Warren-Newport Public Library District
Lake County, Illinois
Board of Trustees

Policy 1020 Conflict of Interest

ARTICLE 1. AVOIDANCE OF A CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Trustees of the Warren-Newport Public Library District (WNPLD) must avoid actual or potential conflicts of interest while conducting the District's business. An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when a Trustee is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a direct or indirect personal profit or gain for that Trustee or a relative as a result of WNPLD's business dealings or other operations. For the purposes of this policy, a relative is any person who is related to a Trustee by blood, marriage, civil union, domestic partnership, or affiliation.

ARTICLE 2. DISCLOSURE AND DISQUALIFICATION

No "presumption of guilt" is created by the mere existence of a relationship with outside firms. However, Trustees must avoid situations in which personal interests might be served or financial benefit gained at the expense of Library users or the Library's interests. Since Trustees make decisions involving purchases, contracts, leases, and the like, it is imperative that they promptly disclose a potential or actual conflict of interest to the Board. In these situations, it is incumbent upon Trustees to disqualify themselves from the discussion and vote on such decisions.

ARTICLE 3. PERSONAL GAIN

Personal gain may result in cases where a Trustee or relative has a 5% or greater ownership in a firm with which WNPLD does business, or when a Trustee or relative receives any kickback, bribe, special consideration, or gift(s) with a value exceeding $25 within the WNPLD fiscal year as a result of any transaction or business dealings involving WNPLD. In such cases, WNPLD and the Board may refer matters to the proper law enforcement agency.

ARTICLE 4. AVOIDANCE OF NEPOTISM

WNPLD does not hire or consider for employment any relative of a Trustee. If a relative of a WNPLD employee is elected to the Board of Trustees, the employee may remain on staff.

WNPLD does not contract for staffing, auditing, or other services which might represent or appear to represent a conflict of interest. Services contracted with individuals or companies in which relatives of a newly elected Trustee hold a substantial or controlling interest or where the appearance of a conflict of interest could be reasonably inferred will not be renewed at the conclusion of the contract.

The Board may make exceptions to this policy in cases where a similar product or service cannot be obtained through other means or when compliance with this policy would cause a substantial expenditure to WNPLD.

ARTICLE 5. AVOIDANCE OF THE APPEARANCE OF A CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Library Trustees and their family members are strongly urged to avoid situations in which their personal interests, activities, or financial activities could:

- create the perception of a conflict of interest;
- create an appearance of impropriety;
- cast doubt upon their fairness, impartiality, or objectivity; or
- appear to be in conflict with the best interests of WNPLD.

Adopted: April 12, 2005
Reviewed/Revised: June 19, 2012; August 19, 2014; January 17, 2017; January 15, 2019; March 15, 2022; January 21, 2025