

Bethlehem Public Library

Material Review and Reconsideration Policy

The library welcomes expressions of opinion concerning materials, programs or displays. A Bethlehem Public Library resident 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, Bethlehem Public Library abides by the following statutory requirements:

- 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.
- Library materials, displays and programs shall only be excluded for legitimate professionally accepted standards of collection maintenance practices as adopted in the collection development and maintenance policy or the display policy or the program policy.
- The materials review and reconsideration process for town residents to challenge any library material, display or program shall neither favor nor disfavor any group based on protected characteristics.
- 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.
- Reconsideration requests are not confidential patron records under section 11-25 of the general statutes.
- 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.

Review Process:

The Library Director will evaluate the completed request for reconsideration form, read the challenged material in its entirety, evaluate the challenged material against the collection development and maintenance policy and make a written decision on whether or not to remove the challenged material not later than sixty days from the date of receiving such

request. The Library Director shall provide a copy of the library director's decision and report to the individual who submitted the form.

The library director may consolidate any requests for reconsideration of the same challenged library material.

Appeal Process

The final authority regarding the removal or retention of library materials ultimately resides with the Library Board of Trustees. Any appeal of the decision of the library director should be directed to the Library Board of Trustees. Appeals must be submitted in writing.

The Library Board shall:

- A. consult with (i) the library director, (ii) the State Librarian, or the State Librarian's designee, (iii) a representative of the cooperating library service unit, as defined in section 11-9e of the general statutes, (iv) the president of the Connecticut Library Association, or the president's designee, and (v) the president of the Association of Connecticut Library Boards, or the president's designee,
- B. deliberate on such request for reconsideration,
- C. provide a written statement of the reasons for the reconsideration or refusal to reconsider the library material, and
- D. provide any final decision that is contrary to the decision of the library director.

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.

Considerations

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. 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.

Any librarian or staff member of a public 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.