

Wyoming Library Boards **NEWS to USE**

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AG to Campbell County: Retain library board

Campbell County Commissioners are not permitted under state law to dissolve the library board, according to an opinion from the Wyoming Office of the Attorney General. The commissioners had voted on December 15 to dissolve six boards, including that of the Campbell County Public Library System, citing the need to comply with GASB 54 accounting standards. The library board requested the State Attorney General's opinion.

Among the points made by the Attorney General's Office in a letter on Feb. 9, 2010:

- The board of county commissioners is required by Wyoming Statute to appoint a library board of directors.
- Under statute, the library board is a body corporate with perpetual existence after its initial organization.
- The county commission may not appoint itself as the library board, as the two offices are incompatible under Wyoming law. Offices are incompatible when one is subordinate or subject to review by another.
- Library funds may not be commingled with other county funds and are set aside as a separate fund. Control of the county library fund is entrusted to the library board.
- Accounting standards such as GASB 54 "cannot and do not dictate the legislative function of government regarding structure and functioning of government." In addition, the AG's office does not believe that GASB 54 requires the dissolution of the library board.
- Wyoming law controls over GASB 54 and should be followed regarding the board of directors and county library fund.

The library board had been slated for dissolution on March 31, so its function will continue as usual. It appears that two other boards that had already been dissolved – the recreation and museum boards – will need to be reinstated. The Campbell County Commission meets again on March 23 to discuss its next steps.

"Wyoming libraries are lucky to have the strong statutes behind them that we do have," said Patty Myers, executive director of Campbell County Public Library System. "I think the Commissioners truly believed this would be an easy transition and good for the county. They just did not think through all the steps and changes they were instigating. It's a valuable lesson for the entire state."

Library endowments to receive another \$3 million

When Wyoming librarians welcomed State Legislators at the annual Wyoming Library Association legislative reception on Feb. 25, they had much to thank them for. The Legislature approved \$3 million in additional funds requested by Gov. Dave Freudenthal for the Wyoming Library Endowment Challenge. This brings the total amount of state matching funds and incentive funds available for library endowments to \$12.1 million.

In other legislative action affecting libraries from the 2010 session:

- *HB 6: County officials-administrative and fiscal duties*: specifies the time period for fines and fees collected to be submitted to the county treasurer
- *HB 60: UPMIFA – expenditure limitation*: raises the “presumption of prudence” limit for expenditures from endowments to 7% of the fair market value of the fund.
- *SF 72: Wyoming retirement plan contributions*: increases the employer and employee contributions for those participating in the Wyoming Retirement System.

A full legislative update from the Wyoming Library Association lobbyist and further details on the Library Endowment Challenge may be found on the WLA website at www.wyla.org.

Advocacy builds public libraries

With counties & states facing \$183 billion in cuts the next 4 years, it's more important than ever to engage in advocacy. At a training session for library trustees on Feb. 25, Sue Hall, a consultant with Library Strategies, shared the success story of the St. Paul Public Library and how Wyoming libraries can develop an effective advocacy strategy.

According to Hall, advocacy is one of the most cost-effective things you can do. It paints a continual picture of what the library means to the community. Advocacy differs from lobbying: lobbying is a targeted process of influencing elected officials while advocacy is a broad-based, grassroots process of speaking out for what you believe in.

One of a library trustee's main roles is to advocate on behalf of their library. Hall recommended creating an advocacy committee that includes stakeholders from every constituency, which is what they did in St. Paul. The committee creates and presents the library's platform. It pins down the issues and creates a communications plan that tells the story of the library and how it makes a difference in the community. Advocacy, Hall said, supports the growing need for library resources and creates community.

In St. Paul, their advocacy efforts resulted in increased funding and greater support from elected officials. When they told the story of their library, they focused on how the it bridged the gap between the haves and the have-nots. Hall said that messages about the library should be simple and consistent, and that advocates should tell stories about how libraries impact citizens' lives.

Hall's presentation has been posted at <http://will.state.wy.us/ldo/Trustees.ppt>. For more information on Library Strategies, visit www.thefriends.org/librarystrategies.html.

New book for trustees at the Wyoming State Library

New in the WSL professional collection: *The complete library trustee handbook* by Sally Gardner Reed and Jillian Kalonick (New York : Neal-Schuman, c2010). This book provides straightforward, easy-to-read guidance on how to make the most of your vital role as a trustee, guiding you through important issues, including sustainable fundraising and advocacy, hiring and evaluating a library director, strategic planning, director-trustee collaboration, and policy development. Request this by interlibrary loan through your library, or search the entire WSL collection at <http://wyld.state.wy.us/wsl/>.

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