

TITLE: Executive Director Succession
POLICY NUMBER: 205
EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/19/2022
REVIEW DATE: January 2023
SUPERSEDES: None



Article 1: Purpose

The Board of Trustees of the Waukegan Public Library recognizes that this is a plan for contingencies due to the disability, death, or departure of the Executive Director. If the organization is faced with the unlikely event of an untimely vacancy, the Library has in place the following emergency succession plan to facilitate the transition to both interim and longer-term leadership.

Article 2: Definitions

Section 2.01 – Temporary Absence

A temporary absence is one of more than one week and less than three months in which it is expected that the Executive Director will return to his/her position once the events precipitating the absence are resolved.

Section 2.02 – Long-Term Absence

A long-term absence is one that is expected to last more than three months.

Section 2.03 – Unplanned Absence

An unplanned absence is one that arises unexpectedly, in contrast to a planned leave, such as a vacation or a sabbatical. The Board of Trustees is authorized to implement the terms of this emergency plan in the event of the unplanned absence of the Executive Director

Section 2.04 – Permanent Change

A permanent change is one in which it is firmly determined that the Executive Director will not be returning to the position.

Article 3: Temporary Succession Plan

Section 3.01 – First Steps

In the event of a temporary, long-term, or unplanned absence of the Executive Director, the Assistant Director is to immediately inform the Board President of the absence. As soon as it is feasible, the President should convene a meeting of the Board of Trustees to affirm the procedures prescribed.

Section 3.02 – Authority of the Acting Executive Director

The position of the Acting Executive Director would be the Assistant Director. The Acting Executive Director shall have the full authority for the decision-making and independent action as the regular Executive Director. The Acting Executive Director will be offered a temporary salary increase at least to

the entry-level salary of the Executive Director position. The President of the Board of Trustees shall be responsible for monitoring the work of the Acting Executive Director in this temporary leadership role.

Section 3.03 – Communications Plan

Immediately upon transferring the responsibilities to the Acting Executive Director, the Board President will notify members of the Board of Trustees and the Executive Assistant will notify staff. As soon as possible after the Acting Executive Director has begun covering the absence, the Board and Acting Executive Director shall communicate the temporary leadership structure to staff and the public, as well as to the following key external Library supporters. This may include, but is not limited to, government contract officers, foundation program officers, Friends of the Library, civic leaders, major donors, and others.

Section 3.04 – Long Term Absence

If the event of a long-term absence, the Board of Trustees will give immediate consideration, in consultation with the Acting Executive Director, to temporarily filling the management position left vacant by the Acting Executive Director. This is in recognition of the fact that for a term of more than three months, it may not be reasonable to expect the Acting Executive Director to carry the duties of both positions. The position description of a temporary manager would focus on covering the priority areas in which the Acting Executive Director needs assistance.

Section 3.05 – Completion of a Temporary Succession Period

The decision about when the absent Executive Director returns to lead the Library should be determined by the Executive Director and the Board President. They will decide upon a mutually agreed upon schedule and start date. A reduced schedule for a set period of time can be allowed, by approval of the Board President, with the intention of working the way up to a full-time commitment.

Article 4: Permanent Change in Executive Director

Section 4.01 - Process for New Director Search

The procedures and conditions shall be the same as for a long-term temporary absence (with one addition). The Board will appoint a Transition and Search Committee to carry out a transition to a new permanent Executive Director at their next regular meeting, calling a special meeting if that date is greater than 10 working days. The Board will also consider the need for outside consulting assistance depending on the circumstances of the transition and the Board's capacity to plan and manage the transition and search. Regardless of the chosen method for conducting the search, the Board will include the opportunity for staff representatives to meet final candidates and provide feedback to the Board.