted: July 12, 1976  
Amended: September 14, 1978  
November 12, 1985  
January 14, 1986  
Reviewed: February 14, 1994  
Amended: October 11, 1994  
August 14, 1995  
Revised: July 16, 2001  
April 14, 2003 (trustee vacancy)  
June 10, 2004 (at-large elections)  
July 11, 2011