

## **Collection Development & Censorship Policy**

Adopted: 1/25/2022

Revised: 2/25/2025

Approved by: Library Board of Trustees

### **Statement of Mission**

The mission of the Fenton Free Library is to enrich the quality of life for a diverse population of all ages by providing resources and services which contribute to individual literacy, education, and entertainment.

The Board of Trustees and staff of the Library affirm the following objectives:

- to provide a variety of materials and programming for informational, educational, recreational and cultural needs, and to provide qualified staff to give guidance in the use of these materials
- to provide access for all people
- to inform the public of library resources and services
- to support intellectual freedom
- to provide materials and programming to patrons of all ages to encourage and promote continued use of the library
- to purchase current materials proportionate to levels of demand and use, taking care to anticipate and respond to indications of significant new needs
- to keep abreast of technological changes which affect the development of the collection
- to be aware of the resources available in surrounding libraries to avoid duplication of resources while ensuring wide coverage of subjects

The Library adheres to the principles of the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to View, and the Freedom to Read statements adopted by the American Library Association. In a free society, information on different points of view should be readily available to allow individuals to decide which ideas are meaningful to them. The public library is the institution that provides free access to these ideas. The library, consequently, has the responsibility for selecting materials that reflect a wide variety of ideas and may contain controversial points of view. Since the library has a responsibility to protect the rights of all users, it does not limit the use of its collection. The library has a responsibility to provide a diversity of materials in both print and non-print forms. Materials are selected to reflect changes in educational, cultural and intellectual ideas and the impact of new technology within the limitations of budget and space.

### **Materials Selection**

Selection is a discerning and interpretive process, involving a general knowledge of the subject and recognition of the needs of the community. Materials are judged on the basis of the content and the style of the work as a whole, not by selected portions or passages. Material selections are made by trained staff. Tools used in selection include professional journals, trade journals, subject bibliographies, publishers' promotional materials, and reviews from reputable sources. Purchase suggestions from patrons are very welcome and indeed are encouraged and provide Librarians with useful information about interests or needs of the community. Patron suggestions will be governed by this Collection Policy in making additions to or deleting items from the collection.

### **Criteria for Selection**

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 materials to the informational needs of the community. In other instances, the criterion may be substantial demand. To build a diversified collection that supports the library's mission, the following criteria are used. These criteria apply to purchased and donated materials as well as special collections.

- Availability and suitability of format
- Suitability of subject, style, and level for the intended audience
- Critic, patron, and staff reviews
- Reputation of the publisher or producer; authority and significance of the author, composer, filmmaker, etc.
- Timeliness or permanence of the material
- Quality of writing, design, illustrations, or production
- Relevance to community needs
- Potential and/or known demand for the material
- Relative importance in comparison with existing materials in the collection on the same subject
- Availability and accessibility of the same material in the local area
- Price, in relation to total budget

### **Material Format**

Materials are purchased in the most appropriate format for library use. Books are generally purchased in hardcover editions for durability. Paperback editions may be purchased in cases where the hardcover edition is expensive and the title would be either used infrequently or is an item that would be weeded from the collection in a few years. Paperbacks may be purchased as added copies of popular titles to meet patron demand and/or as part of the paperback browsing collection. New formats will be considered for the collection when, by industry reports, national survey results, and evidence from local requests, a significant portion of the community population has the necessary technology to make use of the format. Availability of the items in the format, the cost per item, and the Library's ability to acquire and handle the items will also be factors in determining when a new format will be collected. Similar considerations will influence the decision to delete a format from the Library's collection.

### **Weeding**

Weeding of the collection is performed in order to keep the collection responsive to patron needs, to insure its vitality and usefulness to the community, and to make room for newer materials. This identifies lost or damaged items, ephemeral materials that are no longer used, out-of-date materials and extra copies that are not being used. Weeding also helps evaluate the collection by identifying areas or titles where additional materials are needed, older editions need to be updated, and subjects, titles, or authors that are no longer of interest to the community. As materials become worn, dated, damaged or lost, replacement will be determined by the appropriate staff members, who will determine whether or not:

- The item is still available and can be replaced
- Another item or format might better serve the same purpose
- There remains sufficient need to replace that item
- Updated, newer or revised materials better replace a given item
- The item has historical value
- Funds are available

### **Gifts and Donations**

The library welcomes gifts from individuals and groups. The Library, however, reserves the right to make the final selection for any materials that will be added to the collection. The Library also reserves the right to withdraw materials from the collection when they are no longer appropriate under the collection policy. Librarians will not give appraisals of gifts and donations for tax purposes. Any items that are in good condition but are not chosen to be added to our collection may be sold in the library's book shed, at book sales, or gifted to charitable causes.

### **Evaluation of the Collection**

Continuous evaluation of the collection is necessary in order to ensure that the Library fulfills its mission to provide materials which meet patrons' interests and needs. Statistical tools are studied to determine how the collection is being used and how it should change to answer patron usage. The materials themselves are examined for their physical condition and frequency of use. Patron input and community and usage surveys may also be used in evaluating the collection.

### **Reconsideration of Library Materials**

A singular obligation of the Library is to reflect differing points of view within its collection. The Library does not endorse particular beliefs or views, nor does the selection of an item express or imply endorsements of the viewpoint of the author. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, nor will items be sequestered except for the purpose of protecting them from theft or damage. Comments from members of the community about the collection or individual items in the collection frequently provide librarians with useful information about interest or needs that may not be adequately met by the collection. The Library welcomes input, but will be governed by the following procedures before removing items from the collection:

- If a patron objects to the Library's ownership of a particular item or items, the Library will be governed by the guidelines set forth in the American Library Association's "Challenged Materials: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights."
- The challenger will be offered the opportunity to complete a "Patron's Request for Reconsideration of Library Material" Form.
- The request will be reviewed by the Library Director and a recommendation will be formulated. The challenger will be notified in writing of the recommendation within 14 days and a copy will be given to the Board of Trustees.
- If the challenger is not satisfied with the recommendation, written appeal must be made to the Board of Trustees within 30 days. The appeal will be added to the agenda of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees.
- A final determination will be made in writing to the challenger within 30 days of the board meeting.

- The challenged material will remain in the collection until a determination is made. Reconsideration of the item for substantially similar concerns will not be entertained for a period of five (5) years after a decision has been made. Patron Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials forms are available at the Circulation Desk upon request. All sections must be completed before it may be submitted for review.

## **Public Library Request for Reconsideration of Material Form**

The Trustees of The Fenton Free Library have established a Collection Development and Censorship Policy and a procedure for gathering input about particular items. Completion of this form is the first step in that procedure. If you wish to request reconsideration of a resource, please return the completed form to the Library Director.  
Fenton Free Library--1062 Chenango Street, Binghamton, NY 13901

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you represent self? \_\_\_\_ Or an organization? \_\_\_\_

Name of Organization \_\_\_\_\_

1.Resource on which you are commenting:

\_\_\_\_ Book (e-book) \_\_\_\_ Movie \_\_\_\_ Audio Recording \_\_\_\_ Digital Resource \_\_\_\_ Other

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author/Producer \_\_\_\_\_

2. What brought this resource to your attention?

3. Have you examined the entire resource? If not, what sections did you review?

4. What concerns you about the resource?

5. Are there resource(s) you suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

6. What action are you requesting the committee consider?