

Date Approved: November 2024

Last Reviewed:

1. Purpose and Goals

The library materials collection is central to the Belden Noble Memorial Library's mandate. The town of Essex is a small, close-knit rural community. Nevertheless, it is made up of people with a range of backgrounds, interests, and attitudes. BNML recognizes that as a publicly funded organization, it has an obligation to provide library materials that reflect the interests of its community.

The Library provides collections in the form of circulating fiction and nonfiction books, large-print books, periodicals, non-print collections which may include kits made up of multiple related items, and other tools and equipment the public might not be able to acquire on their own. The Library also provides access to an electronic resource collection in the form of databases, e-books, e-audiobooks, and various other services made available online through the CEF Library System.

The purpose of this policy is to guide staff and to inform the public about the principles upon which selection and retention decisions are made.

2. Freedom of Access

2.1 To support an informed public, the Library's collections are intended to represent diverse points of view, and may include materials that some members of the public consider to be controversial in nature. The Library neither approves or disapproves of the views expressed in materials included in the collection. The inclusion of an item is not to be considered an endorsement, official or otherwise, by the Library. Parents or guardians are responsible for a child's reading and library use.

2.2 The Belden Noble Memorial Library agrees with the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View statements (see Appendix).

3. Responsibility for Collection Development

The library director, who operates within the framework of policies established by the Board, is responsible for the selection and discard of library materials.

4. Selection Criteria

4.1 All materials, whether purchased or donated, are considered in terms of the following criteria, which are applied as appropriate across all subjects and formats. Selection is based on the staff's knowledge of the community, on their experience with library materials, and their use by the public, on reviews and recommended lists, recommendations and requests from library users, information from the publishing industry, and availability of the material(s) in the CEF Library System's shared collection. Selection is carried out in the context of available funding.

4.2 Special consideration is given to materials created by local authors, materials with significant local content that record the local experience or that relate to life in Essex, the lives and works of residents of this area, and the Adirondack Region.

4.3 The Library recognizes the importance of providing access to materials in formats that can be used by Essex residents with special needs.

4.4 The Belden Noble Memorial Library selects:

- * Materials that entertain and may enhance an individual's enjoyment of life.
- * Contemporary materials representing varying points of view and which are of current interest, and possible future significance, including materials which reflect current conditions, trends, and controversies
- * Materials that inform and increase an individual's ability to function effectively as a member of society.
- * Materials that provide an aesthetic experience, stimulate the imagination and increase an individual's potential creativity
- * Materials that expand an individual's understanding of the world in which they live

4.5 All materials, whether purchased or donated, are considered in terms of the following criteria:

- * Suitability of physical form for library use
- * Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
- * Present and potential relevance to community users
- * Relationship to the existing collection
- * Relationship to materials in other member libraries of the Library System.
- * Interests of the permanent and seasonal residents of the Town of Essex
- * Reputation, skill, competence, and purpose of the originator of the work
- * Popular demand and current trends
- * Attention of critics, reviews, and the public
- * Contemporary significance/current usefulness
- * Availability of materials in the shared CEF collection
- * Availability of funds and space
- * Additional criteria for the selection of audio-visual materials include content, performer, techniques and availability

4.6 The library does not regularly purchase the following materials:

- * Costly books of little demand
- * Textbooks
- * Family genealogies
- * Books that are self-published
- * Rare books
- * Vanity press publications
- * Obsolete formats such as cassettes, vinyl records, and VHS tapes.

5. New Formats

5.1 Careful consideration is given to the introduction of new formats to the BNML collections. Budget considerations, community needs, availability of the format in the shared System collection, and the probable impact on existing resources are all reviewed before items are selected and introduced to collections in a new format.

5.2 The selection of material in any new format may result in the library director's decision to retire specific items or material formats from its collection in order to responsibly accommodate trends in user demands and/or changes in technology.

6. Withdrawing

6.1 To keep the collection timely and attractive, the Library withdraws unnecessary items, materials with obsolete content, materials no longer of interest or demand, duplicates, worn or mutilated copies.

6.2 The criteria for selection generally apply to the removal of materials with the addition of specific withdrawal criteria that are given prime consideration:

- * Lack of use – Frequency of use/potential use; interlibrary loan circulation
- * Outdated – Timeliness, currency and accuracy of information, superseded editions
- * Value/Quality – Subject matter, historical importance of local significance, cost availability of other and better materials in the field
- * Deterioration – Physical condition relative to other factors of importance
- * Duplicated – Other copies in better condition

6.3 The decision to withdraw/weed is the responsibility of the library director

- * Withdrawal requires the removal of the item from the collection and deletion
- * Whenever appropriate, materials withdrawn from the collection may be sold as a library fundraiser or donated to a non-profit group or organization in need of such materials
- * Materials that remain will be recycled if possible or disposed of otherwise.

7. Non-Endorsement of Content

Selection of an item for the Library's collections does not constitute endorsement by the BNML of either the content or viewpoint expressed in that item.

8. Collection Exclusions

8.1 Belden Noble Memorial Library will only add items to its collection that conform to U.S. Laws (e.g. copyright, trade laws) and observes and protects, as much as is possible, the legal copyright of materials in its collection.

8.2 Generally, the Library is limited to selecting works that are currently in print and available through customary domestic trade suppliers.

8.3 The Board recognizes that some books may be regarded by certain individuals or groups as controversial, whether because of bias, frankness of language, political expression, or moral implication. Selection should not, and will not, be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval by an individual or group in the community, but rather on the evaluation of the publication's literary merit, authenticity, honesty of presentation, topical interest, and use to the audience for whom it is intended. The primary aim of materials selection is to establish a balanced collection which adequately represents various points of view on many subjects.

Responsibility for the reading activities of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of materials for the adult collection shall not be restricted by the possibility that children may obtain materials that their parents consider inappropriate. The Board believes in the freedom of the individual and in the right and obligation of parents to develop, interpret, and enforce their own code of acceptable conduct.

8.4 Textbooks and curriculum-related works, research or scholarly titles, and expensive legal and/or medical works are not purchased except in very special circumstances. For example, the Library may consider purchasing such material if it useful to the general reader and is the only source of information on a topic of much general interest.

9. Donations of Books and Other Materials

9.1 Occasionally, gifts of books and other library materials in good condition are accepted.

9.2 The same criteria and guidelines that apply to the selection of all library materials are used to evaluate gifts. As a guideline for potential donations, the items listed below are generally not accepted

- * textbooks, scholarly, highly technical or other specialized works
- * material that is dusty, damp, moldy or otherwise poor condition
- * material that is over five (5) years old
- * duplicated material already held in sufficient number
- * materials published by “vanity presses” or published by the author

9.3 It is understood that gifts are freely given without conditions attached, unless specifically negotiated beforehand, and that all donations will be used or disposed of as the Director deems appropriate. The Library is not responsible for informing the donor of how it disposed of the donation.

9.4 Appraisals are not done by the Library and tax receipts are not issued

9.5 The Library does not accept storage responsibility for books, documents, or objects owned or controlled by groups or individuals.

10. Monetary Donations

10.1 The Library accepts monetary donations, lifetime gifts, and bequests.

10.2 While the Library welcomes gifts designating funds for specific audiences or types of materials in the collection, the designation of funds for specific titles may not be accommodated if such titles are inconsistent with the Library’s selection criteria.

11. Library Users’ Requests

11.1 The Library welcomes suggestions for purchase from library users. Library users may submit a written or oral request to library staff.

11.2 All suggested purchases are reviewed by the director who applies the same selection criteria that are applied to all materials purchased by the BNML

12. Access to Collections

12.1 All users of the public library have access to all of its collections

12.2 Children are entitled to borrowing privileges, and open and ready access to materials and facilities provided by BNML. No item will be excluded from the library collection because it may come into the possession of children. Parents and legal guardians are responsible for choosing, monitoring, and limiting the use of library materials by their children.

12.3 The Library may control use of any collection material in order to protect items deemed susceptible to theft or damage by users, or to ensure the widest possible use of materials by library customers. However, no library materials will be placed on closed shelves, except due to space limitation or to protect them from damage or theft.

12.4 The Library does not mark selected material in order to indicate approval or disapproval of its contents nor will it expurgate information contained in selected items.

13. Reconsideration of Materials

13.1 The content or manner of expressing ideas in material that is selected to fill the needs of some library users may, on occasion, be considered to be offensive by other library users. Some may object to the creator of the work. The Library Board recognizes the right of any individual or group to reject material for personal use, but does not accord to any individual or group the right to restrict the freedom of others to have access to that same material.

13.2 Library users who object to materials located in a library collection are asked to complete a signed written request for the reconsideration of the materials (Appendix 4) The library director will carefully review every request to reconsider materials, in order to ensure compliance with the selection criteria established in this policy. If any issue remains unresolved the matter can be appealed to the Board.

13.3. Each work will be considered as a whole, and individual passages will not be treated out of context.

13.4. During the process outlined above, no materials challenged will be removed from public use.

Signature of the Chairperson _____

Appendix 1: Library Bill of Rights

Appendix 2: Freedom to Read Statement

Appendix 3: Freedom to View Statement

Appendix 4: Statement of Concern About Library Resources

Document Revision Record

Initial Approval: November 2024

Last Review/Revision:

Year of Next Review: 2028

Appendix 4:

Belden Noble Memorial Library Statement of Concern

Email: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

BNML card #: _____

Do you represent yourself _____ an organization _____ Other (specify): _____

Title: _____

Author/Producer: _____

What brought this resource to your attention?

What concerns you about this resource?

Have you read or examined the entire resource? _____ yes _____ no
If "no" what sections did you review? _____

What action are you requesting BNML to consider? _____
