

Materials Selection and Review Policy, Principles, and Procedures

Approved August 2003

Revised July 2007, July 2009, Aug. 2010, Sept. 2012, Sept.2013, July 2022

The Groton Public Library endeavors to maintain a balance in its materials for the community. The Library Trustees and the staff of the library are responsible for providing equal access to library materials and services for all library users. All materials are selected with the diverse needs of the community in mind. Selections are based on need, current content of the collection, recommendations, and professional review sources.

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 78 Section 33 and the standards adopted by the American Library Association, the Trustees of the Groton Public Library have adopted the following statements regarding materials selection.

General Collection

1. The selection of books and library materials is the responsibility of the Library Director and other qualified staff members and is supported by the Library Trustees.
2. Selection of books and/or other library material shall be made on the basis of their value of interest, information, and enlightenment of library users. No book and/or library material shall be excluded or included solely because of race, nationality, religion, political or social views, sexual preference, or any other identifying characteristics of the author, illustrator, publisher, or content.
3. The Library Trustees believe that censorship is a purely individual matter and declare that anyone is free to not select books or other materials that he/she does not approve of. They cannot exercise this right of censorship to restrict the freedom of others to read, listen, or view.
4. Any specific concerns regarding library materials should be brought to the Library Director and ultimately the Library Trustees. A "Request for Review of Library Materials" form should be completed and returned to the Library Director. If the form is filled out and submitted, the Library Director will inform the Library Trustees of the request for review by their next scheduled meeting.
5. The Library Trustees defend the principles of the freedom to read (including listen and view) and declare that whenever censorship is involved no book and/or library material shall be removed from the library save under the orders of a court in a competent jurisdiction.
6. The Library Trustees adopt and declare that it will adhere to and support the Library Bill of Rights and its interpretations including but not limited to the Freedom to Read and Freedom to View Statements adopted by the American Library Association.
7. In an interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, entitled "Restricted Access to Library Materials" the American Library Association holds ". . . that it is parents -and only parents - who may restrict their children - and only their children - from access to library materials and services. Parents who would rather their children not have access to certain materials should so advise their children."

The standards and procedures used in the selection policy apply to gifts and donations to the library.

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RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS PROCEDURE AT THE GROTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

The choice of library materials by users is an individual matter. While a person may reject materials for themselves, they cannot exercise censorship to restrict access to the materials by others.

Recognizing that a diversity of materials may result in some requests for reconsideration, the following procedures have been developed to ensure that objections or complaints are handled attentively and consistently.

Any Groton resident who has a concern regarding the selection of a specific title is welcome to discuss the interpretation of these principles with the Library Director. A formal review of any title or material is initiated only upon the submittal of a ***Request for Reconsideration*** form.

Upon submittal of this form, professional selectors on the staff will read, review, and comparatively assess the material being reconsidered. A formal written response and assessment will be forthcoming from the Director, along with a copy of the Material Selection and Review Policy and any other appropriate documentation.

Should the patron desire further edification from the governing body of the Library, the resident should then put their concerns in writing to the Board of Trustees. The Board will then study the matter relative to the individual concern and the selection principles as promulgated. If materials meet the criteria of selection, they will not be removed from the collection because of pressure from any individual or group.

Procedures have been developed for the reconsideration of materials to ensure that objections or complaints are handled attentively and consistently. Once an item has been accepted for purchase, based on the Materials Selection Policy of the Library Board of Trustees, it will not be automatically removed upon request.

Sample Letter to Complainant from Director

When an individual expresses an informal or verbal concern about a library resource and is not satisfied with the subsequent discussion with library staff and/or director, they may indicate a desire to formally challenge the resource in question. At that time, the form for reconsideration of the work as well as a copy of the selection and reconsideration policy will be given directly to the complainant or sent to the concerned individual after the conversation.

Public Library Sample Letter to Person Requesting Reconsideration

Dear Library Patron:

We appreciate your concern over _____ in the library. Selecting materials that serve the needs of our community is a vital part of operating a library. The Board of Trustees takes this responsibility very seriously. It has established a materials selection policy for selecting

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resources as well as a detailed reconsideration procedure for requesting reconsideration of particular items. I have enclosed both for your review. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss them further.

If you are still concerned after you review our library policies, please complete the Request for Reconsideration of Material form and return it to me. You may be assured of prompt attention to your request. The steps that will be taken are outlined in the Reconsideration procedure. At any point during this process, please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns.

Sincerely, Library Director

Request for Reconsideration (RFR) Procedure

- Request for Reconsideration conveyed to the concerned patron (resident of Groton) by staff member [or downloaded from website]

- Request for Reconsideration Form returned to Library Director, filled out completely

- The Library Director acknowledges receipt of RFR Form in formal correspondence to the patron and outlines the response procedure and anticipated timeline, attaching the Collection Development Policy and sharing with the Board of Library Trustees.

- Library Director convenes Review Committee of Senior Library Staff to:
 - Read, view, or listen to challenged material/material of concern
 - Research and copy professional reviews on work
 - Record notes to share in the meeting of the Review Committee
 - Transcribe Review Committee notes for the Director's next formal correspondence to the resident
 - Identify alternate works/titles the patron might prefer

- The Library Director sends correspondence outlining the Review Committee's findings and attaching excerpts/copies of professional reviews and reasons selection falls within Collection Development Guidelines
 - Patrons are advised that they may refer their concerns upward to the elected Board of Library Trustees
 - Work will be discussed with Review Committee findings in the posted Open Meeting, with attendance offered to the resident
 - Should work be found to fall within approved Collection Development Guidelines, the Board will thank the patron for their concern
 - The Library Director will send formal correspondence concluding the process

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Sample Reconsideration Committee Report

Title / Item

Author/Producer

Has at least one member of the committee read/viewed/listened to the material entirely? If not, why not?

Resources consulted: (include policies, articles, reviews, etc.)

The Reconsideration Committee recommends:

Justification and comments: (include majority and minority positions)

Signatures of Reconsideration Committee Members & Date

Note: This report is forwarded to...