

BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY

GENERAL POLICIES

1. GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- A. To assemble, preserve and administer, in organized collections, books and related educational and recreational material in order to promote and stimulate knowledge, wisdom, culture, and pure enjoyment for all citizens to the best of our abilities and resources.
- B. To serve the community as a resource for information.
- C. To provide a place where inquiring minds may encounter all points of view on original, unorthodox and critical ideas, and to empower individuals to explore those ideas, evaluate information, and develop their own conclusions.
- D. To provide opportunity and encouragement for individuals of all ages to educate themselves continuously.
- E. To seek continually to identify community needs, to provide programs of service to meet such needs, and to cooperate with other organizations, agencies, and institutions which can provide programs or services to meet community needs.
- F. To provide opportunity for recreation and enlightenment through the use of literature, music, films, and other art forms within the limits of existing facilities.

2. USE OF THE LIBRARY

- A. Legal Residents of the town of Bethlehem and others, as outlined in the Circulation Policy (2023) may obtain a library card free of charge and can borrow books and other materials from the Library. Requirements for a non-resident card are also outlined in the Circulation Policy. Non-residents pay an annual fee established by the Board of Trustees to obtain a library card in order to borrow books and other materials from the Library. Annually, the Trustees will review the amount of this fee and adjust it at their discretion.
- B. The Library will serve all residents of the community. Service will not be denied or abridged because of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status.
- C. The use of the Library or its services shall be limited when excessive demands of groups or individuals tend to curtail service to the public. Such demands may include those made by students, and others whose demands for staff time, available materials or space would prohibit attention and service to other individuals or groups.
- D. The use of the Library or its services may be denied for due cause. Such cause may be failure to return books, or to pay penalties, or the

destruction of Library property, or the disturbance of other patrons, or any objectionable conduct on Library premises.

- E. All patrons and new persons joining the Library must adhere to the Library's Circulation Policy and Appropriate Library Behavior Policy.
- F. The Library may be used by various groups for meetings according to the Library's Meeting Room Policy.

3. SERVICES OF THE LIBRARY

- A. The Library will select from the mass of available materials, and organize for easy access, those books and materials which best meet the needs of the community.
- B. The Library staff will provide guidance and assistance for people to obtain information through print, audio-visual and electronic resources.
- C. The Library will provide information and materials to help people to:
 - 1. Equip themselves for efficient activities in useful occupations and practical affairs.
 - 2. Increase their understanding and appreciation of literary works, the arts, sciences and the political and natural world.
- D. The Library will initiate programs, exhibits, book lists, etc. to stimulate the use of Library materials for the enlightenment of people of all ages.
- E. The Library accepts responsibility for securing information beyond its own resources by borrowing for patrons with serious interests, materials which are not owned by the Library and which cannot be purchased, or materials for which the demand does not justify the purchase.
- F. The Library will lend to other libraries, for a reasonable period, materials which are requested for patrons which are not available in the borrowing Library. Patrons of this library have a priority in the use of materials.
- G. The Library will endeavor to maintain a balance in its service to all patrons. The public library will cooperate with, but cannot perform the functions of, school or other institutional libraries which are designed to meet curricular needs.
- H. Library services will be provided during the hours which best meet the needs of the community. The Library will be closed on federal holidays.
- I. Periodic review will be made of Library services to determine whether the needs of the community indicate that present services should be discontinued or other services should be added.
- J. The librarian will not order books for purchase by borrowers.

4. GIFTS AND MEMORIALS

The Board of Trustees, in conformance with State Law, adopt the following policies on gifts:

- A. Cash and Securities
 - 1. The Library Director shall notify the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees about all offers of gifts of less than \$5,000 offered to the Library. The Chairperson will include the offer of gift as an item for discussion in the agenda. The Board of Trustees, at a regularly scheduled public meeting will discuss the offer and that discussion and decision to accept or reject the gift will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
 - 2. For gifts of \$5,000 or more, the Trustees shall hold a public meeting and notice of place, time and subject of the meeting will be published in a newspaper circulated in the local area at least seven days before the meeting. Discussion of the offer and its acceptance or rejection will be recorded in the minutes. (RSA 202-A:4-c)
- B. Gifts-Personal Property: Library Trustees shall determine a demonstrated, Library need for the specific item offered. Acceptance will not bind the town or Library Trustees to raise, appropriate, or expend public funds for operation, maintenance, repair, or replacement of the donated property. (RSA 202-A:4-d)
- C. Books: Books and related materials will be accepted on the condition that the Library Director has authority to use or dispose of the books/materials as the Director deems appropriate.
- D. Acceptance: The Board of Trustees has authority to accept or reject any and all gifts. The Library will not accept materials which are not outright gifts. If conditions are attached by the donor for receipt of the gift, the Trustees will reject the gift if the conditions are unacceptable to the majority of the Board.
- E. Acknowledgement: all gifts will be acknowledged by the Library Director.

5. INVESTMENTS

- A. Library Trustees shall have custody of Library funds and when invested to produce income, the funds shall be invested in instruments selected after considering their probable safety and probable income generation in accordance with RSA 31:25 and RSA 564-B:9-906.
- B. Annually, the Library Director will submit to the office of the NH Attorney General a report on investments as required by RSA 31:25

6. PAYROLL

The Library Director will inform the Town of staff work hours each week.

Paychecks, or in the case of direct deposit, pay stubs, will be distributed each Friday of the following week.

7. PUBLIC RELATIONS

- A. Some of the primary public relations goals of the Library are:
 - 1. Promote a good understanding of the Library's objectives and services among governing officials, civic leaders, and the general public.
 - 2. Promote active participation in the varied services offered by the Library to people of all ages.
- B. The board recognizes that public relations involve every person who has any connection with the Library. The board urges its own members and every staff member to realize that he or she represents the Library in every public contact. Good service supports good public relations.
- C. All professional staff will be expected to promote Library services by participating in community activities. A reasonable amount of Library time will be allowed staff members for preparation and speaking. Materials to be used by press, radio, or television will be approved by the Library Director.

8. PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS OF NON-LIBRARY ORGANIZATIONS

- A. Use of the Library for exhibits and displays will be at the discretion of the board of trustees based on suitability and availability of space.
- B. The Library assumes no responsibility for the preservation or protection, and no liability for possible damage or theft of any item displayed or exhibited. All items placed in the Library are there at the owner's risk.
- C. The Library maintains a community bulletin board for the posting of civic, cultural and educational announcements.
 - 1. Approval by staff is required; unapproved flyers may be taken down.
 - 2. Flyers must publicize a specific event.
 - 3. Limited space generally allows for short-term notices only.
 - 4. Limited space sometimes requires removing a flyer before the event date.
 - 5. The Library is not responsible for returning materials.
 - 6. Any advertisement by an outside group of an event at the library must state "this is not a library sponsored program."
- D. The Library marquee sign is used for library-sponsored programs only.
- E. No group or individual will circulate a petition or solicit funds on Library

property.

9. AMENDMENTS

This policy may be amended at any meeting of the Board at which a quorum is present by the affirmative vote of a majority of all members of the Board, provided that written notice of the proposed amendment or amendments shall have been sent, via postal or e-mail, to the usual address of each member of the Board and posted in two appropriate public places at least 10 days prior to the meeting at which such action is proposed.

REVISED 06/07/05

REVISED 04/12/10

REVISED 2/11/19

REVISED 10/22/24