

Abbott Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
February 16, 2023
Time 7:00 PM

Chair's Remarks

1. Minutes will be taken by Jim Harrison
2. Nancy Berger - excused absence

Attendees: Tim Eliassen, Susi Churchill, Bev Bjorklund, Jim Harrison, Jon Reed, Jim McGraw via phone, Susan Johanson

Mindy Atwood

Guest: Caitlin Clapp, President of Friends of Abbott Library

Bev convened the meeting at 7 pm

The Board recognized and thanked Susi Churchill for her 8 years of service to the Board. Congratulations to Susi!

Approval of Minutes

Mindy provided the board with some redline changes to the draft minutes. Bev made motion to accept the redlined minutes, Jon seconded. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

The report was discussed. Jon made a motion to accept, Tim seconded. Motion carried.

Director's Report

There was discussion on the Resources Policy. Mindy suggested an addition to the policy that states that decisions regarding questions about the policy effective for one year from the date of decision. Bev moved to accept the change. Jon seconded. Motion carried.

There was discussion about the possibility of a default budget which would mean loss of step increases since they are not included in the default budget. The Board

believes we should proceed with step increases and deal with a default budget if it happens.

Mindy mentioned that we had 18 people attend the new drop in activity.

Strategic Plan

1. Date for Review, Refresh, Renew

Current plan is to meet on the morning of March 23rd. Final time to be announced but likely wrapping up by noon on the 23rd.

Abbott Library Friend's Report

Friends are generously funding the library for \$21,480 in 2023. (Mindy provided the board with a copy of the Funding Requests which the Friends will fund.) It was noted that the Friends have received ~\$49k in donations during 2022.

An "Abbott Library" shirt sale is anticipated very soon. The Friends will be sponsoring their Pancake Breakfast along with the Book Sale on the same Saturday that the town celebrates the 4th of July.

1. Discuss book sale date (July 1 or 8) We are awaiting the town's decision as to when 4th of July celebrations will take place.

Abbott Library Foundation Report

Tim reported that the Foundation collected ~\$17k in 2022.

Chair's Report

1. Establish framework for Policy Committees
 - a. Establish priority list for policy work committees
 - b. Book Sale Committee
 - c. Director review Process and PAR form committee

The Board may create sub-committees. Any sub-committee needs to post a notice of their meetings at least 24 hours in advance in two locations in town. The public

must have access to sub-committee meetings. Minutes need to be taken and preserved at the library.

The NHLTA's annual conference is planned for 9 May 2023 in Concord at the Grappone Center in Concord. Sign-ups are not available yet. Bev recommends that as many Trustees who can attend, do so.

Nonpublic Session RSA 91-A:3, II (a)

The Board went into a non-public session at 7:45 pm.

The Board returned to public session at 7:57.

Bev made a motion to seal the minutes, Jon seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed.

Nonpublic Session RSA 91-A:3, II (a)

The Board went into a non-public session at 7:59 pm.

The Board returned to public session at 8:29 pm.

Bev made a motion to seal the minutes, Jon seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed.

Old Business/New Business

None was brought forward.

Public Comment

No public comments were made.

Adjournment

Jon made a motion to adjourn. Susi seconded. Motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 8:31 pm.

Calendar

March 16, 2023

April 20, 2023

Abbott Library

Expenditures by Vendor Summary

January 2023

	TOTAL
Amazon	108.78
Amazon business	222.71
ARC Mechanical Contractors	1,052.93
Canon Solutions America	316.68
Comcast	144.03
Dead River Company	672.98
Deb Hadley	200.00
Demco	194.44
Eversource	501.02
H.W. Wilson by Grey House Publishing	547.50
Ingram	2,001.75
Melinda S. Atwood	240.00
Midwest Tape	263.11
NHLA	210.00
Park Street Foundation	225.00
Precision Software Corporation	1,517.00
Quill Com	68.98
Rockingham Electrical Supply Co. Inc.	246.72
U.S.Postal Service	-156.00
UniFirst Corporation	83.22
Not Specified	35,611.67
TOTAL	\$44,272.52

Abbott Library
Statement of Financial Position
As of January 31, 2023

	<u>Total</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
B101 Operating Account	21,122.08
B102 Trust and Fines	20,351.02
B102.1 Petty Cash - Drawer	45.00
Total B102 Trust and Fines	<u>\$ 20,396.02</u>
B201 Cap. Campaign/Donation Account	22,128.75
Total Bank Accounts	<u>\$ 63,646.85</u>
Accounts Receivable	
11000 Accounts Receivable	156.00
Total Accounts Receivable	<u>\$ 156.00</u>
Other Current Assets	
12000 Undeposited Funds	0.00
Total Other Current Assets	<u>\$ 0.00</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>\$ 63,802.85</u>
Other Assets	
A18600 Other Assets	
A18610 Certificate of Deposit	
A18611 Accrued Interest from CD	964.65
A18620 Marth Abbott Trust	125,160.00
A18630 Mabel Davies' Funds	115,104.00
Total A18610 Certificate of Deposit	<u>\$ 241,228.65</u>
Total A18600 Other Assets	<u>\$ 241,228.65</u>
A300 New Library Capital Reserve	0.00
A301 Library Gardner Fund	2,804.54
A302 Library General Fund	9,722.90
Total Other Assets	<u>\$ 253,756.09</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$ 317,558.94</u>
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
20000 Accounts Payable	2,943.35
2100 Encumbrances	7,815.75
Total 20000 Accounts Payable	<u>\$ 10,759.10</u>
Total Accounts Payable	<u>\$ 10,759.10</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>\$ 10,759.10</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>\$ 10,759.10</u>
Equity	
30000 Opening Balance Equity	293,468.89

31500 Temp. Restricted Net Assets		50,000.00
C303 Capital Campaign Fund Balance		274,858.85
Total 31500 Temp. Restricted Net Assets	\$	324,858.85
32000 Unrestricted Net Assets		-313,524.54
Net Revenue		1,996.64
Total Equity	\$	306,799.84
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$	317,558.94

Tuesday, Feb 14, 2023 10:38:36 AM GMT-8 - Accrual Basis

Abbott Library

Statement of Activity

January 2023

	<u>Total</u>
Revenue	
1 Town Funding Contributions	
100 Town Funding	9,800.50
101 Town Funding Payroll & Benefits	35,611.67
Total 1 Town Funding Contributions	\$ 45,412.17
43400 Direct Public Support	650.65
46400 Other Types of Income	25.00
46429 Interest Operating Acct	0.45
46480 Book Reimbursement	39.99
46481 Non-Resident Fees	40.00
46487 Printing/Copying Income	65.55
46488 Fax	5.50
46489 Overdue Conscience	29.85
Total 46400 Other Types of Income	\$ 206.34
Total Revenue	\$ 46,269.16
Gross Profit	\$ 46,269.16
Expenditures	
2 Payroll and Benefit Expenses	
207 Full Time Wages	14,344.06
208 Part Time Wages	5,318.38
210 Health Insurance	6,669.62
215 Life & Disability Insurance	257.98
220 Medicare	279.04
221 Employer FICA	1,193.24
231 Retirement Contribution	2,018.38
250 Unemployment Comp Insurance	366.85
260 Workers Compensation Insurance	278.47
Total 2 Payroll and Benefit Expenses	\$ 30,726.02
3 Prof. & Tech Services	
341 Telephone	107.35
341B Internet Access	36.68
342A Computer Support/Hardware	1,517.00
342B Copier Lease	316.68
Total 3 Prof. & Tech Services	\$ 1,977.71
4 Facilities	
410 Electricity	501.02
411 Heat	672.98
430 Bldg Repair & Maintenance	1,382.87
Total 4 Facilities	\$ 2,556.87
5 Other Services	
520 Insurance	4,885.65

540 Training and Meetings	200.00
560 Membership	210.00
Total 5 Other Services	\$ 5,295.65
6 Supplies	
610 General Supplies	50.47
610-A Machine Supplies	68.98
610-C Program Supplies	44.48
625 Postage	-156.00
640 Custodial Supplies	76.90
Total 6 Supplies	\$ 84.83
8 Library Materials	
802-A Books	2,693.02
802-C Non-Print	488.11
802-G Collection Supplies	450.31
Total 8 Library Materials	\$ 3,631.44
Total Expenditures	\$ 44,272.52
Net Operating Revenue	\$ 1,996.64
Net Revenue	\$ 1,996.64

Tuesday, Feb 14, 2023 07:47:38 AM GMT-8 - Accrual Basis

Director's Report

February 16, 2023

Public Relations and Advocacy

- Attended Friends of the Abbott Library meeting on January 31
 - The Friends have received \$49,100 in donations in 2022. Way to go, Friends!
- Attended Town Deliberative Session on February 7
- Attended Department Head meeting on January 8
- Attended Summer Camp meeting on February 10

Financial Management

- I have been given a form to fill out that will serve as a sole source justification memo for the \$11,466 in SLFRF monies the Selectboard approved on November 14, 2022. My goal is to have it submitted to the Town Manager by the end of next week.
- Input budget categories into the 2023 budget in Quickbooks

Strategic Planning

- We have tentatively set a date of March 23 to work with Rebecca Hutchinson of Empower Success Corps on the strategic plan.

Collection Management

- Inventory on the adult fiction collection continues.

Technology Management

- Comcast replaced the wireless modem on Saturday, February 4

Policy Management

- I will circulate a paper copy of the policy matrix at the meeting on Thursday so that the Board may sign up for the policies they are interested in working on.
- I am recommending the following addition to the Resources Policy, "All decisions will be effective for one year from date of the decision." A draft of the updated policy is attached.

Request for your action: Approval of an amended Resources Policy

Staff Management

- The library will be closed on February 24 for a staff development day.
- In the event that the proposed 2023 Town of Sunapee budget (Article 16) fails to pass on March 14, the Town will be operating on a default budget. Items not included in the default budget include the increase to health insurance, the cost of living adjustment and step increases.

For your discussion: Two staff members have reviews in February, before the vote. How would we like to handle those step increases?

Program Management

- I presented the library's annual funding request to the Friends on January 31. The Friends approved \$21,480 for 2023. I have attached the request spreadsheet for your reference. Thank you to the Friends for their continued and generous support.
- We had 18 people attend our first-ever Drop-in Playgroup on Saturday, February 3. Great job, MacKenzie!
- We are currently accepting registrations for an afterschool program that will begin on March 8.
- The Friends of the Abbott Library will be hosting an author talk on April 13 at 6:30 PM. John Broderick will be the author speaking. He will also give a presentation at 3 PM for town and school employees. Here is Mr. Broderick's bio:

John T. Broderick Jr. (born 1947) is a former Chief Justice of the New Hampshire Supreme Court. He served as Associate Justice of the court from 1995 to 2004 and as its Chief Justice from 2004 to 2010. Broderick holds a J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law and a B.A. from the College of the Holy Cross. Broderick also served as Dean and President of the University of New Hampshire School of Law until May 2015. Since 2015, Broderick has been on a journey to end the stigma surrounding mental health in New Hampshire.

When John Broderick's son was just 13, he began suffering from anxiety and depression, conditions that sadly went unrecognized and undiagnosed for years. Because of John's mistakes in failing to see these struggles for what they were-mental illness-and deal with it appropriately, his family went on a very public and painful journey in their home state of New Hampshire. Luckily, they all survived and healed. John, now Senior Director of External Affairs at Dartmouth Health, is on a mission to share his family's hard-won knowledge about mental health. He has embarked on a campaign to change the culture, stigma, and shame around mental illness that for generations has kept too many people feeling alone, afraid to step out of the shadows, and to change the conversation.

His book is "Backroads and Highways: My Journey to Discovery on Mental Health." It was published in August 2022.

Upcoming Programs

- February 21, 28 and March 2, 9 at 10 AM- Storytime
- February 21, 28 and March 2, 9 at 3 PM- Mah Jongg
- February 21 at 6:30 PM- Return of Brendan Gauthier to speak about "The Future of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine."
- March 2 at 6:30 PM- Book Discussion of "All the Pretty Horses" by Cormac McCarthy
- March 4 at 10 AM- Drop-in Playgroup
- March 8, 9, 15, 16, 22, 23, 29, 30 and April 5, 6, 12, 13, 19, 20 and May 3, 4 at 3 PM- Letgoyour Mind After School Program
- April 13 at 6:30 PM- Friends Event: Author Talk with John Broderick

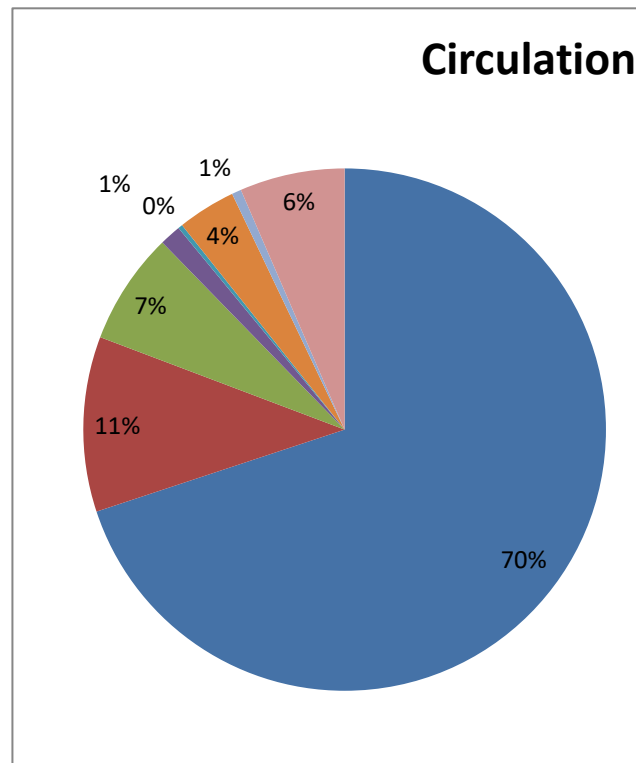
Library Use:	Jan 2023		YTD 2023	YTD 2022	% Change
Library Items	2,754		2,754	2,221	24%
Downloaded Audiobooks	427		427	339	26%
Downloaded E Books - Overdrive and Freeding	274		274	256	7%
Downloaded Magazines	52		52		
Music Downloaded - Freegal	11		11	37	-70%
Music Streamed - Freegal	142		142	227	-37%
Local Use	23		23	7	229%
Online Tools Total	256		256	179	43%
Breakdown of Online Tools					
Ancestry	9		9	0	
Kanopy (videos)	99		99	55	80%
EBSCO	2		2	10	-80%
Mango	24		24	10	140%
New York Times				104	-100%
Hoopla	122		122		
Total Circulation	3,939		3,939	3,266	21%
Patron Visits	1,609		1,609	1,363	18%
New Registrations	15		15	12	25%
Internet Sessions (public computers)	108		108	68	59%
Wireless Usage	487		487	367	33%
Program Questions	12		12	66	-82%
Regular Reference	57		57	70	-19%
Extended Reference	19		19	13	46%
Readers' Advisory	45		45	41	10%
Tech Help	44		44	66	-33%
Extended Tech Help	8		8	25	-68%
Total Reference	185		185	281	-34%
Website	Jan 2023		YTD 2023	YTD 2022	% Change
Visits	1,374		1,374	962	43%
Unique Visitors	732				
Avg Visits per Day	44.3				
Programs This Month	Adult		Child	Adult YTD	Child YTD
Number of Programs	5		2	5	2
Number of Attendees	51		16	51	16
Meeting Room Usage in Hours	Activities		Conference	Activ YTD	Conf YTD
	31		18	31	18
Children's Computer Sessions	37		37		
Volunteer Hours	Jan 2023		YTD 2023		
	156.3		156.3		
Web Chats	Jan 2023		YTD 2023		
	2		2		

January 2023

Circulation	
Library Items	2,754
Downloaded Audiobooks	427
Downloaded E Books (Overdrive and Freeding)	274
Downloaded Magazines	52
Music Downloaded (Freegal)	11
Music Streamed (Freegal)	142
Local Use	23
Online Access	256
Total Circulation	3,939

Toatal Reference 185

Patron Visits 1,609



■ Library Items

■ Downloaded Audiobooks

■ Downloaded E Books
(Overdrive and Freeding)

■ Downloaded Magazines

■ Music Downloaded (Freegal)

■ Music Streamed (Freegal)

■ Local Use

■ Online Access

Funding Requests for 2023

Programming

Summer Reading programming	\$ 2,500.00	
Summer Reading supplies	\$ 300.00	
SCES Summer books	\$ 950.00	
		\$ 3,750.00
8-week after-school Lego program	\$ 2,000.00	
4-week after-school program	\$ 250.00	
		\$ 2,250.00
Sunapee Summer Day Camp programming	\$ 3,500.00	
		\$ 3,500.00
Adult Programs	\$ 1,300.00	
2 Allioops flower arrangement classes	\$ 2,200.00	
Library of Things	\$ 500.00	
		\$ 4,000.00

In-library Program Support

Movie licensing fee	\$ 350.00	
BookPage	\$ 375.00	
aquarium maintenance	\$ 1,500.00	
		\$ 2,225.00

Museum Passes

VINS, The Fells, The Carrier	\$ 440.00	
reimbursements (estimate)	\$ 500.00	
		\$ 940.00

On-line Services

Hoopla	\$ 500.00	
Mango Languages	\$ 900.00	
New York Times Cooking	\$ 225.00	
		\$ 1,625.00
High School Interns	\$ 1,500.00	
		\$ 1,500.00

Professional Development & Staffing

NELA Fall Conference for 2 staff	\$ 1,440.00	
staff lunches in February and September	\$ 250.00	

TOTAL
\$ 21,480.00 REQUEST

Library Resources Policy

Abbott Library, Sunapee, NH

PURPOSE

To guide Library staff in:

- Selecting materials and resources that will be held by the Abbott Library and are of contemporary significance and permanent value.
- Determining which gifts to encourage
- Determining which materials to bind, to replace and to weed-out
- Selecting resources to further the library's mission of inspiring, educating, entertaining and providing essential services and accurate information to our patrons
- To inform our patrons of the selection principles

MATERIAL SELECTION:

- Ultimate responsibility for collection development and selection policy for items held by the Abbott Library lies with the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees delegates to the Library Director the authority and responsibility for selection of library materials and for the development of the collection. The director may authorize other staff to apply the policy in selecting and maintaining collections and resources.
- Adheres to the *ALA Library Bill of Rights* and *Freedom To Read* Statement (appended to this policy)
- As a public library, our collection shall represent a wide range of viewpoints, opinions and tastes to satisfy the needs and interests of our entire community. Minority views, both sides of controversial issues, current political issues, a wide variety of recreational and special interest materials, all have a legitimate place on the Library's shelves.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Selection of all collection materials and resources owned by or presented at the Abbott Library within the policy framework adopted by the Trustees
- Acquire up-to-date materials and resources that are responsive to the interests and needs of every segment of the community and that do not discriminate against any political, religious, economic, or social view/group through deliberate exclusion of their views
- Provide a diversity of materials, resources and programs without exercising direct or implied censorship.
- Expending available funds in an equitable manner across all areas of the collection
- Selecting the children's and young adult's collections to supplement and support school materials without duplicating them
- Continually review collection strengths and weaknesses and improve weak areas with new materials.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

- Individual merit of each item
- Its permanent value
- Diversity of viewpoint
- Popular appeal & demand
- Reviews in professional journals and popular media
- Cost
- Current relevance

- Relationship to existing holdings
- Recommendations from staff and patrons.

SELF-PUBLISHED MATERIALS:

- Self-publishing is the publication of any book or other media, at the author's own expense, without the involvement of an established third-party publisher
- Non-fiction self-published books will not be added to the collection. Fiction self-published books will not be purchased by the library. Donations may be added to the collection at the discretion of the library director. Fiction self-published books will be marked on the spine label "Self-Published" and may be shelved in a separate area. These books may be weeded after one year, with exceptions being made by the discretion of the director

COLLECTION GIFTS AND DONATIONS:

- The Library accepts gifts of books and other materials with the understanding that they will be added to the collection only if appropriate and needed. If they are not needed because of duplication, condition, or age, the Director may dispose of them as he/she sees fit.
- Purchased materials selection criteria shall apply to gifts.
- Memorial gifts of books with suitable bookplates are accepted by the Library. It is preferred that gifts of specific titles be offered after consultation with the Director.
- The Library encourages and appreciates gifts and donations. See Gift Policy for further information.

WEEDING:

- An up-to-date, attractive and useful collection is maintained through a continual withdrawal and replacement process.
- Replacement of worn materials shall be dependent upon current demand, usefulness, more recent acquisitions and availability of new editions.
- Low circulation items determined not to have retention value shall be removed from the collection to provide more space to house the collection.

CHALLENGED MATERIALS AND RESOURCES:

- The Library recognizes that some resources are controversial and that any given item or program may offend some patrons. Materials or programs of the required quality, serving the purposes of the Library and relating to an existing need or interest will not be removed from the collection or cancelled because of pressure by groups or individuals expressing disapproval.
- Selection or removal of materials shall not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the basis of the principals stated in this policy. No library materials shall be sequestered except to protect them from damage or theft.
- It is the responsibility of parents to determine what their children, and only their own children, may read. The selection of materials will not be restricted by the possibility that young people may obtain materials that their parents consider inappropriate.
- In the case of digital resources offered by vendors, including but not limited to Hoopla, Kanopy and OverDrive, it is acknowledged that Abbott Library staff do not select the resources available

through these services.

- In the event that a patron wishes to protest the inclusion of a particular program at or resource in the Abbott Library, the patron will be given an opportunity to submit the “Request for Reconsideration of a Library Resource” form (appended). This form should be filled out in full and submitted to the Library Director who will refer it to the Board of Trustees with a written recommendation for appropriate action. Upon approval by the Board, a copy of the recommendation will be sent to the challenger. The Board’s decision will be final. The item in question will remain accessible until a final decision is made.
- In the event that a patron wishes to protest the inclusion of a particular resource available through Kanopy or Hoopla, the patron will be given an opportunity to submit the “Request for Reconsideration of a Library Resource” form (appended). This form should be filled out in full and submitted to the Library Director who will refer it to the Board of Trustees with a written recommendation for appropriate action. Upon approval by the Board, a copy of the recommendation will be sent to the challenger. The Board’s decision will be final. The item in question will remain accessible until a final decision is made.
- In the event that a patron wishes to protest the inclusion of a particular resource available through OverDrive, the patron will be directed to the New Hampshire Downloadable Books (NHDB) Consortium Collection Development Policy and the NHDB Consortium Request for Reconsideration of Digital Materials form.
- All decisions will be effective for one year from date of the decision.

Approved by the Abbott Library Board of Trustees - 14 July 2009

Revised and approved by the Abbott Library Board of Trustees - 17 November 2015

Revised and approved by the Abbott Library Board of Trustees – 15 November 2021

Revised and approved by the Abbott Library Board of Trustees- 16 December 2021

Revised and approved by the Abbott Library Board of Trustees- 8 September 2022

Revised and approved by the Abbott Library Board of Trustees- 16 February 2023

PATRON REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF A LIBRARY RESOURCE

TYPE OF RESOURCE (Please circle one): Book DVD Magazine Audio
CD Software Digital Program Other (please specify)

TITLE:

AUTHOR:

PUBLISHER:

REQUEST INITIATED BY:

NAME _____ TELEPHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

Complainant represents: (circle one) Self Organization (name) _____

Other (please specify) _____

Use back of page or attach additional pages as needed to answer the following questions.

1. What do you object to in the work? Please be specific: cite pages, passages, etc.
2. What of value is there in this work?
3. What do you feel might be the result of reading/viewing/listening to this work?
4. For what age group would you recommend this work?
5. Did you read/listen to/view the entire works?
6. Are you aware of the judgement of this work by critics?
7. What do you believe is the theme or purpose of this work?
8. What would you prefer the library do about this work?
9. What do you believe should be added to counterbalance the viewpoint expressed in this work?
10. Have you read the Library Resources Policy?
11. Have you read the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read

Statement?

DRAFT

American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights

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

- I. 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.
- II. 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.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. 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.
- VII. 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.

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.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

The American Library Association's Freedom to Read Statement

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.

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.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, 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.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *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 the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; 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.

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.

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