

The Joint Board of Library Trustees for the Towns of Hamilton and Wenham
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Article I

Name and Authorization

The name of this organization is “The Joint Board of Library Trustees for the Towns of Hamilton-Wenham” (herein referred to as the “Joint Board”), existing by virtue of the provisions of G.L. c. 78, § 10, G.L. c. 40, § 4A, and the Hamilton-Wenham Joint Library Agreement dated December 21, 1998, as amended (the “Agreement”), and exercising the powers and assuming the responsibilities delegated to it by said statutes and Agreement.

Article II

Purpose and Objective

Section 1. The Joint Board shall have the custody and management of the library and its services and facilities located at 14 Union Street, Hamilton, as shown on the assessors map, Map 55, lot 66 (“the Property”), as per the Agreement Section II. Facility Ownership and Use and Section IV. Management.

Section 2. Joint Board members will be active participants in promoting and supporting the Mission Statement of the Library, currently as follows:

The Hamilton-Wenham Public Library is a publicly-funded institution dedicated to the common good by serving the informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs of the community and encouraging its patrons in the lifelong pursuit of learning and personal growth. The library will be responsive to the needs of its diverse users, advocate and support the use of appropriate technology, build an excellent collection, commit itself to the highest ideals of library service and the principles of intellectual freedom, and provide a welcoming meeting place for the community.

The Joint Board may amend the Mission Statement from time to time as it deems warranted.

Article III

Membership

Method of Joint Board selection and selection of Officers, duties, appointments, resignation/vacancies, and term.

Section 1. Joint Board Election

The Joint Board is made up of six elected members. Elections are held at the Annual Spring elections. Two three-year positions are for residents of Hamilton, two three-year positions are for residents of Wenham, and two three-year "At-Large" positions can be filled by residents of Hamilton or Wenham and shall be elected jointly by the member towns, as per Hamilton-Wenham Joint Library Agreement of December 21, 1998, Section VII. Elections. All trustees serve without compensation. The At-Large candidates' names must be on the ballots of both towns. An At-Large candidate must take out nomination papers in his/her town of residence and collect the required number of signatures of registered voters. Once nomination papers are submitted to the town clerk and certified, both town clerks will confer and insure that At-Large candidates are on both towns' ballots.

Section 2. Resignation

Any member of the Joint Board may resign by providing written notice to The Joint Board and to the town clerk of his or her residency, in accordance with G.L. c. 41, § 109. At-large Joint Board members must submit their letters of resignation to the town clerks of both towns.

Section 3. Joint Board Vacancies

Vacancies shall be filled as required by G.L. c. 41, § 11. Prior to filling any vacancy, notice of the vacancy will be publicized by the boards of selectmen of both towns by posting on the towns' bulletin boards and websites. Applicants will be reviewed and interviewed by an ad hoc committee of the Joint Board of Library Trustees appointed for this purpose, which shall recommend to the full Joint Board a candidate to fill a vacant board position. Within one month of the vacancy, the Joint Board will recommend in writing a candidate to the Board of Selectman of the town from whose membership the vacancy occurred, and in the event of an at-large candidate, to both towns' Boards of Selectmen. Subsequent to recommendation the vacancy shall be filled by a majority vote of the Joint Board of Library Trustees and the Board(s) of Selectman at their regularly scheduled meetings. The person so appointed shall serve until the next annual election, at which election a successor shall be elected to serve the balance of the unexpired term if any.

Section 4. Attendance

It is expected that Joint Board members will faithfully attend all meetings. Attendance may be by remote participation in accordance with Wenham policy. Any member who fails to attend 3 consecutive regularly scheduled Joint Board meetings will receive a letter from the Chair requesting that he/she explain his or her absence. If no explanation is provided by the date of the next regularly scheduled Joint Board meeting, then the remaining Joint Board members shall vote whether to request that the offending member resign from the Joint Board. Copies of the letter shall be included in the minutes of the Joint Board.

Section 5. Officers

The Officers of the Joint Board shall be Chairperson, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. The officers shall be elected by the Joint Board at the May meeting of the Joint Board, or the earliest meeting following the annual town elections, for a term of 12 months. In the event of a vacancy in any of the Officers' positions during the year, that vacancy shall be filled by a vote of the Joint Board. It is suggested that a person serving as chair first have served as vice-chair, and that an officer not be elected to more than two successive terms of the same position.

5.1 Duties of Officers

a) Duties of the Chair

The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Joint Board and call special meetings of the Joint Board as needed. The Chair shall follow procedures reasonably designed to facilitate orderly conduct of the business before the Board and provide fair opportunity for Joint Board members to discuss the matter at issue. The Chair shall serve as ex-officio member of all committees of the Joint Board. The Chair shall appoint committees of one or more members, each for such specific business as the Joint Board may require. The Chair shall serve as official representative of the Joint Board in all matters dealing with the library and fulfill all legal functions of the Joint Board. The Chair shall be responsible for writing and submitting an Annual Report to the towns of Wenham and Hamilton.

b) Duties of the Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair at his/her request or in his/her absence.

c) Duties of the Secretary

The secretary shall keep a true record of all meetings of the Joint Board, distribute minutes of all meetings of the Joint Board and prepare correspondence as directed by the Joint Board.

Article IV Meetings

Section 1. The library director or Chairperson of the Joint Board shall post all meetings as required by law and Wenham town policy.

Section 2. Regular meetings of the Joint Board shall be held at the library on the second Thursday of each month, except as otherwise arranged by the chair. There are no regularly scheduled meetings in July and August. Regular attendance is expected, and a Trustee is expected to give advance notice to the Joint Board when he/she cannot attend a meeting.

Section 3. Special meetings may be called by the Chair or at the request of a majority of the Joint Board.

Section 4. A majority of the Joint Board shall constitute a quorum.

Section 5. All meetings of the Joint Board shall be subject to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25. All meetings are open to the public unless held under Executive Session under the terms of the law. All minutes of open sessions and released executive sessions will be available for public inspection at the library.

Section 6. There shall be a prepared agenda which shall include: call to order, approval of minutes of previous meetings, reports of the Library Director and committees, action items, and other business as deemed necessary by the Chairperson and as required by G.L. c. 30A, § 20.

Article V Joint Library Director and Staff

Section 1. The Joint Library Director shall be hired by the Joint Board, as provided for in the Agreement Section V. The Joint Library Director shall be the chief executive and administrative officer of the Joint Library and under the review and direction of the Joint Board. Pursuant to G.L. c. 78, Section 34, the Joint Board shall execute a written employment contract with the Joint Library Director outlining the basic conditions of employment as per Hamilton-Wenham Joint Library Agreement of December 21, 1998, Section V. Employment and the Personnel Policies and employment practices of the town of Wenham.

Section 2. In accordance with Agreement Section IV.2, the day-to-day operation of the Joint Library is the responsibility of the Joint Library Director. The Joint Library Director is also responsible for implementation of policies approved by the Joint Board, selection and supervision of personnel, selection and maintenance of books and other materials, expenditures of funds within the approved budget, direction of library operations and provisions of services to the public. The Joint Library Director attends all Joint Board meetings.

Section 3. The Joint Library Director shall be evaluated annually by the Joint Board of Library Trustees. The Chair, after obtaining input from all Trustees, will be responsible for producing the evaluation. The evaluation shall be in writing and shall be provided to the Wenham Town Administrator within 30 days of the Library Trustees' approval. The Library Director shall have the opportunity to respond in writing to the evaluation, consistent with the Town of Wenham's Personnel Policies.

Article VI

Further Responsibilities of the Joint Board

Section 1. In additions to the Joint Board responsibilities set forth in the Agreement and other sections of these rules and regulations, the Joint Board shall bear oversight responsibility for all joint library funds, however derived. The Joint Board is responsible for approval of the library budget before it is submitted to the towns for approval.

Section 2. The Joint Board shall establish all necessary written policies, including one for the selection of library materials and the use of facilities which is in accord with the current standards of the American Library Association as provided for in G.L. c. 78, § 33.

Section 3. The Joint Board will report to the towns in an Annual Report dealing with receipts, expenditures and property of the library, a statement of any unexpended balance of money and of any gifts or bequests as required by G.L. c. 78, § 12.

Section 4. The Joint Board shall appoint a member to be the liaison to The Friends of the Hamilton-Wenham Public Library, and any other liaisons that become necessary.

Article VII

Collective Authority of the Joint Board

All decisions of the Joint Board are made by the Joint Board as a collective body. No individual member of the Joint Board may make decisions or act or speak for the Joint Board unless specifically authorized to do so by a vote of the membership of the Joint Board.

Article VIII

Amendments

These rules and regulations may be amended at any regular meeting of the Joint Board with a quorum present, by a vote of the Joint Board, providing that a motion presenting the amendment was made and seconded at the previous regular meeting.

Article IX

Inconsistent Provisions and Severability

To the extent that any provision of these rules and regulations is inconsistent with any provision of the Massachusetts General Laws, either Town's by-laws, or the Agreement, the statute, by-law, or the Agreement, as the case may be, shall govern. In the event that any provision of these rules and regulations shall be held to be unconstitutional or invalid, all remaining provisions remain in effect.

*Approved by the Joint Board of Library Trustees for Hamilton and Wenham
November 12, 2015.*

Amended by the Joint Board of Library Trustees June 16, 2016

At-Large Candidate election information added January 18, 2018