

Town of Esopus Library
February Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, February 22, 2022

Agenda

Call to order	Jim Fitzmorris
Approval of January Board Meeting Minutes – 01/25/22	
Public Comment	Public
Treasurer’s Report/Finance Committee	Susan Leiching / Reggie Heffernan
Director’s Report	Brooke Dittmar
Friends	Susan Leiching

Committees

1. Buildings and Grounds – Jim Fitzmorris
2. Governance and Personnel – Susan Leiching
3. Sustainability / Research and Development – Don Carragher

Adjournment

Resolutions:

2022-06 – Payment of January Claims

2022-07 – Addition of Finance: Fixed Assets Capitalization Policy

2022-08 – Addition of Finance: Operational Reserve Fund Policy

2022-09 – Open Additional Account at Bank of Greene County

Buildings & Grounds
Committee Meeting
February 14, 2022

Attendees: Don Carragher, Brooke Dittmar, Jim Fitzmorris, Shannon Harris

Brooke reported that the library's new cleaning service did a good, thorough job in its first effort.

Jim will follow up on Gilbert's efforts related to construction of a new bridge adjacent to the library's pond. We'd like to have at least one additional estimate to compare with Agape's price quote.

Regarding potential sealing/stripping/paving work in the library's parking lot:

- Don has suggested possible increase of parking spaces in the lower lot;
- Don will speak with a contractor about striping and sealing areas of the upper lot. There are several drainage-related issues which need to be addressed.
- Brooke has spoken with the company that previously did striping on both parking lots. They do seal coating, also, and will provide a bid for seal coating and striping all of our paved areas.
- Shannon suggested contacting our local Advisory Commission on Drainage for analysis of drainage issues on library property.

Don has spoken with the owner of a neighboring property on Canal Street who is willing to discuss clearing of vines, and who also wants to have a survey done to determine where shared property lines are located.

Next meeting will be March 14 @ 4:00pm.

Respectfully submitted by
Jim Fitzmorris, Chairperson

**Town of Esopus Library
Finance Committee Minutes
February 10, 2022**

Attendance: Susan Leiching, Reggie Heffernan, Brooke Dittmar

The payment of claims for \$13,921.29 was reviewed by the Finance committee and a resolution for approval by the Board of Trustees will be presented to the Board at the February 22nd meeting.

Discussion ensued about the differences in both the check listings and journal entries for employee expenses with the monthly profit and loss statement. Brooke will ask the accountant to provide the cause of these discrepancies for January expenses.

The committee edited the Operation Reserve Fund/Bund Balance Policy which creates a separate account to improve financial stability in the event of late receipt of tax appropriations. This policy will be presented to the board for approval on February 22.

As requested at last month's meeting, we discussed wage ranges for hourly positions. Susan Leiching suggested that potential employees bringing appropriate experience could be paid an additional \$0.25/hour per year of service for up to 10 years. This would allow a range of up to \$2.50/hour more than base rates for experienced personnel.

Finally, we discussed the need for a Fixed Asset Capitalization policy. Brooke provided a policy already written and approved by the Highland library. With the addition of a one sentence introduction, this policy could also be approved by the entire board.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Reggie Heffernan, Acting co-treasurer

**Next Meeting
Thursday, March 10, 2022
4 pm**

**Town of Esopus Library
Governance and Personnel Committee**

**February 8, 2022
(2nd Tuesday, @ 4pm)**

Attendance: Susan Leiching, Brooke Dittmar, Nancy Beranek, Jim Fitzmorris

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 PM

1. Reviewing the responsibilities of the director. There are several changes – Susan will send a draft copy to the committee members

2. Brooke checked for updates in the Freedom to Read, Freedom to View and the restricted access to Library Materials. The updated versions will be put in the trustee reference book. They will not need a resolution to accept – just a review of the new documents.

Meeting adjourned at 5:10 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Leiching, Chairperson

**Next meeting is March 8, 2022
4:00 PM**

TOWN OF ESOPUS LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES January 25, 2022

Board Members Present: Gilbert Ramos, Jim Fitzmorris, Reggie Heffernan, Nancy Beranek, Don Carragher, Laura Lauria, and Susan Leiching, Shannon Harris

Board Members Excused:

Board Members Absent:

Staff Present: Brooke Dittmar, Mary Garraty

I. CALL TO ORDER –

The meeting of the Town of Esopus Library Board of Trustees was called to order by President Jim Fitzmorris at 6:03 pm via Zoom

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Written minutes for December monthly Board meeting held on January 4, 2022 were submitted and open for review.

- A motion to accept the minutes of the December Board Meeting, held on January 4th, was made by Don Carragher and seconded by Reggie Heffernan.
AYE: 6; NO: 0; ABSTAIN: 0
Board Members Excused:
Board Members Absent: Susan Leiching and Laura Lauria

III. TREASURER'S REPORT/FINANCE – Gilbert Ramos

Written report was submitted. Gilbert reviewed the Finance committee meeting minutes. The Fund Balance Policy is in the final stages of preparation and recommends maintaining a reserve of three months of operating expenses.

- **Resolution #01 of 2022 (Payment of December Claims):** The Board of Trustees of the Town of Esopus Library accepts and approves the payment of claims from December 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021 for items in the amount of \$39,821.04. A motion to accept the resolution was made by Nancy Beranek and seconded by Don Carragher.
AYES: 6; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0
Board Members Excused:
Board Members Absent: Susan Leiching and Laura Lauria

IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Brooke Dittmar, Director

Written report submitted. Brooke reviewed the Director's report. We have opened the Book Cellar. We have received donations from the Foundation and from Lukatis. We also received our PILOT payment. A number of patrons have made donations. We ordered four patron

laptops. We have not yet been able to purchase the additional hotspots, as the company's governmental department position is vacant. We received mugs and pens with our logo on them, using a PR grant from the same company we ordered them from. Hudson Valley Explorer had an article about some Mid-Hudson Libraries, and we were one of the libraries that were highlighted. There is a printed copy for each Trustee in their mailbox.

We are joining the Digital Navigators of the Hudson Valley, through which we can help folks connect to digital services. It should be a great thing. We are ordering four computers to replace our older computers. We had 9,727 folks connect to our wireless this past year. Brooke attended the Waterfront Advisory Committee's open house. If you go to the Town of Esopus website, you will see a number of brief surveys that they would like people to fill out. They are deciding how to utilize and develop specific targeted areas along the river. Brooke also discussed the digital enhancements to the Libby app.

VI. FRIENDS -- Susan Leiching

Susan reported that the Friends had a meeting on January 19th. They are going to continue with lobby sales, and the Book Cellar is now open. The Friends are in the process of doing their annual mailing around mid-February. Friends are still receiving donations.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Combined Committee Meeting (Buildings and Grounds, Research and Development and Sustainability) – Jim Fitzmorris**
Written report submitted. Jim reviewed the committee meeting minutes. Nancy discussed the contact info from Rep. Delgado's office, Green Mountain Energy and Rural Development. The Committees are looking into two immediate needs. The first need is to have the solar array and geothermal systems evaluated and the second is to explore battery power storage.
- **Governance and Personnel – Susan Leiching**
Written report submitted. The committee reviewed the Responsibilities of the Trustees. Next month the committee will review the Responsibilities of the Director. We are also working on combining the internet and wireless policies together.
 - **Resolution #04 of 2022 (Responsibilities of Trustees Update) The Board of Trustees of the Town of Esopus Library accepts the changes to Responsibilities of Trustees. A motion to accept the resolution was made by Jim Fitzmorris and seconded by Don Carragher.**
AYES: 7; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 1
Board Members Excused:
Board Members Absent:

Gilbert read the following resolutions:

- Resolution #02 of 2022 (Lukatis Donation):** The Board of Trustees of the Town of Esopus Library accepts the quarterly share of income in the amount of \$1,065.08 from the Lukatis Trust into the operating funds for the library. A motion to accept the resolution was made by Reggie Heffernan and seconded by Susan Leiching.
 AYES: 8; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0
 Board Members Excused:
 Board Members Absent:
- Resolution #03 of 2022 (Acceptance of Foundation Donation):** The Board of Trustees of the Town of Esopus Library accepts the annual monetary donation from the Foundation in the amount of \$48,380.00 and approves its addition to the General Fund of the 2022 Operating Budget. A motion to accept the resolution was made by Nancy Beranek and seconded by Don Carragher.
 AYES: 8; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0
 Board Members Excused: 0
 Board Members Absent: 0
- Resolution #05 of 2022 (Acceptance of PILOT Payment):** The Board of Trustees of the Town of Esopus Library accepts PILOT funds totaling \$3,481.00 from the Town of Esopus, and will deposit the monies into the Town of Esopus Library's 2022 Operating account. A motion to accept the resolution was made by Shannon Harris and seconded by Don Carragher.
 AYES: 8; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0
 Board Members Excused: 0
 Board Members Absent:

VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business or discussion, Susan Leiching made a motion to adjourn and it was seconded by Shannon Harris. The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

AYES: 8; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0

Board Members Excused:

Board Members Absent:

Prepared by Mary Garraty, Secretary to the Town of Esopus Library Board of Trustees

Attending: Nancy, Reggie, Laura, Shannon, Brooke, Don.

This was the first meeting of the two newly combined committees. Thanks to all the members who made it a point to attend. We are off to a good start. SRD (Sustainability and Research & Development) will be used in notes. We will continue to meet the 2nd Wednesday at 4pm as one committee. Don has agreed to chair with approval.

While we awaited all the members to attend, Laura expressed great concern over her housing site not having back-up generators during the recent power loss ice storm. Ulster County was particularly hit hard with extensive tree/power/TV/telephone damage. Don also had heard similar complaints of other 'senior' housing sites that do not have back-up generators. Many seniors have refrigerated prescriptions and powered medical devices that they depend on to live. This must be addressed. Even at the entrances of public buildings (including our library), the power-assist door openers cannot work without power, preventing many seniors access.

The recent storm made clear several good and bad examples of the preparations our towns and county have in place. It is generally agreed that our library should continue to seek funding to expand the ability to provide emergency services as appropriate. The extent of this work will be developed as we meet with and coordinate with the Town of Esopus Board/Fire/Ambulance/Sheriff's departments.

Reggie reported on speaking with Anthony Sicari (Solar Farm) who referred us to Solar Alchemy for our solar array inspection. Shannon reported the town hall was open for warming and charging with food provided by the Bruderhoff. For the library to be an effective resource we will need a generator/stored energy system that could be expensive. Grants will need to be submitted to source public (NYSERDA, private, State, County, Federal/FEMA) to pay for this. Nancy has researched this.

Shannon commented that after a partial restoration of power, our E-sign was lit with information while most of Port Ewen was blacked out. With back-up power we would be able to display vital information for the public to be alerted, warmed, fed and informed. Shannon will get the specs of the town hall generator.

Brooke said our Mission/Vision should be reviewed to reflect this broader community service. Don offered to write a statement after reviewing the ALA (American Library Association) materials on disaster response.

All members participated in a very lively discussion that covered many ideas/opinions/suggestions that bode well for our increased service for our community.

Next meeting: March 9, 4pm Zoom unless notified.

Submitted by Don Carragher



FINANCIAL – FIXED ASSETS CAPITALIZATION POLICY

The Town of Esopus library will, in accordance with rules adopted by the State Board of Accounts, capitalize, or track, inventory worth over \$5,000.

Definitions and Provisions

Tangible Assets

Tangible assets are assets that can be observed by one or more of the physical senses.

Fixed Assets

Tangible assets of a durable nature employed in the operation of the library and are relatively permanent and are needed for the production of goods or services are termed property, plant, and equipment or fixed assets. These items are separated into classes according to the physical characteristics of the items (e.g. land; buildings; improvements other than buildings; machinery, equipment and furniture; and construction in progress).

Capital Outlay

Capital outlays are expenditures which benefit both the current and future fiscal periods. This includes the costs of acquiring land or structures; constructions or improvement of buildings, structures or other fixed assets; and equipment purchases having an appreciable and calculated period of usefulness. These expenditures result in the acquisition of or addition to the government's general fixed assets.

Land

The library will capitalize all land purchases, regardless of cost.

Original cost of land will include the full value given to the seller, including relocation, legal services incidental to the purchase (including title work and opinion), appraisal and negotiation fees, surveying and costs for preparing the land for its intended purpose (including contractors and/or library workers [salary and benefits]), such as demolishing buildings, excavating, clean up, and/or inspection.

Donated land will be recorded at fair market value on the date of transfer plus any associated costs.

Buildings

The library will capitalize buildings at full cost with no subcategories for tracking the cost of attachments. Examples of attachments are roofs, heating, cooling, plumbing, lighting, sprinkler systems, or any part of the basic building. The library will include the cost of items designed or purchased exclusively for the building.



The library will capitalize a new building only if it meets the following conditions:

1. total cost exceeds \$5,000, and
2. useful life is greater than two years.

The library will capitalize the cost of improving or renovating an existing building only if the result meets the following conditions:

1. total cost exceeds \$5,000,
2. useful life is extended two or more years, and
3. total cost will be greater than the current book value and less than the fair market value.

Capital building costs will include preparation of land for the building, architectural and engineering fees, bond insurance fees, interest cost (while under construction), accounting costs of material, and any costs directly attributable to the construction of a building.

The library will record donated buildings at fair market value on the date of transfer with any associated costs.

Purchases made using Federal or State funding will follow the source funding policies and above provisions.

Improvements Other Than Buildings

These are improvements to land for better enjoyment, attached or not easily removed, and having a life expectancy of greater than two years.

Examples are walks, parking areas and drives, fencing, retaining walls, pools, fountains, planters, underground sprinkler systems, and other similar items.

Improvements do not include roads, streets, or other assets that are part of the community infrastructure and are not for the support of the library facilities.

The library will capitalize new improvements other than buildings only if it meets the following conditions:

1. total cost exceeds \$5,000, and
2. useful life is greater than two years.

The library will capitalize the cost of improving or renovating improvements other than buildings only if the result meets the following conditions:

1. total cost exceeds \$5,000,
2. useful life is extended two or more years, and
3. total cost will be greater than the current book value and less than the fair market value.

The library will record donated improvements other than buildings at fair market value on the date of transfer with any associated costs.

Purchases made using Federal or State funding will follow the source funding policies and above provisions.



Machinery, Equipment and Furniture

The definition of machinery and equipment is an apparatus, tool, or conglomeration of pieces to form a tool. The tool will stand alone and not become a part of a basic structure or building.

Machinery and equipment includes computers, office machines, telephone systems, copiers, replicating equipment, postage machines, microfilm readers/printers, vacuum cleaners, mowers, power tools, and floor machines.

Furniture is also part of this category and includes tables, chairs, desks, shelving, and file cabinets.

The library will capitalize and tag items with an individual value equal to or greater than

\$1,000.00 Machinery, equipment and furniture combined with other machinery to form one unit with a total value greater than the above mentioned limit will be one unit.

A computer (CPU, monitor, keyboard, and printer) is considered one unit. A telephone system is considered one unit. A row or course of shelving is considered one unit.

The library will record donated machinery, equipment and furniture at fair market value on the date of transfer with any associated costs.

Purchases made using Federal or State funding will follow the source funding policies and above provisions.

Item Data Sheet

Item data sheets will be completed for all fixed asset items. Data sheets will record an item's location, date of purchase, cost or estimated cost, fund and account of purchase, estimated life, tag number, and serial number.

Item Tags

Machinery, equipment and furniture may be sequentially numbered and tagged with decal type property tags.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees:



FINANCIAL – OPERATIONAL RESERVE FUND POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to improve the library's financial stability by protecting itself against delayed payment of tax appropriation or the annual donation from the Town of Esopus Library Foundation. The policy is designed to ensure the continuity of financial operations.

Policy

The library shall maintain a reserve fund, called the Operational Reserve Fund, of approximately three (3) months of operating expenses. In the event that the tax appropriation and/or the Town of Esopus Library Foundation donation are delayed and these moneys are used, the amount used shall be replaced when the tax appropriation or foundation donation is received.

The Operational Reserve Fund shall be kept in an account separate from the operating checking account. The Operational Reserve Fund balance is noted separately on the financial statements.

Use of the Operational Reserve Fund must be approved by the Town of Esopus Library Board of Trustees.

The adequacy of the reserve fund will be reviewed periodically by the Treasurer and Finance committee. The Finance Committee will recommend any changes to the Library Board of Trustees.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees:



Restricted Access to Library Materials: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Libraries are a traditional forum for the open exchange of information. Restricting access to library materials violates the basic tenets of the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights.

Some libraries block access to certain materials by placing physical or virtual barriers between the user and those materials. For example, materials are sometimes labeled for content or placed in a "locked case," "adults only," "restricted shelf," or "high-demand" collection. Access to certain materials is sometimes restricted to protect them from theft or mutilation, or because of statutory authority or institutional mandate.

In some libraries, access is restricted based on computerized reading management programs that assign reading levels to books and/or users and limit choices to titles on the program's reading list. Titles not on the reading management list have been removed from the collection in some school libraries. Organizing collections by reading management program level, ability, grade, or age level is another example of restricted access. Even though the chronological age or grade level of users is not representative of their information needs or total reading abilities, users may feel inhibited from selecting resources located in areas that do not correspond to their assigned characteristics.

Physical restrictions and content filtering of library resources and services may generate psychological, service, or language skills barriers to access as well. Because restricted materials often deal with controversial, unusual, or sensitive subjects, having to ask a library worker for access to them may be embarrassing or inhibiting for patrons desiring access. Even when a title is listed in the catalog with a reference to its restricted status, a barrier is placed between the patron and the publication.¹ Because restricted materials often feature information that some people consider objectionable, potential library users may be predisposed to think of labeled and filtered resources as objectionable and be discouraged from asking for access to them.

Federal and some state statutes require libraries that accept specific types of federal and/or state funding to install content filters that limit access to Internet resources for minors and adults. Internet filters are applied to Internet resources in some libraries may prevent users from finding targeted categories of information, much of which is constitutionally protected. The use of Internet filters must be addressed through library policies and procedures to ensure that users receive information and that filters do not prevent users from exercising their First Amendment rights. Users have the right to unfiltered access to constitutionally protected information.²

Library policies that restrict access to resources for any reason must be carefully formulated and administered to ensure they do not violate established principles of intellectual freedom. This caution is reflected in ALA policies, such as "Evaluating Library Collections,"³ "Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors,"⁴ "Preservation Policy," and the ACRL "Code of Ethics for Special Collections Librarians."⁵



Town of Esopus Library

Donated resources require special consideration. In keeping with the “Joint Statement on Access” of the American Library Association and Society of American Archivists,⁶ libraries should avoid accepting donor agreements or entering into contracts that impose permanent restrictions on special collections. As stated in the “Joint Statement on Access,” it is the responsibility of a library with such collections “to make available original research materials in its possession on equal terms of access.”

A primary goal of the library profession is to facilitate access to all points of view on current and historical issues. All proposals for restricted access should be carefully scrutinized to ensure that the purpose is not to suppress a viewpoint or to place a barrier between users and content. Libraries must maintain policies and procedures that serve the diverse needs of their users and protect the First Amendment right to receive information.

1 “Labeling Systems: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights,” adopted June 30, 2015, by ALA Council.

2 Access to Digital Resources and Services: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights," adopted January 24, 1996 by the ALA Council; amended January 19, 2005; July 15, 2009 under previous name "Access to Digital Information, Services, and Networks"; and June 25, 2019.

3 "Evaluating Library Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights," adopted February 2, 1973, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; June 2, 2008; and June 25, 2019.

4 "Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights," adopted June 30, 1972, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991; June 30, 2004; July 2, 2008 under previous name "Free Access to Libraries for Minors"; July 1, 2014; and June 25, 2019.

5 “Code of Ethics for Special Collections Librarians” approved by ACRL in October 2003.

6 “ACRL/SAA Joint Statement on Access to Research Materials in Archives and Special Collections Libraries” Approved by ACRL in July 2009.

Adopted February 2, 1973, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004; January 28, 2009; and July 1, 2014.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees: February 25, 2015
Reviewed by the Board of Trustees: February 22, 2022

The Freedom to Read

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.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

A Joint Statement by:
American Library Association
Association of American Publishers

Subsequently endorsed by:
American Booksellers for Free Expression
The Association of American University Presses
The Children's Book Council

Freedom to Read Foundation
National Association of College Stores
National Coalition Against Censorship
National Council of Teachers of English
The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

Reviewed by the Board of Trustees: February 22, 2022

The Freedom to View

The FREEDOM TO VIEW, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression.

Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

Endorsed by the ALA Council
January 10, 1990

Reviewed by the Board of Trustees: February 22, 2022
