

## **Woodland Public Library Procedures for Reconsideration of Materials**

### *Informal, Verbal Complaint*

The first and most informal level of challenge is frequently a verbal complaint, usually made by an adult in response to some perceived inappropriateness of an item in the collection. Active listening, validating their right to object, de-escalating the conflict, and seeking resolution are key behaviors to employ at this stage. Clarifying the objection, explaining the selection policy including the reconsideration form and asking for clarification of the patron's desired outcome are key. Regardless of the outcome, staff should prepare a detailed written account to be submitted to the Director that includes name of objector, objected title, author/producer, specific part(s) objected to, description of interaction, and outcome.

### *Written Request for Reconsideration*

A person may choose to initiate the formal *Request for Reconsideration*. A *Request for Reconsideration Form* will be provided to any requesting individual. When a completed and signed form has been submitted, a formal challenge begins with the following required steps:

#### 1. *Initial Finding:*

- Once a completed and signed form is received by the Library Services Director; she/he and the professional librarians will:
- a. Re-examine the challenged material.
  - b. Survey appraisals of the material in professional reviewing sources.
  - c. Determine the extent the material supports the goals of the Library.
  - d. Weigh merits against alleged faults to form opinions based on the materials as a whole and not on passages isolated from context.
  - e. A written response will be given to the objector by the Library Services Director, preferably in person. If in person is not possible, the Director will send it to the objector by registered mail.

#### 2. *Appeal of Decision*

If the objector is not satisfied with the written decision of the Library Services Director, the decision may be appealed to the Library Board of Trustees, the governing board of Woodland Public Library. In such cases, each Board member will be provided with a copy of the complaint, the material itself and reviews, as well as the Initial Finding's report and decision. A public hearing will be scheduled within 30 days to deliberate and decide on the matter; the

objector may attend the meeting. The Board's decision is final, and a written decision will be composed by the Board President.

### 3. *Legal Action*

The objector may file legal action to compel the Library to remove the material. Such cases are handled by the Woodland City Attorney who may seek the support of the American Library Association and the Office of Intellectual Freedom in the defense. Materials remain on the shelf during the course of legal action and are removed only with a court injunction.

### *Reporting Challenges*

The Library Services Director will submit all challenge attempts to the Office of Intellectual Freedom via the Challenge Database Form (OIF, 2007) available online at <http://www.ala.org/bbooks/online-challenge-reporting-form>

In doing so, Woodland Public Library is actively cooperating with groups concerned with resisting attempts to abridge intellectual freedom as stated in the Library Bill of Rights.

### *Advice from American Library Association.*

“Addressing these challenges requires a balance of carefully crafted library policy, knowledge, and understanding of intellectual freedom principles, and sensitivity to community needs and concerns. It also requires effective communication.” (ALA, 1999). That need for effective communication extends to staff, boards, public, and media with a focus on three key messages when responding to a challenge:

- Libraries provide ideas and information across the spectrum of social, religious, and political views.
- Libraries are one of our great democratic institutions. They provide freedom of choice for all people.
- Parents are responsible for supervising their own children's library use.

### *Summary—Intellectual Freedom Implications for Professionals*

Three primary documents direct Woodland Public Library's actions—*Library Bill of Rights* (Appendix B), *Freedom to Read Statement* (Appendix E) and *Library Code of Ethics* (Appendix F). In addition, formal interpretations related to *Freedom to View* (Appendix G) and *Free Access to Libraries for Minors* (Appendix C) further clarify the position related to intellectual freedom. The Woodland Public Library seeks to provide well-developed policies and proactive community education plans to encourage support

of intellectual freedom and of the individual right to choose. Any complaint will be handled with unwavering civility and firmly rooted in a clear understanding of professional responsibility.



# Woodland Public Library

250 First Street · Woodland, CA 95695

<http://www.cityofwoodland.org/library>

530 · 661 · 5980

## Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

Requestor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check one:

Representing: Self \_\_\_\_\_ Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Item you wish to bring to our attention:  Book  Video  Audio  Other

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Publication Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_ Publisher: \_\_\_\_\_

Please summarize your complaint with specific references (i.e. page numbers) by answering the following questions:

1. How was this item brought to your attention? Did you pick it up yourself? Did you read a review?
2. Did you read the entire item or otherwise completely review the material?
3. Are you concerned about the item as a whole or a specific part?
4. What objections do you have to the item and why? (Please be specific.)
5. What is the potential harm or danger of the work?
6. What are some positive aspects you have found in this item?
7. For what age group would you recommend this item?

Summary of complaint:

Summary of Complaint Continued

What outcome is desired?

- Return to staff selection committee for reconsideration.
- Offer alternative material on same subject from another point of view
- Other\_\_\_\_\_

What alternative item(s) are recommended on the same subject?

Additional Comments:

Signature

Date



1. Staff member \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

2. Library Services Director \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

3. Board President \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_