



LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
August 3, 2022
5PM
Rice Public Library
AGENDA

1. Review and approve minutes from February 24, 2022 meeting
2. Review Freedom to Read policies and forms
3. Next Steps
 - a. Action Items
 - b. Next Meeting

Materials:

- Draft Minutes – February 24, 2022
- Draft Freedom to Read policies and forms



LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
February 24, 2022
4PM
DRAFT

Present: Susan Goodman, Chair, Stephanie Wexler-Robock, Judy Spiller, Rachel Dennis, Tom Newbold, Cici Nielsen, Lindsay Burrowbridge, Lee Perkins, Kendra Amaral

1. Select a Chairperson
 - Rachel moved to nominate Susan Goodman as Chair, Judy seconded. Approved unanimously.
2. Review and Approve minutes from January 20, 2022 meeting
 - Correct spelling of last names.
 - Stephanie moved to approve with corrections, Cici seconded. Approved unanimously.
3. Discuss Library Mission and Vision Statements
 - General agreement that Rice Library mission is good with some minor edits.
 - Tom moved to approve the mission statement, Susan seconded. Approved unanimously.
4. Review Freedom to Read policy and forms
 - Discussed examples provided.
 - May just need to change formatting of existing to conform to Town Policy templates.
 - It does not need to be reviewed by Town Attorney.
 - Policy should clearly define a process for how a challenge will be reviewed.
 - Susan and Lee will work on updates and bring to the next Com meeting.
5. Next Steps
 - Next meeting will not happen until likely May, to allow Library and Town staff time to focus on the reopening of the Rice bldg.
 - Next meeting will discuss RFP for strategic planning services and review of revised Freedom to Read policies and challenge forms.



**TOWN OF KITTERY
RICE PUBLIC LIBRARY
FREEDOM TO READ POLICY**

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. The Town of Kittery is devoted to reading and wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read. We trust our Kittery residents to recognize propaganda and misinformation and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution.

In accordance, the Town of Kittery and the Rice Public Library will:

1. Provide the Widest Diversity of Materials

It is in the public interest for the Rice Public Library to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.

2. Provide opportunities to read and consider a broad range of viewpoints and ideas.

The Rice Public Library serves the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. Patrons will have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian.

3. Not bar access to materials based on political or personal history

It is contrary to the public interest for the Rice Public Library to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.

4. Not restrict the selections made by the patrons

Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters, values differ, and values will not be legislated.

5. No Materials shall be labeled as subversive

It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous. The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others.

6. Allow individuals the Freedom to select what they wish to read

It is the responsibility of the Rice Public Library, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government if ever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.

The Town of Kittery and the Rice Public Library Advisory Board

Affirms

The Freedom to Read Policy for our residents

THE FREEDOM TO READ

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, censor content in schools, label “controversial” views, distribute lists of “objectionable” books or authors, and purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that the national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. **The residents of Kittery** are devoted to reading and as are our **librarians** and the publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read. Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust our **Kittery residents** to recognize propaganda and misinformation and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe **the residents** are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press to be “protected” against what others think may be bad for them. We believe **our residents** still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression. These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials. Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference. Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections. We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings. The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We, therefore, affirm these propositions:

1. Provide the Widest Diversity of Materials

It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority. Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. Opportunities to read and consider a broad range of viewpoints and ideas.

Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated. Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. Shall not bar access to materials based on political or personal history

It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author. No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. No efforts shall be made to restrict the selections made by the patrons

There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression. To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters, values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. No Materials shall be labeled as subversive

It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous. The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes those individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. Shall allow individuals the Freedom to select what they wish to read

It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information. It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, moral, or aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society, individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one. The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and spoken. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support. We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; those ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

CHALLENGED MATERIALS PROCEDURES

The library considers material objectionable only if the material taken as a whole lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value. Selected passages or individual sentences or words do not constitute evidence or grounds for deletion from the collection. Only Kittery residents may initiate a challenge to the collection.

In the event that an objection is raised, the following procedure will apply:

1. The objection will be heard first by the person responsible for the acquisition of this item.
2. If an understanding is not reached, the complainant shall be asked to fill out a form "Citizens Request for Reconsideration of a Book." These forms are available from the library staff.
3. The completed form shall be submitted to the Library Advisory Committee.
4. The committee shall examine the material in question and check general acceptance of material by reading reviews, weighing values and faults, weighing evidence of specialists in the field, and form opinions based on the material as a whole and not passages or portions pulled out of content.
5. The committee will meet to discuss individual findings and prepare a written report of its decision.
6. If the complaint cannot be resolved, assistance should be sought from professional organizations, such as the Intellectual Freedom Committee of the ALA (American Library Association).

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS

Author _____

Title _____

Published (if known) _____

Request initiated by _____

Telephone _____

Address _____

City _____

Complaint represents: _____ Him/Herself/Themselves

_____ Organization or group

If organization of group, please identify: _____

1. Did you read/view/listen to the entire material? If not, which parts did you review?
2. What do you believe is the theme of this work?
3. Are you aware of the judgment of this material by literary/film critics and experts in the field?
4. To what in the material do you object? (Please be specific by citing pages, scenes, quotations, and other relevant passages.)
5. What do you believe might be the result of having access to this material?
6. Is there anything of intellectual, social, emotional, or artistic value in this work to particular readers or viewers?
7. What would you like the library to do about this material?
8. In its place, what item of equal quality would you recommend that would convey an appropriate and balanced perspective of the topic?

Date _____

Signature of complainant _____

Staff member accepting request _____

Completion of this form is the first step in a formal process. We will notify you that your form has been received. The Library Advisory Committee will then review and respond to your request at our next meeting if the agenda allows.

Code of Ethics

As members of the American Library Association, we recognize the importance of codifying and making known to the profession and to the general public the ethical principles that guide the work of librarians, other professionals providing information services, library trustees and library staffs.

Ethical dilemmas occur when values are in conflict. The American Library Association Code of Ethics states the values to which we are committed, and embodies the ethical responsibilities of the profession in this changing information environment.

We significantly influence or control the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information. In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information. We have a special obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations.

The principles of this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical decision making. These statements provide a framework; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover particular situations.

- I. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.
- II. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.
- III. We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.
- IV. We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders.
- V. We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.
- VI. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.
- VII. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.
- VIII. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.

IX. We affirm the inherent dignity and rights of every person. We work to recognize and dismantle systemic and individual biases; to confront inequity and oppression; to enhance diversity and inclusion; and to advance racial and social justice in our libraries, communities, profession, and associations through awareness, advocacy, education, collaboration, services, and allocation of resources and spaces.

Adopted at the 1939 Midwinter Meeting by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 1981; June 28, 1995; January 22, 2008; and June 29, 2021.