

Wicomico County Free Library Procedures for Reconsideration of Library Resources

, A customer's objection to library materials should be handled at the time of complaint by the professional staff. If a complaint is voiced at the Circulation Desk, a staff member shall refer the patron to the Information Desk. A professional staff member shall discuss the problem, and if appropriate, give the customer a copy of the policy and intellectual freedom manual assembled for public distribution.

, If the customer is not satisfied, refer the customer to the Manager of Information Services or the Assistant Director.

, A "Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources" form will be given to anyone wishing to pursue a complaint. It must be filled out before a request can be considered for formal action. The request must be hand delivered or sent to the Director by certified mail.

, Upon receipt of the completed form, the Director shall gather, or cause to be gathered, copies of critical opinions and/or reviews of the material in question. Using these as a base, the Director shall review the work in question and prepare a written response within five (5) working days from receipt of the request for reconsideration. The response shall be sent by certified mail to the customer and it shall conclude with the following statement: "if you wish to discuss the matter further, please contact the Director (name), or the Assistant Director (name)."

, Copies of the request for reconsideration, with copies of the response, shall be sent to:

, The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

, The Chairperson of the Board's Material Committee

, The Assistant Director

, The person responsible for the selection of the material

, If the customer is dissatisfied with the Director's response, he or she may request a hearing before the Materials Committee of the Board of Trustees. This request must be submitted in writing. Upon receipt of the written request for a hearing, the Director shall arrange a time and place of the hearing with the Materials Committee. The Director will inform the customer by certified mail of the time and place of the hearing.

, The Materials Committee shall receive written arguments from the customer and may hear oral arguments if the customer wishes to speak. The Director shall be present at this meeting, and the executive session which will follow. The Committee will not respond to the complaint during the hearing, except to question or clarify. It shall then retire into executive session to consider the material. Once a decision has been reached, the Committee shall reply in writing. The reply will be written by the Chairperson or the Chair's designate. It shall be sent to the customer by certified mail which shall be postmarked within five (5) working days of the hearing. Copies of the reply will be given to the President of the Board, the Assistant Director, the person responsible for the selection of the material.

, If the customer is not satisfied by the response of the Materials Committee, he or she must request a hearing before the Board of Trustees in writing within fourteen (14) working days of the postmark of the Materials Committee's reply. The Board shall conduct the hearing and response as described for the Materials Committee (Item 7).

, The decision of the Board of Trustees is binding, and shall not be revoked except under orders of a court of competent jurisdiction.

, Those persons with authority for selection and de-selection also have the authority to remove the material in question if they decide that it does not meet the standards for inclusion in the collection. Upon removing questioned material they will notify the Director, the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, the Chairperson of the Materials Committee, the Assistant Director, and the person responsible for the selection of the material.

FAILURE TO APPEAR AT A HEARING: Hearings are arranged at the request of one person but involve the arrangement of work and personal schedules by many others. Therefore, the petitioner must arrange to be at the hearing at the time designated. Unwillingness to make himself or herself available at the offered time, or failure to appear at the hearing shall be considered withdrawal of the complaint.

December 12, 2000