

# Collection Development Policy

## **Rationale**

The purpose of a Collection Development Policy is to guide the library staff in the development of the library's collection of materials and to inform the public about the principles upon which these decisions are made.

A policy cannot replace the judgement of librarians, but stating goals and indicating boundaries will assist them in choosing from the vast array of materials available.

## **Scope of the Collection**

The Thomas Memorial Library's collections are intended to meet the informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs of its citizens. The scope of the collection is to be sufficiently broad to offer a choice of format, treatment, and level of difficulty so that the library needs of most individuals can be met and individuals of all ages can be served. The collection is not archival; it is reviewed, revised, and renewed on an ongoing basis to meet contemporary needs of the Cape Elizabeth community and surroundings.

## **Selection Principles**

Library materials shall be selected for values of interest, information, and enlightenment of all the people of the community. The library will include material without regard to the race, nationality, age, gender, sexual orientation, or the political or religious views of the creator. The library shall provide the fullest practicable range of material presenting a wide variety of views concerning the problems and issues of our time. Materials of sound, factual authority should not be proscribed or removed from library shelves because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

The selection of any material for the library's collections does not constitute an endorsement of its contents. The library recognizes that many materials are controversial, and that any given item may offend some patrons. Selection decisions are not made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to the collection and the needs and interests of the community.

*The responsibility for children's use of the library materials rests with their parents or legal guardians. The selection of materials intended for use by adults shall not be inhibited by the possibility that they may be accessible to use by children.*

## **Criteria for Selection**

Librarians must consider each type of material for its excellence and the audience for which it is intended. No single standard can apply to all acquisition decisions. Librarians may select some

material primarily for its artistic merit, scholarship, or its value as a human document, while they choose others to satisfy the recreational and entertainment needs of the community.

A small percentage of library materials are subject to widespread and/or heavy local demand.

These high-demand items may or may not meet the general or specific criteria contained in this policy. In either case, librarians give serious consideration to the volume and nature of requests by members of the public. In addition, as the social and intellectual climate of the community changes, materials which librarians originally did not recommend for purchase, may become of interest. Such materials will be re-evaluated as the need arises.

To build a collection of merit and significance, librarians acquire materials according to objective guidelines. They evaluate all acquisitions, whether considered for purchase or donated to the library, by examining reviews in one or more of the professional library review media and checking against the standards listed below.

### **General Criteria**

- Overall purpose
- Contemporary or permanent value/interest/demand/appeal
- Authority, skill, competence, reputation, and significance of the author
- Reputation and standards of the publisher
- Clarity, accuracy, objectivity, and readability
- Social significance
- Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment
- Appropriateness and effectiveness of the medium to the content
- Quality and suitability of the physical format to the library collection
- Attention of critics and reviewers
- Importance of the subject matter to the collection
- Scarcity of material on the subject
- Price, budgetary, and space limitations
- Availability of material elsewhere in the region or through interlibrary loan
- Potential use
- Need for duplicate materials in the existing collection
- Currency
- Presentation of opposing points of view to allow for balance

### **Specific Criteria for the Evaluation of Works of Information and Opinion**

- Authority
- Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment
- Objectivity
- Clarity, accuracy and logic of presentation
- Diversity of viewpoint/expression

## **Special Criteria for the Evaluation of Works of Imagination**

- Representation of important movement, genre, trends, or national culture
- Literary merit
- Vitality and originality
- Artistic presentation and experimentation
- Sustained interest
- Effective characterization
- Reflection of the human experience

## **Responsibility for Materials Selection**

The responsibility for assisting in the selection of library materials belongs to members of the library staff. The ultimate responsibility for materials selection rests with the Director who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Thomas Memorial Library Committee. All staff members who select materials are expected to adhere to the selection objectives and principles expressed in this policy and to apply their knowledge and expertise in making selection decisions.

## **Selection Methods**

Librarians select most materials on the basis of reviews published in sources recognized as reliable and authoritative. These include professional review journals as well as review sources aimed at the general public and online sources.

Librarians also consult standard bibliographies such as Public Library Catalog, Children's Catalog, Junior High School Catalog, and Senior High School Catalog and lists of best books published in the library review media, especially for retrospective materials to fill a gap in the collection.

The number of items librarians can select is only a small fraction of the number produced each year. Librarians make all selections with professional judgment adhering to selection criteria.

## **Special Collections**

**Maine Collection:** Primary emphasis will be on collecting non-fiction materials about the State of Maine, current and historical; secondary emphasis will be on non-fiction materials written by State of Maine authors.

**The Gabriel A. Zimpritch Poetry and Writing Collection:** Primary emphasis will be on collecting 20th century English and American poetry and creative writing resource materials.

## **Weeding Policies and Procedures**

Weeding is the practice of systematically examining and evaluating materials already in the library's collection. In weeding, the selection staff determines whether an individual item should be retained or withdrawn. If the item is withdrawn, the librarian decides if it should be replaced with a new copy, or with a new title.

Librarians withdraw materials for a variety of reasons: perhaps because the information is outdated, the library owns more copies than currently needed, the material is rarely used, or the physical condition of the material is poor. Discarded items may be discarded, donated or sold to raise additional funds for the Thomas Memorial Library depending on condition of the item(s).

## **Gifts**

The Thomas Memorial Library accepts gifts of materials with the understanding that the same guidelines of selection that apply to materials acquired by purchase also apply to gifts. The library reserves the right to evaluate and to dispose of gifts in accordance with the criteria applied to purchased materials and, in addition, the library reserves the right to sell or otherwise dispose of materials not added to the collection.

The library staff may issue to the donor a written statement that indicates the number of items received and the date, but it is the donor's responsibility to indicate to the IRS the value of the items given. Pursuant to Section 155a of the Tax Reform Act of 1984 and IRS regulations, the library staff will not appraise or indicate a value for the gift.

Please see the Gifts Policy for further information about gifts of items or monetary donations to the Thomas Memorial Library.

## **Requests for Purchase**

Comments, requests, and questions from patrons about the collection provide librarians with useful information about local interests or needs. Librarians evaluate requests for specific items in accordance with selection principles, objectives and criteria set forth in this document.

While the library encourages acquisition suggestions from patrons, the final decision to acquire materials for the library collection rests with the library staff.

## **Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials**

A singular obligation of the public library is to reflect differing points of view on controversial or debatable subjects within its collections. The Thomas Memorial Library does not promulgate particular beliefs or views, nor does the selection of an item express or imply endorsement of the viewpoint of the author. Library materials shall not be marked or labeled to indicate approval or disapproval of the contents, nor will items be sequestered, except for the purpose of protecting them from damage or theft.

The Thomas Memorial Library welcomes the expression of opinion by patrons and community members, but will be governed by this materials selection policy in making additions to, or deletions from, its collections. Objections may be raised by a library patron about an item in the collection. In the event a complaint about materials in the collection is made, the following procedure will be followed:

1. A patron who requests the reconsideration of library materials will be asked to put the petition in writing. Staff will provide a Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form that the patron will be encouraged to complete and sign. (See Appendix)
2. The Library Director will then appoint a committee to review the challenge and make recommendations. This committee will be comprised of the staff member who selected the item (or the staff member who currently selects in the item's area), a professional librarian not on TML staff, a Thomas Memorial Library Committee member, and two members from the community at large. The Director will provide appropriate resources to the committee for their evaluation of the challenge. The committee is advisory only, and will report its findings to the Library Director within four weeks of receipt of a signed Request for Reconsideration form.
3. The Library Director will carefully weigh the recommendations of the committee and make a decision on the disposition of the material. S/he will communicate the decision in writing to the selector, the Thomas Memorial Library Committee, the review committee, the Town Manager and the complainant no later than one week after receiving the findings from the committee.
4. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response from the Director, s/he may appeal to the Thomas Memorial Library Committee at a regularly scheduled meeting within sixty days. The complainant is to notify the Director at least ten days prior to the Committee meeting in order to be placed on the meeting's agenda. The complainant will be given up to ten minutes to present an appeal and five minutes will be allowed for clarifying questions from the Committee. The Committee will have two months to respond to the appeal and will do so in writing. The decision by the Committee will be final.



6. Have you read, or are you aware of reviews of this work?

7. What do you believe is the intent or purpose of the creator of this work?

8. In its place, what item of equal quality would you recommend that would convey an appropriate perspective on this topic?

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Signature

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Date