



STONINGTON FREE LIBRARY

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. PROGRAM POLICY

1.1. Definition of a Program

1.1.1. A Library program is a free event, virtual or in-person, planned by the Library staff for the benefit of those members of the public who opt to attend. It may involve outside presenters, facilitators or performers and may be presented in cooperation with other entities.

1.2. Purpose

1.2.1. Stonington Free Library supports its mission to enrich lives and build community by bringing information, ideas and people together in part by developing and presenting programs that provide additional opportunities for information, enlightenment, interest and entertainment. Programming is an integral component of library service that:

1. Expands the library's role as a community resource
2. Introduces patrons and non-users to library resources
3. Provides entertainment
4. Provides opportunities for lifelong learning
5. Expands the visibility of the library

1.2.2. The Library recognizes the importance of programs as resources for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas and to promote free expression and free access to ideas by residents.

1.3. Roles and Responsibilities

1.3.1. Ultimate responsibility for programming at Stonington Free Library rests with the Library Director, who may delegate responsibility to a Program Committee made up of staff and/or volunteers. The Library Director and staff are professionally trained to curate and develop library programs.

1.4. Program Selection

1.4.1. The Program Committee use the following criteria in making decisions about program topics, speakers, and accompanying resources:

1. Community needs relevant to the research, independent interests and educational needs of residents

2. Availability of program space and/or suitability of program for virtual presentation
3. Treatment of content for intended audience
4. Presentation quality
5. Presenter background qualifications in content area
6. Budget
7. Relevance to community interests and issues
8. Historical or educational significance
9. Connection to other community programs, exhibitions or events
10. Relation to library collections, resources, exhibits and programs

1.5. **Program Development, Coordination and Supervision**

- 1.5.1. Library programs may originate from Library staff, partnering institutions or members of the public at the discretion of the library director.
- 1.5.2. In the event of a co-sponsored program, supervision of the program may be delegated to the co-sponsoring organization depending upon the timing and venue of the program. All programs sponsored or co-sponsored by the Library, however, must abide by this policy regardless of where they are hosted.

1.6. **Program Access**

- 1.6.1. All library programs are open to the public. Some programs may require advance registration for planning purposes or when space is limited, or may be limited to Stonington residents. Attendance may also be limited by age or grade level.
- 1.6.2. Programs cannot be used for solicitation or for partisan purposes, whether commercial, political, religious, or otherwise. Library sponsorship of a program does not constitute endorsement of the program content or of the views expressed by presenters or participants.
- 1.6.3. Policies and Procedures of Stonington Free Library apply to all library programs regardless of venue.
- 1.6.4. Any individual requiring an accommodation to participate in a library program should contact the library two weeks prior to the program.

1.7. **Presenter/performer expectations:**

1. Scheduling: If a presenter finds it absolutely necessary to cancel a scheduled program, the presenter should notify the library as soon as possible and at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled event. There is no guarantee that the library will be able to reschedule the presenter's event.
2. Confidentiality: Presenters/Performers are expected to keep all personal information acquired while performing or conducting a program at the library confidential. A person's library record and information needs are private and confidential.
3. Conflict of interest: As part of the library program, presenters or performers cannot ask for or receive for themselves or for any member of their households, directly or indirectly, any monies or gifts from library patrons. The purpose of the library program should be educational, not promotional. Presenters cannot actively promote their personal business to library patrons, staff or volunteers.

1.8. **Cultural diversity/services**

- 1.8.1. The Library values diversity and is committed to providing many programming options for the Library's diverse community. We strive to enhance library service with performers/presenters who represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints and represent a broad range of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and economic backgrounds.

1.9. **Presenter/Performer Conduct**

- 1.9.1. All presenters and performers are expected to follow library behavior policies and rules of conduct that protect the interest and safety of presenters, volunteers, staff, and library patrons. The following are some examples of inappropriate conduct that could lead to the termination of contractor relationship with the Library:
 1. Willful violation of any library rule or policy
 2. Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of library materials, equipment or other property or that of any volunteer, staff, or patron
 3. Lack of cooperation or other disrespectful conduct
 4. Inappropriate use of library equipment or systems
 5. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information
 6. Unsatisfactory performance or conduct
- 1.9.2. In addition to the conduct outlined above, to protect vulnerable populations from harm and presenters from false allegations, and to uphold the library's value of

respect, presenters must uphold the Code of Conduct outlined below during the course of their work for the Library. This Code of Conduct applies to volunteers and paid contractors that work with programs and populations in a library setting including, but not limited to, vulnerable populations.

1.9.3. Vulnerable Populations include all of the following: youth and adolescents, elders, persons with physical or developmental disabilities, persons experiencing homelessness or mental illness, persons for whom English is a second language, those with economic disadvantages or learning disabilities and any other person especially vulnerable to abuse.

1.9.4. Presenters overseeing activities or programs WILL:

1. Show respect for the rights, safety and welfare of program participants
2. Maintain a professional and respectful demeanor when engaging with program participants
3. Report any concerns about personal safety, harassment or intimidation by program participants
4. Report any concerns about a patron or program participant to the library location staff immediately

1.9.5. Presenters overseeing activities or program WILL NOT:

1. Use any racist, sexist, discriminatory, offensive or culturally insensitive language including inappropriate slang
2. Behave in a way that frightens or demeans any program participant
3. Accompany a patron into a restroom or assist them with personal care
4. Invite program participant to their home or arrange to see them outside the set activity times in their role as a presenter
5. Transport a program participant in a vehicle
6. Perform errands on behalf of program participants
7. Use patrons' personal information for personal gain

1.10. **Virtual Programs**

1.10.1. Some library programs may be offered using a library approved virtual meeting platform that registered patrons may use to access the virtual program from their own internet-enabled devices. This may include programs that are simultaneously run at the physical library as well as programs that are offered only virtually.

While hosting the virtual program, library staff, partnering organizations, and program facilitators will follow industry standard best practices for virtual events

1.10.2. Some virtual programs may be pre-recorded and broadcast via the internet or recorded as presented for later viewing. In the event an interactive program is being recorded, attendees will be informed of that fact at the start of the program.

1.10.3. Live virtual programs require advance registration. Registered participants will receive via email a link to log on to the program and must not share that link with others. Information collected during the registration process will be used only to communicate information about that program or to confirm eligibility to participate in that program.

1.10.4. Patrons attending virtual programs are expected to adhere to the Library's Behavior Policy and failure to do so may result in their immediate removal from said program. The Library will make all reasonable efforts to ensure the digital security of virtual events, however attendees must understand that all online activity carries some degree of risk.

1.10.5. Patrons are required to provide their own equipment and internet connection to attend virtual programs. The Library will make a good faith effort to utilize platforms that will be compatible with the widest array of hardware and software, but makes no guarantee that every patron will be capable of accessing every Library program successfully. Nor can the Library guarantee the quality of the audio, video, or internet connection of program presenters or attendees.

1.11. **Program Materials**

1.11.1. The sale of books or other media by authors or performers is permitted as part of a library-approved program, at the discretion of the Director. Presenters are responsible for completing their own sales; library staff/volunteers are not to be made available to assist in this regard unless prior arrangements are made with the Director.

1.12. **Program Evaluation**

1.12.1. To provide the highest quality and most useful programming, Library staff will gather information about program results to guide future programming decisions. Outputs, such as the number of attendees at a program, will be gathered for all or almost all programs. Outcomes, such as how well the content of a program helped attendees learn about the program's topic, will be gathered at times when such data is required for grant reporting or would be helpful in evaluating a new program topic or format.

1.13. **Procedures for Questioning of Library Programs**

- 1.14. The Library limits consideration of requests to reconsider programs to residents or taxpayers of Stonington. Please see the Policy Regarding Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials and the reconsideration form for further information on this process.
- 1.15. All library programs are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the general statutes.

2. DISPLAY POLICY

2.1. Purpose

- 2.1.1. The Library's Display Policy provides a basis for the display of library materials by library staff, informs the public about the principles and criteria upon which these decisions are made, and promotes the purposes of the library's mission, which is to enrich lives and build community by bringing information, ideas and people together.

2.2. Policy

- 2.2.1. The Library recognizes the importance of displays as resources for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas and to promote free expression and free access to ideas by residents. A key aspect of our approach is the creation of thoughtfully curated displays, which play an essential role in informing and inspiring individuals of all ages and diverse backgrounds. Displays are provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all residents, represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints, and provide access to content that is relevant to the research, independent interests and educational needs of residents.

2.3. Principles and Criteria

- 2.3.1. The final responsibility for the display of library materials is held by the Library Director, but day-to-day responsibility is shared by library staff who are professionally trained to curate and develop displays. Library staff uses the following criteria in making decisions about display topics, materials, and accompanying resources:

1. Community needs, education, research and interests
2. Availability of display space
3. Historical, cultural or educational significance
4. Connection to other community or national programs, exhibitions or events

5. Relation to library collections, resources, exhibits and programs
6. The Library may partner with other community agencies, organizations, educational institutions, or individuals to develop and present co-sponsored displays and exhibits.

2.3.2. The Library will strive to include a wide spectrum of opinions and viewpoints in library initiated displays and exhibits, as well as offer displays and exhibits that appeal to a range of ages, interests, and information needs. Library-initiated displays and exhibits should not exclude topics, books, media, and other resources solely because they may be considered to be controversial.

2.3.3. The Library provides displays created or curated by librarians or staff members of the public library as well as allowing displays created by members of the public or community groups to be exhibited in the public library, at the discretion of the library director. Acceptance of a display or exhibit topic by the Library does not constitute an endorsement by the Stonington Free Library of the content of the display or exhibit, or of the views expressed in the materials on display.

2.3.4. All library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the general statutes.

2.4. **Intellectual Freedom and Censorship**

2.4.1. The choice of library materials by patrons is an individual matter. The library recognizes that some materials may be controversial or offensive to an individual but maintains that individuals can apply their values only to themselves. The selection of library materials is predicated on the customer's right of access to information and freedom from censorship. Selections will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but on the merits of the material itself.

2.4.2. This Library supports intellectual freedom and subscribes to the Library Bill of Rights, The Freedom to Read Statement, The Freedom to View Statement and the related supportive documents of the American Library Association.

2.5. **Procedures for Questioning of Library Programs**

2.5.1. The Library limits consideration of requests to reconsider displays to residents or taxpayers of Stonington. Please see the Policy Regarding Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials and the reconsideration form for further information on this process.

3. COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE POLICY

3.1. Purpose and Scope

- 3.1.1. The Stonington Free Library's Materials Selection Policy serves as a guide for authorized personnel in the selection and withdrawal of library materials. It also serves to inform the public as to the criteria upon which library materials are selected and withdrawn. This Library supports intellectual freedom and subscribes to the Library Bill of Rights, The Freedom to Read Statement, and the related supportive documents of the American Library Association. This policy applies to both the digital and print materials in the Library's collection.
- 3.1.2. No library material shall be removed because of origin, background or viewpoints expressed in such material because of the origin, background or viewpoints of the creator of such material. All library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the general statutes.
- 3.1.3. It is the Library's goal to build a balanced collection of materials representing a wide range of varied and diverging points of view for the interest, information, enlightenment and enjoyment of all members of the community from infancy through maturity that meets their diverse needs, interests and viewpoints. The Library provides unrestricted access to materials, information and resources to satisfy the community's intellectual needs and to support lifelong learning.
- 3.1.4. The Library recognizes the importance of the public library as a place for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas, and promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by residents.

3.2. Responsibility of Selecting Library Materials

- 3.2.1. The Library Board delegates the oversight and management of the collection, within the guidelines of this policy, to the Library Director and staff that are professionally trained to curate and develop a collection that provides access to the widest array of library and educational materials. Responsibility for the selection, maintenance, replacement, and weeding of materials rests with the designated professional staff under the overall direction of the Director.

3.3. Sources for Selection

- 3.3.1. Reviews in library and publishing industry periodicals are primary sources for materials selection. Reputable bibliographies, booklists by recognized authorities, and the advice of competent individuals and/or entities in specific subject areas also are used. Suggestions from library staff and the general public are considered as well.

3.4. Selection Criteria

3.4.1. Library materials are diverse in topic, format, and other characteristics. Each type of item must be considered in terms of its own merit and the audience for whom it is intended. No single set of selection criteria can be applied to all cases. In order to build and maintain its high quality collection based on professionally accepted standards of material relevance, physical condition, availability of duplicates, availability of age appropriate or grade-level material, continued demand of material the Library applies the following general criteria when considering materials for acquisition:

1. The appropriateness of the item to the needs and interests of Library users and of the community as a whole
2. Accuracy, objectivity, clarity, logic and effectiveness of the material
3. Diversity of viewpoint
4. Relevance to the current and future needs of the community
5. Authority and competency of the presentation
6. Preference for materials from established publishing companies
7. Local interest in subject or author
8. The extent to which the topic is already represented in the collection
9. The contribution of the item toward strengthening the existing collection
10. Suggestions from Library staff and the general public
11. Popular demand is a significant basis for selection
12. The value of the item based on literary or scholarly excellence and other inherent quality, considered without regard to popular demand
13. Budgetary limitations and space constraints

3.5. **Scope of the Collection**

3.5.1. The Library provides materials, services and a collection that reflects the diverse educational, informational and recreational needs of its users. The Library recognizes that patrons have different learning styles and preferences for how they receive information. Therefore, the Stonington Free Library provides materials in a variety of formats, including:

Print - such as hardcovers, paperbacks, magazines and newspapers

Digital resources - such as online material, digital books, digital video, digital audio, digital archives and databases

Media - such as movies, tv series and audiobooks

Other formats that facilitate the library's mission

3.6. **Digital Collections/Databases**

- 3.6.1. This policy applies to both the digital and print materials in the Library's collection. Wherever possible, the Library makes electronic information available in the Library and remotely. In choosing to purchase or license electronic databases, the Library applies the same standards for selection as for print materials. However, the Library recognizes that it does not have the same control over electronic databases as it has over its in-house print materials. The Library will make every effort to provide assistance and ensure that the public learns how to use its electronic databases.

3.7. **Materials For Children and Teens**

- 3.7.1. The Library maintains several age-appropriate collections for children and teens. Materials may be reassigned among these sub-collections based on the age appropriateness of the content.
- 3.7.2. Children's and teen materials will be selected with the same care and judgment and following the same criteria as are adult materials.
- 3.7.3. Providing textbooks is the responsibility of the schools. The Library's role is to provide supplementary materials to enrich the resources available to students and teachers through the educational system. Selection of materials for children and teens should not be made to duplicate school texts, but rather should consider the usefulness of the items for general Library purposes.

3.8. **Choice of Library Materials By Minors**

- 3.8.1. The role of the parent or legal guardian in supervising the reading, listening, and viewing choices made by a minor child is recognized by this Library.
- 3.8.2. The Library staff and trustees are charged with the responsibility of providing free and equal access to Library materials and services to all eligible people. Moreover, it is impossible for them to know or predict the opinions of parents and guardians regarding the specific borrowing selections made by minor children.
- 3.8.3. Therefore, it is the policy of the Stonington Free Library that parents and guardians, not the Library staff or trustees, are responsible for monitoring and approving the selection of materials made by minor children. It is the parents or guardians – and only these – who may restrict their children – and only their children – from borrowing specific Library materials. Parents or guardians who wish their children not to have access to certain materials should accompany or otherwise advise their children. The Library staff and trustees cannot and do not act in loco parentis.

3.8.4. Selection of materials for the community as a whole cannot be inhibited by the possibility that specific items of an advanced nature may come into the possession of minor children.

3.9. **Withdrawals**

3.9.1. An up-to-date, attractive, and reliable collection can be maintained only by purchasing and retaining appropriate materials, and by removing items that have low circulation, are damaged, unrepairable, outdated, inaccurate, misleading, duplicating and otherwise no longer useful or historically significant. The collection should be evaluated by authorized and qualified staff on a systematic and continuous basis to identify materials that should be withdrawn.

3.9.2. Items withdrawn by reason of condition, loss or damage will be considered for replacement if deemed suitable and current.

3.9.3. Items removed from the collection are used for outreach activities, book sales, donated to other non-profits or are recycled.

3.10. **Gifts and Book Donations**

3.10.1. The Library accepts gifts of books and other collection materials without commitment as to final disposition. It assumes unconditional ownership of all items donated and retains the right to use or dispose of them as it sees fit.

3.10.2. Gift items and book donations must meet the same selection criteria as purchased materials. Items in poor physical condition or written in will not be kept. Duplicate copies of items already in the collection will be added only if needed. Donated materials will not be accepted with restrictions or conditions that necessitate special and separate housing, processing, treatment or final disposition.

3.10.3. The Library cannot give a dollar valuation for gifts of materials, but it can provide the donor with a statement verifying the number and type of materials donated and accepted, upon request.

3.11. **Controversial Materials**

3.11.1. Specific acquisitions may include items that may be unorthodox, unpopular or controversial in nature. The Library's acquisition of such items does not constitute endorsement of their content but rather allows for their free expression.

3.11.2. The decision by an author, publisher, or other content creator to withdraw their work from the market and stop selling or publishing it will not be considered sufficient reason alone for the Library to withdraw it from the collection.

3.12. **Balance and Neutrality**

- 3.12.1. Public libraries have a responsibility to provide books and other materials presenting diverse points of view on the problems and issues of our time. It must be understood, therefore, that ownership of Library materials does not constitute an endorsement by the Library of the ideas or viewpoints expressed within those materials.
- 3.12.2. Selections of Library materials are not made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval by specific individuals or groups, but solely on the merits of the works in relation to building the collection and serving the needs and interests of Library users and the community as a whole. While aware that one or more persons may take issue with the selection of specific items, the Library does not have to remove from the collection items purchased in accordance with the criteria specified above. Nor will materials be marked in such a way as to indicate official approval or disapproval of viewpoint and content. Items are not separated from the general collection except for the purposes of protecting them from damage or theft. In all cases, the quality of resources will be judged on the content as a whole, not by detached excerpts.

3.13. **Intellectual Freedom and Censorship**

- 3.13.1. The Library recognizes not all users will greet all materials with the same degree of enthusiasm and regard. Therefore, some materials selected for the collections may seem controversial and even distasteful to some Library users. It is the right of the individual not to read, view or hear materials that the individual considers objectionable. It is never the right of any Library user or users to deny access to Library materials to others. The freedom to choose from a broad range of informational and artistic materials will not be abridged. When evaluating library materials the Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View statements from the American Library Association are used as guiding documents.

4. **Requests For Reconsideration of Library Materials**

- 4.1. Any Stonington resident or taxpayer who wishes to object to the presence of a particular item in the collection may do so by completing the Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials. The Library Director and the Library Board of Trustees will review such objections. While an item is under review, it will remain in the collection. The patron will be informed of the Library Board's decision regarding the objection.

4.2. **Material Review and Reconsideration Policy**

- 4.2.1. The Stonington Free Library welcomes expressions of opinion concerning materials, programs or displays. Any Stonington resident or taxpayer with a vested interest who wishes that a specific item, program or display be reconsidered is asked to complete and submit a Reconsideration Form. In

accordance with Public Act 25-168 Sec. 322, 323 Stonington Free Library abides by the following statutory requirements:

1. No library material, display or program shall be removed, or programs be cancelled, because of the origin, background or viewpoints expressed in such material, display or program or because of the origin, background or viewpoints of the creator of such material, display or program.
2. Library materials, displays and programs shall only be excluded for legitimate pedagogical purposes or for professionally accepted standards of collection maintenance practices as adopted in the collection development and maintenance policy or the display and program policy.
3. The materials review and reconsideration process for Stonington residents or taxpayers to challenge any library material, display or program shall neither favor nor disfavor any group based on protected characteristics.
4. The individual completing a reconsideration form must include specific information about which portion or portions of such material they object to and provide an explanation of the reasons for such objection. The Request for Reconsideration form must include the individual's full legal name, address and telephone number.
5. Reconsideration requests are not confidential patron records under section 11-25 of the general statutes.
6. Any library material being challenged will remain available in the library according to its catalog record and be available for a resident to reserve, check out or access until a final decision is made by the Library Director.

4.2.2. **Review Process:**

1. Staff will direct concerns to the Library Director or Assistant Director who will listen to the concern of the individual or group.
2. After initial discussion, the Library Director or Assistant Director will provide copies of the "Library Bill of Rights," "Freedom to Read Statement," "Freedom to View statement," and "Library-Initiated Programs and Displays as a Resource: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights" from the American Library Association.
3. If the individual or group requests further action after reading the statements listed above, they will submit a completed Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form to the Library Director.
4. Upon receipt of the form, the Library Director will contact the person who filled out the form, acknowledge receipt of the form and explain the Library's procedures.

5. The Library Director will assign designated staff to evaluate the complaint, review, or read the item; consult the reviewing media (if possible) for other judgments on the item; and search for information about the author(s)/editor(s)/etc.
6. A written report with copies of all pertinent documents will be submitted by the assigned staff to the Library Director within ten (10) days of the complaint.
7. The Library Director will make a recommendation at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.
8. The Library Board of Trustees will make a final ruling on the request.
9. The individual or group making the request for reconsideration will be contacted by the Library Director with the Library Board of Trustees' final decision.

4.2.3. The final authority regarding the removal or retention of library materials ultimately resides with the Library Board of Trustees. Any Stonington resident or taxpayer who submitted a request for reconsideration form can appeal the decision of the Library Director. Appeals should be directed to the Library Board of Trustees. The Library Board shall:

1. Consult with (A) the Library Director, (B) the State Librarian, or the State Librarian's designee, (C) a representative of the cooperating library service unit, as defined in section 11-9e of the general statutes, (D) the president of the Connecticut Library Association, or the president's designee, and (E) the president of the Association of Connecticut Library Boards, or the president's designee,
2. Deliberate on such request for reconsideration,
3. Provide a written statement of the reasons for the reconsideration or refusal to reconsider the library material, and
4. Provide any final decision that is contrary to the decision of the Library Director.

4.2.4. A resource that has previously been reconsidered by request shall be exempt from additional requests for reconsideration for three years following being retained in the Library's collection despite a formal request for reconsideration. The Library Director shall summarize the previous decision in response to any new request for reconsideration during that three-year time period.

4.2.5. The Library is prohibited by state statutes from removing, excluding or censoring any book on the sole basis that an individual finds such book offensive.

4.2.6. **Regulations:**

1. Materials are not marked or identified to show approval or disapproval, and no materials are sequestered, except to protect valuable or rare items from injury or theft.
2. Responsibility for reading, viewing, and listening by children and young adults rests with their parents or legal guardians. Access is not restricted by the fact that children may obtain materials that their parents consider objectionable.
3. Library-initiated displays use library worker expertise for community interests, collections, services, facilities, and providing access to information and information resources. They introduce users and potential users to library resources and the library's role as a facilitator of information access. –From Library-Initiated Programs and Displays as a Resource: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, attached in full.
4. The Library staff and Board of Trustees uphold the principles set forth in the “Library Bill of Rights,” “Freedom to Read Statement,” the “Freedom to View statement,” and “Library-Initiated Programs and Displays as a Resource: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights.”
5. Questioned materials remain in the active collection and/or on display until an official decision is made.

4.2.7. Guidelines:

1. Stonington residents or taxpayers have the right to question materials in the collection
2. Any librarian or staff member of Stonington Free Library who, in good faith, implements the policies described in this section shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding that results from such implementation.

4.3. The Freedom to Read Statement

- 4.3.1. The library has adopted the below formal position of the American Library Association.
- 4.3.2. 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, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our 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. We, as individuals devoted to

reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

- 4.3.3. 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 Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.
- 4.3.4. 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.
- 4.3.5. 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 less able to deal with controversy and difference.
- 4.3.6. 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.
- 4.3.7. 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, in order 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.
- 4.3.8. 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.

4.3.9. We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *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. *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. *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. *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. *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 that 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. *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, the moral, or the 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 said. Books are the major channel by which 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.

- 4.3.10. 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; that 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.

- 4.3.11. This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.
- 4.3.12. Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

4.4. **Freedom to View Statement**

- 4.4.1. The FREEDOM TO VIEW, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:
1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
 2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
 3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
 4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
 5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

4.4.2. This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

4.4.3. Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council

4.5. **Library Bill of Rights**

4.5.1. The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.
7. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

4.5.2. Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

4.5.3. Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

4.6. **Library-Initiated Programs and Displays as a Resource: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights**

- 4.6.1. Library-initiated programs support the mission of the library by providing users with additional opportunities for accessing information, education, and recreation. Article I of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, “Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves.” Library displays increase awareness of programs, resources, and services.
- 4.6.2. Library-initiated programs include, but are not limited to, lectures, displays, exhibits, community forums, performing and visual arts, participatory workshops, technology programming, creative learning programming, wellness programs, story times, continuing education, fairs and conventions, book clubs, discussion groups, demonstrations, and presentations for social, cultural, educational, or entertainment purposes. Library-initiated programs may take place onsite at the library, off-site at other locations, or online, and may be provided by library workers, volunteers, or partners. Libraries may also choose to promote their programs, services, and resources through displays and digital signs.
- 4.6.3. Library-initiated programs and displays utilize library worker expertise for community interests, collections, services, facilities, and providing access to information and information resources. They introduce users and potential users to library resources and the library’s role as a facilitator of information access. The library may participate in cooperative or joint programs with other agencies, organizations, institutions, or individuals to facilitate information access in the community the library serves.
- 4.6.4. Libraries should not discriminate against individuals with disabilities and shall ensure they have equitable access to library resources. Library-initiated programs and displays should comply with all applicable laws, including the standards and requirements of The Americans with Disabilities Act and state and local disability accessibility guidelines. If a program is held in a location not controlled by the library, the library should assure that the space is accessible to all users. If users overflow designated event areas during library events, libraries should secure accessible public spaces (e.g., ramps, pathways, and emergency exit routes) to ensure access and safety for everyone. Reasonable accommodations should also be made to have interpretation or real-time captioning for the deaf or hard of hearing at library-initiated programs when needed or requested by library users.
- 4.6.5. Socially excluded, marginalized, and underrepresented people, not just the mainstream majority, should be able to see themselves reflected in the resources and programs that libraries offer. Libraries should actively seek to include a variety of programming options representing diversity of genres, formats, ideas,

and expressions with a multitude of viewpoints and cultural perspectives that reflect the diversity in our communities. Library-initiated programs that cross language and cultural barriers introduce community members to the library's resources and provide access to information. Libraries serving multilingual or multicultural communities should make efforts to accommodate the information needs of those who speak and read languages other than English, including advertising for such events.

- 4.6.6. Concerns, questions, or complaints about library-initiated programs and displays are handled according to the same written policy and procedures that govern reconsiderations of other library resources. These policies should apply equally to all people, including, but not limited to, library users, staff, and members of the governing body. The policies should set forth the library's commitment to free and open access to information and ideas for all users.
- 4.6.7. Programs should not be canceled because of the ideas or topics of the program or the views expressed by the participants or speakers, nor should library workers censor or remove displays because someone may disagree with the content. Library sponsorship of a program does not constitute an endorsement of the program content or the views expressed by the participants or speakers, any more than the purchase of resources for the library collection or curation of a display constitutes an endorsement of the resources content or its creator's views. Libraries should vigorously defend the First Amendment right of speakers and participants to express themselves.
- 4.6.8. Article V of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." The right to use a library encompasses all the resources the library offers, including the right to attend library-initiated programs. Libraries create programs for an intended age group or audience based on educational suitability and audience interest; however, restrictions on participation based solely on the gender, chronological age, or educational level of users violate this right and should be enforced only when not doing so would adversely impact the safety of the participants or interfere with the intended purpose of the program. Parents and guardians may restrict their own children's access to library programs, but no person or organization can interfere in others' access and participation. A parent or guardian may discuss their child's access to and participation in library programs with their child, but may not impose those decisions on others, including other people's children.
- 4.6.9. Libraries should not deny access to library-initiated programs if patrons owe the library for overdue fines or other fees. If libraries charge program participants for supplies used, they should make every effort to reduce economic barriers to participation.

- 4.6.10. Any collection and retention of program participants' personal information should be on an opt-in basis only. While attendees may need to demonstrate their eligibility to attend the program by showing a library card or student ID, they should not be required to share their personal information in order to attend a library program.
- 4.6.11. "[Visual and Performing Arts in Libraries: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#)," adopted February 13, 2018, by ALA Council.
- 4.6.12. "[Services to People with Disabilities: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#)," adopted January 28, 2009, by the ALA Council; amended June 26, 2018.
- 4.6.13. "[Equity, Diversity, Inclusion: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#)," adopted June 27, 2017, by the ALA Council.
- 4.6.14. Adopted January 27, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended June 26, 1990; July 12, 2000; June 26, 2018 *under previous name* "Library-Initiated Programs as a Resource"; and June 24, 2019.

4.7. **Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials Form**

Please express your concerns by answering the following questions addressed to the Director and Board of Trustees of the Stonington Free Library. Your responses will help us in better understanding your concerns. You may use this form as presented here or as the basis for a letter. You must be a Stonington resident or taxpayer to submit a reconsideration request.

Full Legal Name _____

Address _____
City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

You represent (circle one) **SELF** or **ORGANIZATION (please provide name of organization below)**

1. Material on which you are commenting:

- | | | | |
|------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Book | DVD/Blu-Ray | Display | Library Program |
| Audio Recording | | Newspaper | Magazine |
| Electronic Information | | Other | |

Title _____

Author/Producer _____

Publisher/Date of Work _____

2. What brought this material to your attention?

3. Did you read, listen or view the material in its entirety? If not, which parts did you read, listen or view?

4. To what part of the material do you object? Please be specific and cite pages, scenes, etc. as applicable.

5. What do you feel might be the result of reading, listening or viewing this material?

6. Have you read reviews of this material?

7. What action do you suggest the library take concerning this material?

8. Can you recommend any resources which provide additional information on this topic?

Please sign and date below and return this form to the Library Director. You will be notified within 60 days of receipt of the results of the reconsideration process. Reconsideration requests are not confidential patron records under section 11-25 of the CT General Statutes.

Signature _____

Date _____