

FITCHBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
February 14, 2018

FITCHBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY  
610 Main Street, Fitchburg MA

Trustees present were: Jim Walsh, Matthew Bruun, Martha Clark, Robert Favini, Mary Rice Hurley, Joanne Huse, Cynthia Jones, and Joan McWilliams.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES of January 10, 2018

The minutes of the January 10, 2018 meeting were approved.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Walsh reported that the Library had received the state aid check for \$30,201.24. The money can be used for anything and can be banked and used in the future. The amount of the check varies depending on how much the state allocates for libraries in each fiscal year.

LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

Director Bernard said one the major programs in March will be the Celtic Concert on Sunday March 11. The artist is Kate Chadbourne, a musician, songwriter, poet and storyteller. It will be paid for by the Robert L. Rice Memorial Concert Fund.

Next week is school vacation so there will be several programs in the Youth Library.

Director Bernard has also been attending meetings of an organization called Finding Common Ground, a cross state group devoted to various issues. The last meeting Director Bernard attended, with members of the Fitchburg Fire Dept., was devoted to preparing an emergency disaster plan.

There will be a conference on the Open Meeting Law in April at the Leominster Public Library which Chair Walsh plans to attend.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

*Finance Committee-* The monthly financial reports from Jim Hohman were distributed. Rob Favini discussed the overall decline in state money to libraries.

*Legislative Affairs Committee-*

Director Bernard and Jim Walsh attended Legislative Affairs Day at the Forbush Library in Westminster.

*Collection Development-* Director Bernard said that the Collection Development Policy had in the past been a statement of principles adopted specifically for this library. She has proposed to the Trustees that Fitchburg Public Library adopt the ALA Freedom to Reads Statement and the

Library Bill Of Rights, as do many other libraries, as Fitchburg Public Library's statement of principles related to its collection development policy and to replace its former statement of principles. The Trustees voted to accept the proposal.

#### NEW BUSINESS

Chair Walsh reported on work with the Financial Development Agency, the agency the Library has hired to help us with fund raising for the library renovation grant. Director Bernard, Rob Favini, and Chair Walsh met with Mayor DiNatale to talk about the process. The Mayor will talk to Robert Antonucci and ask him to be the lead person in the campaign advisory board. The FDA has talking points for the Mayor to provide to Mr. Antonucci and to others when addressing the issue. The Mayor is supportive of the Library project.

Director Bernard distributed information sheets with questions regarding how libraries should relate to libraries which have been decertified. After discussion, the Trustee voted to implement the Fitchburg Public Library Reciprocal Borrowing Privileges Policy prepared by Director Bernard. It states that Fitchburg Public Library will not "lend materials to residents of municipalities with decertified libraries."

#### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted  
by Jean Tenander  
for Cynthia Jones

**Fitchburg Public Library**  
**Investment Performance**  
**12/31/17-1/31/18**

**Investment Objectives**      **The investments comprising the Fitchburg Public Library shall be managed prudently with a primary emphasis on growth oriented securities that yield a reasonable rate of return.**

**Alice & Rodney Wallace Funds**      **Stocks-69%   Bonds-30%   Money Market-1%**

<b>Market Value 12/31/17</b>	<b>Market Value 1/31/18</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>	<b>Estimated Annual Income</b>	<b>Annual %Income</b>
\$1,080,293	\$1,095,536	+ 1.41%	\$28,630	2.61%

**Other Funds**      **Stocks-15%   Bonds-75%   Money Market-10%**

<b>Market Value 12/31/17</b>	<b>Market Value 1/31/18</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>	<b>Estimated Annual Income</b>	<b>Annual %Income</b>
\$ 706,953	\$ 710,544	+ .51%	\$20,577	2.90%

**TOTAL**

\$1,787,246	\$1,806,080	+ 1.05%	\$49,207	2.72%
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	<b>12/31/2017</b>	<b>1/31/2018</b>	<b>Income Balance as of 1/31/2018</b>
<b>Restricted</b>	\$330,985.04	\$332,220.80	\$ 37,684.64
<b>Unrestricted</b>	\$375,967.60	\$378,323.29	\$ 19,810.42
<b>Total</b>	\$706,952.64	\$710,544.09	\$ 57,495.06

## The 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.

"The Freedom to Read Statement", American Library Association, July 26, 2006.

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement> (Accessed December 21, 2017)

Document ID: aaac95d4-2988-0024-6573-10a5ce6b21b2

## 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.

"Library Bill of Rights", American Library Association, June 30, 2006.  
<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill> (Accessed December 21, 2017)  
Document ID: 669fd6a3-8939-3e54-7577-996a0a3f8952

## STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

To assure that books and other library materials are provided to meet the needs and interests of all the people in the community, the Board of Trustees has adopted the following statement of principles concerning the selection of materials for the library:

Books and other library materials should be selected for inclusion in library collections for the information enlightenment and interest of the people of the community as a whole. Library materials should never be added or omitted because of the desires of any single individual or group, to the exclusions of the interests of the rest. There should be the fullest practicable provision of library materials to present all points of view about the problems and issues whether of the past, the present, or the future, and whether local, national, or international. Libraries do not advocate the ideas found in their collections. The presence of an item, whether magazines, book or other library material, in a library does not indicate an endorsement of its contents by the library.

Library materials which are authoritative should not be proscribed or removed from library shelves because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval. In no case should any item be excluded because of the race, nationality, or the political or religious views of the writer. Particularly most libraries resist any and all attempts to abridge the full access to ideas, the full freedom of information, and the full freedom of expression that are the tradition and the heritage of citizens of the United States.

Public libraries in particular, while adhering unequivocally to the right of the people to full freedom of information, have a responsibility to make certain that the materials in their custody are not misused to the injury of either the people or the nation. The best procedure against misuse of library materials is not to suppress the materials, but to counter the misuse of them by an honest and complete presentation of all sides of the question at issue.