

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY
OF THE
J. V. FLETCHER LIBRARY

Philos. 7

Objective

The mission of the J. V. Fletcher Library is to serve its clientele as a progressive, responsive public library resource, connecting users of all ages with their popular materials needs, without regard to format and serving as an informational center providing materials on the issues and interests of day-to-day living. A strong secondary role is the provision of educational and informational support to students pursuing both formal and informal educational paths. While the Fletcher Library strives to be both reflective of, and responsive to, the community, it also seeks to be in the vanguard of professional library services – attracting and leading the community into informational, cultural and technological literacy in a warm and welcoming public setting.

(Library Planning Process, 2006).

To support this mission, library materials are selected, organized, and made accessible in order to anticipate and meet the diverse needs of library clientele.

Policy on Library Materials Selection — Pursuant to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 78, Section 33, As Amended — and Reconsideration

This Policy of the J. V. Fletcher Library Board of Trustees has established that:

- 1) The Library shall develop collections of merit and significance, whether acquired by purchase or gift. Each item of material shall be considered in terms of its value to the collection and the audience for whom it is intended. Reading and language abilities of the citizens will be considered.
- 2) Materials to be evaluated shall include a variety of books for young people and adults, in hardcover and paperback editions; financial services; data base services; electronic formats; large print books; periodicals; newspapers; pamphlets; recordings; videocassettes; films; tapes; microforms; maps; music scores; new technologies, and; the equipment needed for all borrowers, including the handicapped, to use the materials.
- 3) Materials shall be evaluated according to objective standards. Flexibility, open-mindedness and responsiveness are required in the process. Consideration shall be given to expanding knowledge, changing social values, technological advantages and cultural differences where appropriate. As growth and change occur in these areas, the Library shall reevaluate materials which were not acquired.
- 4) Some materials may be judged primarily in terms of artistic merit, scholarship or their value as human documents; others will be selected to satisfy recreational and entertainment needs.
- 5) Different viewpoints on controversial issues will be acquired, including those which may have unpopular or unorthodox positions. The Library recognizes that those materials which offend, shock or bore one reader may be considered pleasing, meaningful, or significant by another.

- 6) To avoid unnecessary duplication, consideration will be given to materials available to the public through the Collection Development guidelines of the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium, Inc., through other area libraries and through other community agencies.
- 7) All collections will be widely accessible to all borrowers, regardless of their location, through extensive interlibrary and intralibrary loan services and through the daily delivery service.
- 8) Recognizing that a materials selection policy can result in complaints from public at large who may not understand the reasons why certain items have been included in the collection, the Library shall develop procedures for reconsideration of the item in question. Any patron has the right to question the purchase of an item for the Library collection.
- 9) The Library Board of Trustees supports the American Library Association's (ALA) Bill of Rights, ALA's Freedom to Read Statement, ALA's Library Rights for Adults, and ALA's Free Access to Libraries for Minors.
- 10) Librarians and Library governing bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child. Thus, parents—and only parents—have the right and the responsibility to restrict the access of their children to library resources. Parents who do not want their children to have access to certain library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their children. Otherwise, each reader is privileged to select for himself among the books the library has purchased, and no one is obliged to read what he does not like. (See also Library Card Registration and Responsibilities Policy).
- 11) Funds do not permit unlimited purchase of specialized research, scholarly or highly technical materials, textbooks or other curriculum-related materials used in the schools and colleges of the area, except as such materials also serve the general public. In the event of incentives, group discounts, joint programs, and collaborative initiatives, materials may be purchased to supplement the elementary, middle school and high school libraries.

Responsibility for the Selection of Library Materials

The Board of Trustees formulates policies for the selection of all materials within the broad framework of the objectives and purposes of the Library. The Trustees delegate the responsibility of implementing these policies through materials selection to the Library Director and, under his/her direction, to the professional staff who are qualified for this activity by reason of education, training, and experience. Suggestions from staff members (other than those officially assigned the selection responsibility) and from library users are encouraged and seriously considered in the selection process.

Goals of Selection

The J. V. Fletcher Library selects, makes available, and promotes the use of library materials, whatever the format, which:

- 1) Enrich and support the educational, recreational, and informational needs of the users, taking into consideration their varied interests, abilities, and learning styles.
- 2) Represent differing viewpoints on a subject.
- 3) Reflect the problems, aspirations, attitudes, and ideals of a pluralistic society.
- 4) Support business, cultural, recreational, and civic activities in the community.
- 5) Stimulate self-understanding and growth.
- 6) Enhance job-related knowledge and skills.
- 7) Increase knowledge of and participation in the affairs of the community, the country, and the world.
- 8) Are appropriate to the level of the targeted user.

The collections for young people are aimed at meeting the diverse recreational, cultural, and informational needs of that segment of the population from infancy through adolescence. Materials are included to provide enjoyment, stretch the imagination, cultivate a love of books and reading, stimulate creative abilities, supplement study, and provide an awareness of the broad spectrum of moral and social values. Materials are selected which vary in format, content, and level to meet wide-ranging interests and demands, to help young people understand their own development, and to prepare them for informed participation in society.

Criteria Guides for Selection

The evaluation of materials is characterized by flexibility, open-mindedness, and a responsiveness to the changing needs of the citizens of the Town of Westford and of the Commonwealth. These changing needs require that materials be evaluated initially and on a continuing basis. As a result, materials not recommended for purchase originally may, in fact, be purchased at a later date. The converse -- that materials may still be considered unsuitable or unnecessary for the collection -- is also possible.

Purchases for the library are made on the basis of recommendations in library journals, professional and literary magazines, publishers' trade magazines, and newspaper reviews.

Materials are evaluated as a whole and not on the basis of a particular section or sections. A work will not be excluded from the Library's collection because it presents an aspect of life honestly or because of frankness of expression.

While a single standard cannot be applied to each potential item for selection, materials are judged by appropriate criteria. In some instances, these criteria include artistic merit, scholarship, or the value of the material to the informational needs of the community. In other instances the criterion may be substantial demand.

In the process of building a diversified collection which supports the Library's mission, the following objective criteria are applied to purchased and donated materials:

General Criteria

- 1) Availability and suitability of format.

- 2) Suitability of subject, style, and level for the intended audience.
- 3) Critics' and staff's reviews.
- 4) Reputation of the publisher or producer; authority and significance of the author, composer, filmmaker, etc.
- 5) Timeliness or permanence of the material.
- 6) Quality of writing, design, illustrations, or production.
- 7) Relevance to community needs.
- 8) Potential and/or known demand for the material.
- 9) Relative importance in comparison with existing materials in the collection on the same subject.
- 10) Availability and accessibility of the same material in the regional or statewide area.
- 11) Price.

Specific Criteria for the Evaluation of Factual Works

- 1) The work contains timely and accurate information.
- 2) Competence of author.
- 3) Objectivity.
- 4) Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment.
- 5) Clarity of presentation.
- 6) Usability of arrangement.
- 7) Inclusion in standard bibliographies and indices.

Specific Criteria for the Evaluation of Works Representing an Opinion

- 1) Representation of a challenging, though extreme or minority, point of view.
- 2) Clarity and logic of presentation.
- 3) Usability of arrangement.
- 4) Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment.
- 5) Degree and accomplishment of purpose.
- 6) Availability of materials on the subject.

Specific Criteria for the Evaluation of Works of the Imagination

- 1) Representation of an important movement, genre, trend, or culture.
- 2) Vitality and originality.

- 3) Artistic presentation and quality evidenced in the plot, setting, theme characterization, point of view, and style.
- 4) Sustained interest and entertainment.

Withdrawal and Discarding of Library Materials

Materials are regularly withdrawn from the library's collection because:

- 1) The work may be factually out-of-date — that is, no longer timely or accurate.
- 2) A more comprehensive source on the subject has since been acquired.
- 3) The work may feature popular or commercial characters in whom interest has faded, or who have been supplanted in popular culture.
- 4) The work may reflect racial, ethnic or gender bias, stereotypes, views or illustrations.
- 5) The work may be so badly worn or damaged that it cannot be bound or mended.
- 6) The work may be less expensive to replace than repair.
- 7) The work, a once-popular material, is no longer regularly requested.
- 8) Space considerations may necessitate the removal of some items from the collection.

Materials deemed lost or missing are officially withdrawn from the record of Library holdings. With a Trustee vote, materials may be forwarded to the Friends of the J. V. Fletcher Library, Inc. Book Sales per MGL Ch. 30B, S. 15 (g):

(g) Notwithstanding any other requirement of this section, a governmental body may by majority vote, unless otherwise prohibited by law, dispose of a tangible supply no longer useful to the governmental body but having resale or salvage value, at less than the fair market value to a charitable organization which has received a tax exemption from the United States by reason of its charitable nature.

Replacement of Library Materials

A replacement is an item purchased to take the place of an identical title previously in the collection. It is not the Library's policy to automatically replace all materials withdrawn because of loss, damage, or wear. It is the Library's policy to evaluate the need for replacement based upon the following two factors:

- 1) Existence of adequate coverage of the subject, especially if more current material is available.
- 2) Demand for the specific title.

Purchase of Multiple Copies

Where high interest or high demand necessitates, the Library will strive to purchase multiple copies of titles, formats or volumes.

Donations

Donations of books and materials to the library are welcomed, with the understanding that the same criteria of selection will be applied before adding donated materials to the collection. Those materials not selected will be refused, or sold, or discarded. No donations which are accompanied by qualifying instructions as to disposition, housing, or use will be accepted.

Gifts of Library Materials

Gifts of books and other materials are accepted with the understanding that they may be used, routed to the Friends of the J. V. Fletcher Library, Inc. Booksales or disposed of as the Library determines is appropriate. New titles acquired in this manner are subject to the basic standards of selection. Replacements and duplicate copies are added to the collection if needed. The cost of processing and the availability of shelving space are also factors in determining the acceptance of gifts. The Library does not provide evaluations of gifts for tax deductions or other purposes.

Local Authors

Every attempt is made to acquire titles by local authors (Westford and towns in the Merrimack Valley) that are published by mainstream publishers. Titles by local authors that are self-published are not added to the collection unless there is a compelling reason to do so (such as valuable local content and/or high local interest.)

Westford Writers

Westford writers often donate their books which have been published by non-mainstream publishers. If the donated book does not otherwise meet our collection development criteria, we will add the donated title to our collection with the call number *Westford Writer*. However, we will not purchase such titles; they will only be added to the collection if they are donated by the author.

Materials Preservation

Certain materials of long-term value and/or usefulness may be preserved through binding, preservation techniques, scanning, transcribing or putting on microforms, or some other technique.

Reconsideration of Library Materials

Procedures have been developed for the reconsideration of materials to assure that objections or complaints are handled in an attentive and consistent manner. Once an item has been accepted for purchase, based on the Library Materials Selection Policy of the Library Board of Trustees, it will not be automatically removed upon request. (See Addendum I.)

VOTED AND APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES: 11/3/97; amended 9/9/02; 5/14/07; 4/4/16; 4/1/19; 11/25/19; 4/5/21.

ADDENDUM I

RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS AT THE J. V. FLETCHER LIBRARY

The choice of library materials by users is an individual matter. While a person may reject materials for himself/herself, he/she 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 assure that objections or complaints are handled in an attentive and consistent manner.

Any resident of the Town of Westford that 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 Library Material Selection Policy [subsumed in the Collection Development 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.