

# Reconsideration Policy

Valley City Barnes County Public Library - Adopted September 2013

## Intellectual Freedom

The Valley City Barnes County Public Library is committed to the principles of intellectual freedom and affirms the American Library Association's Freedom to Read statement [Appendix] and the Library Bill of Rights [Appendix]. As such, materials representing diverse viewpoints on topics, including controversial ones, are actively collected. Selection of an item does not indicate that the Library, its Board, or its Staff agrees with the ideas and viewpoints it presents.

## Reconsideration Requests

When a complaint about library items is made, the following steps will be followed:

1. Informal:
  - a. The consideration will be listened to calmly and courteously.
  - b. The Library's selection policy and commitment to intellectual freedom will be explained, to help the patron understand the value of a diverse library collection and that ownership of an item does not indicate agreement or endorsement of the ideas, values, or principles expressed therein. This will be done respectfully and in a fashion that acknowledges and restates the patron's concerns.
  - c. If the patron has recommendations for other materials on the topic, they will be noted, and if appropriate, procured.
  - d. If the patron is not satisfied, advise the patron of the library's policy and procedures for handling a reconsideration request, and provide the patron with a copy of the Library's Selection Policy and of the Request for Reconsideration Form.
2. Formal:
  - a. If the form is filled out, make sure a prompt written reply related to the concern is sent.
  - b. The item shall remain part of the collection until a decision has been made.
  - c. Notify the Director and/or the Library Board of the complaint and assure them that the Library's procedures are being followed. Present full, written information giving the nature of the complaint and identifying the source.
  - d. Notify the Chairperson of the North Dakota Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Committee that a reconsideration request has been filed.
  - e. The Director and staff involved in collection development shall review the request for reconsideration. This includes:
    - i. Reading/viewing/listening to the challenged item in its entirety.

- ii. Considering the objections in terms of the Library's Selection Policy, the principles of the Library Bill of Rights, and the opinions of various reviewing sources used in materials selection.
  - f. If the reviewed material does not meet the criteria set forth in the Selection Policy, the Library shall acknowledge that the material is unsuitable and it will be withdrawn from the collection.
  - g. If the material does meet the selection criteria, the item shall remain part of the collection
  - h. The Director will respond to the request clearly and precisely, stating the reasons the material was withdrawn or retained. This response will also inform the requestor how to pursue the matter further.
3. Appeal:
- a. If the requestor feels that the problem has been dealt with inadequately, a final appeal to the Library Board can be made.
  - b. A public hearing will be conducted with the Board acting as the decision-making body.
  - c. The Director will notify the American Library Association Intellectual Freedom Office, and their advice will be enlisted.
4. Hearing:
- a. An open meeting will be held—the location, beginning, and ending times of the meeting will be publicized in advance of the meeting.
  - b. The meeting will be conducted by the Director or Assistant Director.
  - c. The Library Board will act as the decision-making body. A quorum must be present.
  - d. News coverage will be arranged by the Director.
  - e. Persons wishing to speak must register prior to speaking, giving their name, address, and organization represented (if any).
  - f. Each speaker will be given four minutes in which to present his/her point of view. A timekeeper will be appointed prior to the meeting.
  - g. Library Board members will be given time to ask questions following each testimony.
  - h. Each speaker should present a written copy of his/her testimony to the Library Board members.
  - i. The Board will review the testimonies heard. They will vote at a later date after they have had time to weigh and consider the testimonies. The Board will issue its opinion within 14 working days after the hearing.
  - j. The Board will make their decision public and the Library will take action in accordance with that decision.