

# **Policy Manual**

## **Townsend Public Library**

## **Townsend, Massachusetts**

Revised and Approved September 2025

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>MISSION.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Article I: NAME and AUTHORIZATION.....	5
Article II: TRUSTEES.....	5
Section 1. Number.....	5
Section 2. Term of Office.....	5
Section 3. Resignation/Vacancy.....	5
Article III. OFFICERS.....	6
Section 1. Officers:.....	6
Section 2. Duties of the Chairperson:.....	6
Section 3. Duties of the Vice Chairperson:.....	6
Section 4. Duties of the Secretary.....	6
Article IV: COMMITTEES AND BOARD LIAISONS.....	6
Section 1. Appointment.....	6
Section 2. Reports.....	6
Section 3. Authority.....	7
Article V. LIBRARY DIRECTOR AND STAFF.....	7
Article VI. MEETINGS.....	7
Section 1. Regular Meetings.....	7
Section 2. Special Meetings.....	7
Section 3. Quorum.....	7
Section 4. Open Meeting Law.....	7
Section 5. Order of Business.....	8
Section 6. Public Participation.....	8
Article VI. DUTIES OF THE BOARD.....	8
Section 1. Authority.....	8
Section 2. Planning Process:.....	8
Section 3. Appointment of Director:.....	8
Section 4. Employment Contracts:.....	9
Section 5. Materials Selection Policy:.....	9
Section 6. Library Policies:.....	9
Section 7. Budget Preparation:.....	9
Section 8. Facility Maintenance:.....	9
Section 9. Annual Report:.....	9
Section 10. Agreements:.....	9
Section 12. Advocacy:.....	9
Section 13. Legislative Support:.....	9
Article VII. COLLECTIVE AUTHORITY.....	10

Article VIII. PARLIAMENTARY RULES.....	10
Article X. AMENDMENTS.....	10
<b>LIBRARY OPERATIONS.....</b>	<b>10</b>
Circulation.....	10
Library Accounts.....	10
Patron Responsibilities.....	10
<b>Library Conduct.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Food and Beverages.....	12
Unattended Minors.....	12
Consequences.....	12
<b>Confidentiality of Library Records.....</b>	<b>13</b>
Code of Ethics of the American Library Association:.....	13
Policy.....	13
Procedures.....	14
<b>Use of Patron Database.....</b>	<b>15</b>
Policy.....	15
Compliance with Massachusetts Open Records Law.....	15
Library's Responsibility.....	15
Patrons' Rights.....	15
References.....	15
<b>Collections.....</b>	<b>15</b>
Policy.....	16
Responsibility for Selection.....	16
Appropriations Requirements.....	16
Selection Guidelines and Practices.....	16
Formats.....	16
Placement of Materials.....	17
Access to the Collection.....	17
Lost or Damaged Library Items.....	17
Interlibrary Loan.....	17
Exclusions from Collections.....	17
Material Selection Tools.....	17
Special Collections.....	18
Weeding.....	18
Expression of Concern.....	18
Library of Things.....	19
Types of Materials Included in Collection.....	19
Procurement of Materials.....	19

Lending Guidelines.....	19
<b>GIFTS AND LOANS.....</b>	<b>20</b>
Acquisition Policy.....	20
Trustee Responsibilities.....	20
Staff Responsibilities.....	20
Loans.....	20
<b>Signage, Bulletin Board Use, Ticket Sales, and Soliciting.....</b>	<b>21</b>
Posting Policy.....	21
Sales.....	21
Soliciting and Petitions.....	21
<b>Historical Reference Room.....</b>	<b>21</b>
Use.....	21
Materials Included in the Collection.....	22
Scope of the Collection.....	22
<b>Study Rooms and Trustee Conference Room.....</b>	<b>22</b>
Policy for Use.....	22
Exam Proctoring Policy.....	23
<b>Townsend Library Internet and Computer Use.....</b>	<b>23</b>
Internet Policy.....	23
Computer User's Responsibility.....	24
Parents, Minors and the Internet.....	24
Disclaimer.....	24
<b>Programs.....</b>	<b>25</b>
Policy.....	25
Responsibility for Programming.....	25
Content.....	25
Charges.....	26
Attendance.....	26
Statements of Concern Regarding Programs and Collections.....	26
Expressions of Concern.....	26
Formal Complaint Process.....	26
<b>Personnel.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>VOLUNTEERS.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>GIFT OFFER FORM.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>LOAN OFFER FORM.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>COMPLAINT FORM.....</b>	<b>30</b>

## **MISSION**

It is the mission of the Townsend Public Library to provide the public with access to quality collections, technology, and programs for information, lifelong learning, literature, and entertainment.

## **LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

### **Article I: NAME and AUTHORIZATION**

The library shall be called the Townsend Public Library. This organization will be called The Board of Trustees (The Board). The Board has been established under Massachusetts General Laws Ch.78, Sec. 10-13 and in accordance with Sec. 3-10 of the Charter of the Town of Townsend.

### **Article II: TRUSTEES**

#### **Section 1. Number**

There shall be five (5) members of the Board elected by the voters of Townsend.

#### **Section 2. Term of Office**

The terms of office of the Trustees shall be three (3) years, each elected for three (3)-year overlapping terms, so arranged that the terms of as nearly an equal number of members as possible shall expire each year.

#### **Section 3. Resignation/Vacancy**

A trustee may resign by written notice filed with the Town Clerk. Any vacancy on the Board shall be filled in accordance with the Charter of the Town of Townsend, Sec. C-3-1 f.

### **Article III. OFFICERS**

#### **Section 1. Officers:**

- a. The Officers of the Board shall be Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary, elected from among the five (5) Trustees at the regular May meeting of the Board.
- b. The Officers shall serve from their election until their successors are duly elected.

#### **Section 2. Duties of the Chairperson:**

- a. The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings, shall call special meetings, and shall generally perform the duties of a presiding officer. The Chairperson shall appoint all committees and, in conjunction with the Library Director, execute all decisions of the Board.
- b. The Chairperson or a designated representative, and the Library Director shall represent the Board in all its matters before the Board of Selectmen, Financial Committees, Town Meeting, and other town boards and officers. In addition, the Chairperson shall be responsible, in conjunction with the Library Director, for the preparation of the Annual Report of the activities of the Board and the Library.

### **Section 3. Duties of the Vice Chairperson:**

The Vice-Chairperson shall perform all the functions of the Chairperson in their absence or disability.

### **Section 4. Duties of the Secretary**

The Secretary shall:

- a) Keep an accurate record and properly file, in permanent form, complete proceedings of each Board meeting.
- b) Send a copy of such proceedings to each Board member prior to the subsequent meeting.
- c) Perform all the functions of the Chairperson in the simultaneous absence of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

## **Article IV: COMMITTEES AND BOARD LIAISONS**

### **Section 1. Appointment**

The Chairperson shall appoint committees of one or more members each for such specific purposes as the business of the Board may require from time to time. The committee shall be considered to be discharged upon the completion of the purpose for which it was appointed and after the final report is made to the Board. This shall include the annual appointment of a Liaison as a representative to the Friends of the Townsend Public Library and a Liaison as a representative to the Endowment Board of Directors.

### **Section 2. Reports**

All committees shall post meetings and make progress reports to the Board at each meeting.

### **Section 3. Authority**

No committee will have other than advisory powers unless, by suitable actions of the Board, it is granted specific power to act.

## **Article V. LIBRARY DIRECTOR AND STAFF**

The Board shall hire, to act on its behalf and under its direction, a qualified Library Director to be the executive and administrative officer of the library. The Library Director shall select and appoint other employees and shall be responsible for the proper direction and supervision of staff, and for the administration of collective bargaining agreements and by-laws pertaining to personnel; for the care and maintenance of library property; for the selection of books and other library materials and maintenance of the library's materials collection in keeping with the materials selection policy adopted by the Board; for the effectiveness of library services to the public; and for the library's financial operation within the limitations of the approved budget. The Library Director shall attend all Board meetings and shall advise the Board in library matters, including making policy and budget recommendations; and shall execute decisions and policies of the Board.

The Library Director and Staff shall comply with all personnel policies outlined in the Town of Townsend Personnel Policies and Procedures manual.

## **Article VI. MEETINGS**

### **Section 1. Regular Meetings**

- a. Regular meetings shall be held as needed, with the date, hour, and location being determined by the Board. The meetings shall be posted in accordance with the Open Meeting Law.
- b. A vote will be decided by a simple majority of the Trustees voting, except in the case where other criteria are required by ordinance or statute.

### **Section 2. Special Meetings**

Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson or upon the request of two (2) members of the Board for the transaction of business stated in the call for the meeting, provided all members are notified..

### **Section 3. Quorum**

A quorum shall consist of three (3) members of the Board.

### **Section 4. Open Meeting Law**

All meetings of the Board shall be subject to the state's Open Meeting Law, as contained in Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 30A, Sections 18 through 25. In particular, all meetings are open to the public unless held in executive session under the terms of the law. A notice of all meetings, except in the case of an emergency, shall be filed with the Town Clerk at least forty-eight (48) hours beforehand, and a copy of the notice shall be posted in the Town Hall. Further, all records of minutes of meetings will be available for public inspection.

### **Section 5. Order of Business**

The order of business for regular meetings shall include, but not be limited to:

- a) Call to order
- b) Visitors/Public forum
- c) Approval of minutes
- d) Reports
  - Director's Report
  - Report of the Friends of the Library
  - Townsend Public Library Endowment Fund Report
  - Committee Reports
- e) Old business
- f) New business
- g) Topics not anticipated by the Board
- h) Scheduling of the next meeting
- i) Adjournment

## **Section 6. Public Participation**

Visitors' comments shall be heard at the discretion of the Chairperson. All visitors will be asked to sign in. Those visitors who have a desire to speak must be recognized by the Chairperson.

## **Article VI. DUTIES OF THE BOARD**

### **Section 1. Authority**

In accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 78, Sections 11 and 12, and the Townsend Charter, "the Board shall have custody and management of the library and all property owned by the Town relating thereto. All money raised or appropriated by the town for its support and maintenance shall be expended by the Board, and all money or property which the town may receive by gift or bequest for said library shall be administered by the Board in accordance with the provisions of such gift or bequest."

### **Section 2. Planning Process:**

The Board shall engage in an ongoing planning process, which assesses the needs of the library and the role of the library in the community, and the Board shall ensure that the library develops to meet those needs.

### **Section 3. Appointment of Director:**

The Board shall select, appoint, and regularly evaluate a competent Library Director.

### **Section 4. Employment Contracts:**

The Board shall prepare a written employment contract for the Library Director and Assistant Director, detailing the basic conditions of employment, as provided by the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 78, Section 34.

### **Section 5. Materials Selection Policy:**

The Board shall establish a written policy for the selection of library materials and the use of library materials and facilities, which is in accordance with the American Library Association "Library Bill of Rights" and "Right to Read" statement and other current standards of the American Library Association.

### **Section 6. Library Policies:**

The Board shall determine, in consultation with the Library Director, library policies and maintain a written record of them.

### **Section 7. Budget Preparation:**

The Board shall advise the Library Director in preparation of the library budget, adopt the final budget document, participate in its presentation to town boards and officials, and work for its adoption by the municipality.



**Section 8. Facility Maintenance:**

The Board has custody and management of the Library facility and shall, through the Library Director, monitor the maintenance of buildings and grounds, and regularly review facility needs to see that they meet the requirements of the total library program.

**Section 9. Annual Report:**

The Board shall make an annual report to the town of its receipts and expenditures and of the property in its custody, with a statement of any unexpended balance of money and of any gifts or bequests which it holds on behalf of the town, with its recommendations.

**Section 10. Agreements:**

Subject to existing law and subject to appropriation, the Board of any library for the purpose of improving the services of said library may enter into an agreement with the board or boards of any neighboring library or libraries to pay for services in common.

**Section 12. Advocacy:**

The Board shall speak and act as an advocate for the library in the community and participate in an active public relations program.

**Section 13. Legislative Support:**

The Board shall study and support legislation that will benefit the library and the larger library community of which it is a part.

**Article VII. COLLECTIVE AUTHORITY**

All decisions of the Board are made by the Board as a collective body. No individual member may make decisions, act, or speak for the Board unless specifically authorized to do so by a vote of the Board.

**Article VIII. PARLIAMENTARY RULES**

Except as provided for in these policies, the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern Board proceedings.

**Article X. AMENDMENTS**

These policies and regulations may be amended at any regular meeting of the Board with a quorum present, by a majority vote of the members present, provided that a motion presenting the amendment was made and seconded at the preceding regular meeting. Policies affecting patrons' access to materials may only be modified by a unanimous vote of the Board at two (2) consecutive regular meetings.

# LIBRARY OPERATIONS

## Circulation

### Library Accounts

1. To obtain a library card, photo identification must be shown.
2. Parents/guardians are responsible for registering a minor for a library card and must prove their identity.
3. Those who are eligible to apply for an account with the Townsend Public Library:
  - a. All Townsend residents
  - b. All Massachusetts residents, with the exception of those from towns/cities whose libraries have been decertified.
  - c. Anyone who works in Townsend
1. All out-of-state patrons will be required to purchase an annual library membership for the price of \$50 per card. The annual fee will be waived for any out-of-state resident who works in Townsend.
2. Patron borrowing privileges are suspended when the maximum limit for fines or fees, set by CWMars, has been reached.
3. Warning letters may be issued whenever the Library has a concern regarding the return of materials.

### Patron Responsibilities

1. Patrons must present their library card or proof of identity to check out materials.
2. Personal account holders or the responsible adult of a minor cardholder are responsible for any items checked out on their account and any fines or fees accrued on their account.
3. If any library card is lost or stolen, the patron must notify the Library. Upon such notification, no materials will be loaned against that card.

## Library Conduct

Townsend Public Library provides a safe environment intended for the use of all members of the public. Patrons are expected to respect the rights of other patrons and staff members and to use the Library for its intended purposes. Misconduct will not be allowed in the library.

Definition: Misconduct is behavior that is illegal or that:

- Interferes with the rights of individuals to use the library materials, services, and premises<sup>1</sup>.
- Interferes with the ability of staff to conduct library business.

---

<sup>1</sup> The term “premises” includes: the interior of any and all Library buildings and the exterior grounds of the parcel of property on which said Library buildings are located.

- Threatens the secure and comfortable environment of the library or those using the library.

Misconduct may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Willfully annoying, harassing<sup>2</sup>, or threatening another person.
- Any behavior that endangers or could endanger the safety or health of others.
- Behaving in a disorderly, loud, or boisterous manner.
- Using abusive or profane language.
- Theft, vandalism, or the deliberate destruction of materials, property, or the personal property of patrons or staff members.
- Maliciously accessing, altering, deleting, damaging, or destroying any equipment (i.e., computers, peripherals, computer systems, network, computer program, or data, etc.)
- Impeding access to library resources, premises, or an area of the premises.
- Entering staff-only, non-public, or locked areas, unless accompanied by a staff member or through prior authorization from a staff member.
- Leaving personal items in the building. The library assumes no responsibility for any personal belongings left unattended.
- Using personal electronic devices without earphones or with earphones at an unreasonable volume.
- Using cell phones at a volume that is disruptive to others.
- Distributing or posting material without staff approval.
- Soliciting of sales or selling to library patrons except at library-sponsored events.
- Smoking, vaping, or using tobacco products inside the facility or on facility grounds.
- Bringing animals into the library, except those trained to assist individuals with disabilities or for library-sponsored events.
- Using alcohol or marijuana on library premises.
- Using the restroom facilities for bathing.
- Possession, use, or threat of use of dangerous weapons, including all firearms<sup>3</sup>.
- Violation of any municipal, state, or federal law or code.

### **Food and Beverages**

1. Food and drinks are allowed in the cafe area only. (Exception: food and beverages may be allowed in the story hour room or meeting rooms during special events only.)
2. Patrons must dispose of all trash, clean tables, and sweep the floor if needed.

---

<sup>2</sup> Harassment is defined as any action taken or situation created intentionally to produce psychological or physical discomfort, embarrassment, or ridicule. Harassment is characterized by requests for sexual contact, unwelcome physical advances, or conduct (verbal or physical) of a nature that is intimidating, demeaning, hostile, offensive, or potentially dangerous to self or others.

<sup>3</sup> Dangerous weapons include, but are not limited to any offensive weapon, pistol, revolver, or other firearm, dagger, razor, stiletto, switchblade knife, or knife having a blade exceeding five inches in length.

## Unattended Minors

The safety of minors on Library premises is a serious concern of the Library staff. However, the responsibility for the safety and behavior of minors on Library premises rests with the parent, guardian, or caregiver, hereto defined as the Responsible Party, and not with Library staff. The following guidelines apply to the conduct of minors.

- Minors under the age of 10 must be accompanied by a Responsible Party.
- Minors age 10 and older may be left unattended for a period of time - not to exceed two (2) hours - to complete homework assignments or special projects.
- Minors left unattended should know how to reach a Responsible Party, and the Responsible Party must be aware of the library's closing time.
- Minors should know who is picking them up and when.
- The Responsible Party must be aware of the hours of programs so that the minors do not have to wait for unreasonable lengths of time to be picked up.
- Responsible Parties should advise minors to wait inside the building to avoid the hazards of the street and parking lot.
- Staff members will not transport minors from the library to any other location.
- If an unattended minor's conduct calls attention to themselves, a Library staff member will attempt to locate the Responsible Party.
- If a problem arises with minors of any age, and the staff is unable to locate the Responsible Party, the Police will be notified.
- Staff cannot regulate when or with whom minors leave the library. Minors left at the library are free to leave the building.

## Consequences

Enforcement of these rules may take the form of any of the following actions, depending upon the severity of the misconduct, which will be determined by the staff on duty at the time.

- Patrons who engage in misconduct will be given one warning and asked to behave in an appropriate manner. Patrons who do not modify their behavior after one warning will be asked to leave for the rest of the day.
- Patrons who engage in misconduct that, in the judgment of a staff member, is "extreme" will be ordered to leave the building immediately and may be requested not to return for the remainder of the day. "Extreme" misconduct may include activities that are harassing, threatening, dangerous, or destructive to persons or property on the Library premises.
- If necessary, the senior staff member on duty may call the police for assistance.
- Patrons who engage in misconduct may receive written notice from the Library Director of a suspension or revocation of Library privileges. Patrons may request an appeals hearing before the Board of Library Trustees within fourteen (14) days of such notice. Any unlawful actions committed in the library or on the library premises will immediately be reported to the Townsend Police Department.
- If a minor who is violating the Library Conduct policy will be given one warning. If a minor does not modify their behavior after one warning, the responsible party may be asked to remove the minor from Library premises.

- If a minor is violating the Library Conduct policy and is not attended by a responsible party, a Library staff member will ask the minor to modify their behavior and take appropriate action as outlined above.

## Confidentiality of Library Records

### Code of Ethics of the American Library Association:

“We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired, or transmitted.”

### Policy

Confidentiality of library records is central to intellectual freedom and directly related to the ability of citizens to use library materials and pursue information without fear of intimidation. In accordance with First and Fourth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution, Mass. General Laws, and the American Library Association's statement of professional ethics, the Board of Trustees of the Townsend Public Library respects the privacy of patrons and recognizes its responsibility to protect their privacy.

1. The Library will not reveal the identities of individual patrons nor reveal the information sources or services they consult unless required by law. Confidentiality extends to information sought or received and materials consulted, borrowed, or acquired. Confidentiality includes database search records, reference interviews, interlibrary loan records, computer use records, and all other personally identifiable uses of Library materials, programs, or services.
2. The Library will hold confidential the names of cardholders and their registration information and not provide access for private, public, or commercial use. Use of this information by the Townsend Public Library, Friends of the Townsend Public Library, and the Library Endowment is permitted as outlined in the Use of Patron Database policy.
3. The lawful custodian of the records is the Director of the Library.

### Procedures

1. The Library staff member receiving a request to examine or obtain information relating to registration records or circulation records, or other records identifying the names of Library patrons, shall immediately refer the requestor to the Director, the official custodian of the records. To prevent any misunderstanding, the staff member should avoid discussing with the person making the request what patron information may or may not be available, or what the Library can or cannot do.  
  
If the Library Director is not available, inform the requestor when the Director will be available. If pressed to act sooner, contact the Director immediately. In the event the Director cannot be reached, the highest-ranking person on duty is responsible for working with the requestor.
2. The Library Director shall meet with the requestor of the information. If the requestor is a law enforcement officer, the officer must have a court order, a warrant issued under the USA Patriot Act, or a National Security Letter (NSL) issued under the USA Patriot Act to receive the requested records. If the officer does not have a proper court order, warrant, or

NSL compelling the production of records, the Library Director shall refuse to provide the information. The Library Director may explain the confidentiality policy and the state's confidentiality law, and inform the agent or officer that patrons' records are not available except when a proper court order in good form has been presented to the Library.

3. If the records requested cover registration, circulation, or other records protected under the Mass. General Laws, and the Director is uncertain about whether the order or subpoena presented to the Library Director is sufficient to require release of the records, the Library Director may immediately consult with legal counsel to determine if such process, order, or subpoena is sufficient to require release of the records.
4. If any written request, process, order, or subpoena is not in proper form or does not otherwise appear to be sufficient to support releasing the records, the Library Director shall insist that such defects be cured before any records are released.
5. If the Library Director, or the Director in consultation with the Library's attorney, determines that the order, warrant, or NSL is sufficient and compels the release of the records, the Library Director shall release the records.
6. If the request is made pursuant to the USA Patriot Act, the Library Director is authorized to obtain legal counsel regarding the request. As required by the USA Patriot Act, the Library Director may not discuss the request with anyone other than legal counsel.
7. If the requestor is not a law enforcement officer and has not presented any type of court or administrative order requiring release of the requested information, the Library Director shall refuse to provide the requested records. The Library Director may explain the confidentiality policy and the state's confidentiality law.
8. The Library Director may seek authorization to take legal action (such as moving to quash a subpoena) to resist releasing requested registration, circulation, or other records protected under the Mass. General Laws if the Library deems such action to be appropriate.
9. Any threats or unauthorized demands (i.e., those not supported by a written request, process, order, or subpoena) concerning circulation and other records identifying the names of Library patrons shall be reported to the Director.
10. Any problems relating to the privacy of circulation and other records identifying the names of Library patrons not provided for above shall be referred to the Director.

## **Use of Patron Database**

### **Policy**

The Library maintains an electronic file of its patrons as part of its automated circulation system. The Library may use those files to enhance or improve library services, including communicating with library patrons through mailings or other means.

### **Compliance with Massachusetts Open Records Law**

All information stored in any medium belonging to a city is defined as a public record by Massachusetts Open Records Law. Any use of the information in the patron database will comply with that law. See [Confidentiality of Library Records](#) policy in this manual.

### **Library's Responsibility**

The Library Director, who serves as custodian of the records, will authorize specific uses of the patron database. In addition to the Library itself, the Library Endowment and the Friends of the Townsend Public Library may also request to use information in the patron database. The Director will inform the Board of Trustees of any requests and authorizations to use the database.

### **Patrons' Rights**

This policy is not intended to discourage anyone from becoming a patron of the Library. If this information is used to compile a library mailing list, any patron may request in writing that their name not be included in such a list.

### **References**

U.S. Constitution:

First Amendment: Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Fourth Amendment: The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

## **Collections**

The Townsend Public Library offers collections to further the Library's mission. The Townsend Public Library strives to be an information center for the Townsend community to preserve and encourage the free expression of ideas essential to informed citizens.

### **Policy**

The Townsend Public Library Board of Trustees has adopted this Collections Policy to provide guidance for the selection and evaluation of materials that anticipate and meet the needs of the Townsend community.

### **Responsibility for Selection**

The Townsend Public Library Board of Trustees delegates authority for the selection of materials to the Library Director and those staff designated by the director.

### **Appropriations Requirements**

The Library Director develops an annual budget in consultation with the Townsend Public Library Board of Trustees. The budget includes a subscription line that meets the minimum

standards, or municipal appropriations, set forth by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

### **Selection Guidelines and Practices**

The Townsend community includes people from diverse educational, cultural, and economic backgrounds who display a variety of interests, needs, values, and viewpoints. Librarians at the Townsend Public Library make selections based on a general knowledge of the subject and its literature, familiarity with the materials in the collection already, an awareness of the selection tools for the subject, and recognition of community needs.

The Townsend Public Library has adopted the primary role of popular materials center. To fulfill this role, librarians select materials to serve the full range of ages, cultures, lifestyles, education, and reading skills of community citizens. The materials selected reflect the complex culture shared by the community. The collection includes diverse points of view and a choice of formats, treatments, and levels of difficulty. Librarians achieve a balanced collection through a diversity of materials, not an equality of numbers, working within constraints of budgets, availability, and space.

The Library does collect some supplementary materials that promote lifelong learning and provide a beginning point for those seeking more advanced information or materials.

The collection is generally not archival and items are expected to be used frequently. Those managing the collection continually assess that it is meeting the current needs of the community.

### **Formats**

Materials are purchased in the most appropriate format for library use. The Townsend Public Library recognizes the place of non-print formats in the collection as legitimate, educational, and recreational resources for the community. The Library monitors the development of new formats and may add these to the collection. The Library cannot afford to purchase and house all new formats.

The Townsend Public Library makes efforts to acquire materials in formats that are useful for citizens with disabilities, such as large-type books, audiobooks, and e-books. Collection managers will develop these collections as demand indicates and will be alert for new formats that may be appropriate.

### **Placement of Materials**

The Townsend Public Library shelving areas are divided into sections such as Juvenile, Young Adult, Fiction, Non-fiction, and DVDs for ease of use, but patrons of any age may use all sections of the library.

### **Access to the Collection**

The Townsend Public Library does not restrict anyone's access to any section of the collection. In the interest of protecting the individual's right to have access to materials, the Library supports the following:

- The First Amendment to the U. S. Constitution.
- The Library Bill of Rights - adopted by the American Library Association Council.
- The Freedom to Read Statement from the American Library Association



It is the responsibility of parents or legal guardians, not the Townsend Public Library staff, to monitor library use by minors.

**Lost or Damaged Library Items**

Patrons will be expected to pay a replacement fee for any library materials lost, damaged, or destroyed. Exceptions may be made with approval from the Library Director or the Assistant Director.

**Interlibrary Loan**

Interlibrary loan is a transaction in which the Townsend Public Library facilitates the sharing of resources with other libraries in Massachusetts.

Interlibrary loan is not a substitute for collection development. It supports the mission of the Townsend Public Library by expanding the range of materials available to library patrons without needlessly duplicating the resources of other libraries.

**Exclusions from Collections**

The Townsend Public Library does not keep, acquire, or purchase materials that violate the legal definition of obscene materials as defined by state statute.

No material will be excluded from selection based on the identity of the creator or the content of the work, including; race, ancestry, place of origin, color, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status, receipt of public assistance, political affiliation, disability, level of literacy or socio-economic status.

**Material Selection Tools**

The Townsend Public Library material collection managers are professionals with the education, training, and work experience required to make important selection decisions. They select materials for the Townsend Public Library collection, applying their knowledge of patron information needs; regional, state, and college library collections; publishing industry trends; and the general history of knowledge.

The Townsend Public Library collection managers rely on professional tools for selection. The Townsend Public Library patrons are encouraged to recommend the purchase of library materials. These requests are evaluated using the selection criteria reflected in this policy.

**Special Collections**

The Townsend Public Library supports the acquisition and preservation of useful and important materials.

**Weeding**

Circulating collections undergo an annual assessment to make space for current materials, to make collections more attractive, to facilitate ease of use by patrons and staff, and to reduce the damage to materials caused by overcrowding, space limitations, and overuse. Weeding decisions are based on criteria such as:

- Relevance
- Accuracy of information

- Low use based on analysis of circulation statistics
- Wear and damage
- Changes in format
- Duplicated holdings with low demand
- Space limitations
- Community interest
- Availability from other libraries.

**Expression of Concern**

The Townsend Public Library recognizes that some materials are controversial. The Townsend Public Library's role is to provide materials that will allow individuals to freely examine subjects and make their own decisions. Patrons are responsible for making their own decisions regarding what they approve of and check out from the library. Patrons cannot restrict the freedom of access to library materials for others.

Selection of materials for the collection is based on the principles described in this policy rather than on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval. Selection of any item does not constitute endorsement of the author's viewpoint, nor does the Townsend Public Library endorse particular beliefs or views.

Townsend Public Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of their contents, and no library materials will be sequestered, except to protect them from damage or theft.

Responsibility for reading, listening, and viewing of materials by minors rests with their legal guardians. At no time will the Townsend Public Library staff act in place of the guardian. Selection of library materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that they may be read or viewed by minors. Guardians are encouraged to accompany their minors to the library to choose materials.

The Townsend Public Library Director and the Board are aware that patrons may take issue with the inclusion of any specific item in the collection, and they welcome the expression of concern by our patrons. Concerns by Townsend Public Library Card Holders or Townsend residents shall be dealt with promptly and courteously as detailed in the following process:

- The Townsend Public Library staff will direct patrons to either the Library Director or the Assistant Director.
- The Library Director or Assistant Director will discuss the material with the concerned individual.
- After discussion with the Townsend Public Library Director or Assistant Director, an individual still concerned about an item may submit an official statement to the Townsend Public Library Board of Trustees using the Complaint Form. The concern communicated by the form shall be considered by the Board at a regular meeting.
- The Board shall consider the issue and decide upon a course of action. The Board shall notify the concerned individual in writing of its decision.

## **Library of Things**

The Library of Things is a collection of non-traditional library items that complement the Townsend Library's mission to provide the public with access to quality collections, technology, and programs for information, lifelong learning, literature, and entertainment.

### **Types of Materials Included in Collection**

The purpose of the Library of Things is to provide diverse opportunities for learning and engagement. To further this goal, the Library of Things may include, but is not limited to:

- Home Improvement Tools
- Assistive Devices
- Crafting and Gardening Tools
- Puzzles, Games, Educational Toys, and Learning Kits

The Library of Things is not intended to be comprehensive, and the library is limited by a finite amount of storage space for these items.

### **Procurement of Materials**

The library staff will select materials for the Library of Things based on the needs and interests of library patrons. The library welcomes input from the community concerning the collection. All suggestions for purchase are evaluated using the same selection criteria as for other materials.

### **Lending Guidelines**

Not all library materials may be suitable for all members of the community. Many items require a check-out contract to be signed by individuals aged 18+.

Responsibility for a minor's use of library materials, regardless of format or content, lies with the responsible adult, not with the library.

Due to the nature of the items contained in the Library of Things, these items will not be shared via delivery with the other libraries in the CWMARS Network. All library patrons are required to check out and return Library of Things items to the Townsend Public Library.

## **GIFTS AND LOANS**

### **Acquisition Policy**

Procedure for donation of gifts is in accordance with MGL Ch. 44 Sec. 53A and as described in the "Townsend Public Library Gift/Loan Policy"<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Gift & Loan Policy and Offer Forms: Appendix II

**Trustee Responsibilities**

The Board shall work with the Director and relevant staff to make all decisions regarding the receipt, use, care, and disposition of articles of value made available to the Townsend Public Library. The following considerations shall be part of any such decision:

1. Relevance to the mission of the Townsend Public Library.
2. Concerns regarding display, theft, or storage.
3. Expenses relative to acquisition, maintenance, restoration, insurance, or disposal.

Any appraisal valuation deemed necessary by the Board or desired by the Donor shall be at the expense of the Donor. The use and disposal of any and all gifts shall be at the sole discretion of the Board. A majority vote of the Board will be required to accept, maintain, or dispose of any gifts. Any funds received from the disposition of said gifts shall be deposited into the General Fund of the Town of Townsend. The Library Director shall maintain a master list of all such gifts and loans, their appraised value, and current placement. A copy of said list shall also be submitted with the minutes of the meetings of the Board. This list will be updated as part of the annual policy review.

**Staff Responsibilities**

1. The Townsend Public Library is responsible for maintaining all records of acquired objects, including a copy of the Deed of Gift.
2. The Townsend Public Library will provide the donor(s) with a Deed of Gift signed by the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees and the Library Director. The Chairperson and Director also acknowledge, by letter, all gifts and bequests.

**Loans**

In the event that an individual or organization desires to loan an item to the Townsend Public Library for temporary display or use, the following policies apply.

4. During the loan period the donor must maintain adequate insurance to replace or repair the item.
5. Neither the Townsend Public Library nor the Town of Townsend assumes the responsibility for damage by fire, theft, loss, or any other occurrence while on loan to the Townsend Public Library.
6. The loan terms and conditions must be documented by the Library Director and approved by the Board. A written agreement must be signed by both the donor and the Library Director, including any donor instructions.

**Signage, Bulletin Board Use, Ticket Sales, and Soliciting****Posting Policy**

- All postings must be approved and dated by the Director or designated Staff.
- Items will be posted by staff or designated volunteers only.
- Once posted, flyers are library property and may be disposed of when the information is no longer current or at the discretion of the Director.

- Townsend Public Library is not responsible for lost or stolen flyers.
- There will be no permanent installations of posters or collection boxes.

### **Sales**

The Library allows only the sale of tickets and items that support library services and programs, with the exception of non-profit Community Organizations that have been approved by the Board of Trustees.

### **Soliciting and Petitions**

Soliciting inside the Library is forbidden. Petitions are allowed for campaigns and ballot initiatives if they are official forms from the Secretary of State's office or the Townsend Town Clerk's office.

## **Historical Reference Room**

The Townsend Public Library Historical Reference Room is a resource of material that chronicles and preserves Townsend's local history and genealogy. Included in the collection are resources for many Massachusetts towns and New Hampshire towns, particularly surrounding or neighboring towns. The Room is kept locked when not in use. Materials located in this room are NOT circulated. There is a table and chairs where patrons may sit and do research.

### **Use**

All patrons are encouraged to visit the Historical Reference Room to perform historical or genealogical research. Because many of the items in the collection are fragile or irreplaceable, care and consideration must be exercised in their use. With this in mind, the following procedures must be followed:

- The Historical Reference Room is only open to the public during regular library hours.
- If possible, patrons wanting to use the Resource Room should call ahead to notify the staff.
- Patrons using the Historical Reference Room must sign in and sign out at the main library desk.
- No food or drink is ever permitted in the Historical Reference Room.
- Patrons are asked to leave materials they have used on the table in the Historical Reference Room so the staff can reshelv items in the proper place and keep track of the number of items used.
- Photocopying is permitted as long as the copying complies with federal copyright laws. The researchers should ask before having anything photocopied from the Historical Reference Room collection.
- The library staff is available to assist patrons with questions, if time permits.

### **Materials Included in the Collection**

- Town histories from most communities in Massachusetts, including Townsend
- Digital copies of The Townsend Times (not all issues available)
- Townsend Annual Reports

- North Middlesex Regional High School Yearbooks (not all years available)

### **Scope of the Collection**

The Townsend Public Library collects the following for the Resource Room:

- Materials dealing with the history of Townsend
- Materials written or produced by Townsend residents about the town of Townsend, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and other New England locales
- Manuscripts and genealogies of families whose members lived in Townsend
- Materials that may assist genealogy researchers in determining whether the subjects of their research lived in Townsend
- Vital records of Massachusetts towns, especially those surrounding Townsend
- Copies of the Townsend Times newspaper or any other local newspaper
- Archives of the Townsend Public Library

## **Study Rooms and Trustee Conference Room**

Study rooms and Library conference rooms may be reserved for public use according to the policy below.

### **Policy for Use**

1. Study rooms will be available during regular library hours for individual or small group quiet studying or meetings.
2. Food and drink are permitted at the discretion of the library staff.
3. Townsend Public Library is not responsible for valuables left unattended.
4. Study rooms may be reserved in advance; otherwise they are on a first-come, first-served basis. Patrons may be asked to leave a room if someone else is waiting to use it.
5. There is no charge for the use of a room.
6. Noise or disruptive behavior shall result in suspension of room use privilege.
7. Patrons must vacate rooms ten (10) minutes before library closing.
8. Any damage shall be assessed and patrons shall be held responsible.

### **Exam Proctoring Policy**

For students whose schools require remote study, the Townsend Public Library may proctor exams, subject to staff availability and the requirements of the school. The Library will not proctor GED tests.

Note the following guidelines:

1. Exams will be administered during the Library's regular operating hours. Exams may not exceed three (3) hours in length and must be completed thirty (30) minutes before the Library closes.

2. The Library will provide an individual conference room. Students are responsible for supplying all materials needed (pencils, erasers, pens, papers, calculators) to complete the test.
3. Exams will be proctored by a designated Staff member at the time the exam is scheduled. Proctors will not monitor a student continuously during the exam but will check periodically to enforce time limits and other rules set forth in the exam materials.
4. Cell phones are not allowed in testing rooms.
5. Proctors cannot interpret test instructions or discuss examination content with the student.
6. Proctors will not enter personal information on the proctoring materials nor attest to having the student under observation at all times during the exam.
7. At the time of testing, the student must provide current photo identification and the name on the identification must match the name on the exam documents.
8. The Library does not charge a fee to proctor exams, nor will it incur any expenses associated with providing this service. The student must provide an addressed stamped envelope for materials that need to be mailed.
9. The Library is not responsible for completed tests that are not received by the testing institution. It is the student's responsibility to confirm the institution's receipt of completed test materials.
10. If it is determined that the proctoring request is unreasonable or the demands are too burdensome to administer, the Library reserves the right to deny this service.

## **Townsend Library Internet and Computer Use**

### **Internet Policy**

The Townsend Public Library offers access to the Internet. It does not monitor and has no control over the information accessed through the Internet and cannot be held responsible for its content. Library patrons use it at their own discretion.

There are information resources that are inappropriate to a library setting that can be accessed through the Internet. As a public place, the Library has the authority to ask that an Internet session be ended when such material, as deemed inappropriate by the library staff, is displayed on the screen.

### **Computer User's Responsibility**

- Respect the privacy of others.
- Patrons are prohibited from engaging in any activity constituting a violation of local, state, or federal laws.
- Patrons are prohibited from downloading copyrighted material.
- Patrons may not attempt to modify or gain access to files, passwords, or information belonging to others, or attempt unauthorized access to computers or networks.
- Patrons may not install or run unapproved software on Library Computers.
- Patrons may not connect a personal computer or other device to the Library network (LAN).
- Patrons may use public wireless access.

- Patrons may not damage or tamper with Library hardware, software, or files.
- Patrons may fax, print, and photocopy documents. A suggested donation of \$2 per page for faxing and \$0.25 per page for printing or photocopying is appreciated.
- Patrons may not send, receive, print, or display text or media that are obscene or illegal as defined by Massachusetts General Law or Federal Law.

The Library reserves the right to end Internet and computer sessions if these rules are violated. Violations or failure to comply with the directions of library staff may result in the suspension or revocation of privileges at the Library. Additionally, illegal activities will be reported to the police.

### **Parents, Minors, and the Internet**

Parents, guardians, and other caregivers, hereafter defined as the Responsible Party, are responsible for minors' use of the Internet. The Library and its staff do not assume responsibility for a minor using the Internet.

The Responsible Party is advised to supervise minors' Internet sessions. Additionally, minors under the age of six (6) must be under the direct supervision of a Responsible Party when using a computer.

### **Disclaimer**

#### ***(Town Council please review liability disclaimer for accuracy necessity)***

All users of computer services offered by the Townsend Public Library agree to hold the Townsend Public Library System, staff employed at the library, Library Board of Trustees, and the Town of Townsend harmless from any and all claims, losses, damages, obligations, or liabilities, directly or indirectly relating to the use of its computers, network, or Internet services. In no event shall the Townsend Public Library have any liability for lost profits for indirect, special, punitive, or consequential damages, or any liability to any third party that may arise from the use of the computers, network, or Internet services, even if the Townsend Public Library is advised of the possibility of such damages. The Townsend Public Library is not responsible for damage to a patron's removable media or computer, or any loss of data, damage, or liability that may occur from patron use or the Library's computers and network.

The Library does not guarantee that every Internet service and every patron device or storage media will work in conjunction with the Library's computers and network.

## **Programs**

### **Policy**

The Townsend Public Library offers programs and events to further the Library's mission.

### **Responsibility for Programming**

Library-initiated or sponsored programs are a resource that provides information, education, and recreation to our community. Programs may take place in the Library and in other locations in the community. These programs are designed to:

- Encourage and promote the use of library materials and resources.



- Present information on issues of current or local interest, and for cultural entertainment.
- Facilitate the sharing of the community's "people resources"—their hobbies, skills, collections, knowledge, and expertise.

The Library also co-sponsors programs with The Friends of the Townsend Public Library and Townsend Public Library Endowment, Inc., as well as other agencies, individuals, or community organizations. The Library's role in such cases may include, but is not limited to, Library Director's and staff time in planning the program and furnishing space, promotion, and preparation of related materials or displays.

When a community group or individual approaches the Library with a programming idea or request, the Library Director examines the request to determine if:

- The program supports the mission of the Library
- The resources needed to accomplish the program are available.

### **Content**

The Library will endeavor to provide programs and sponsor programs that present a broad spectrum of opinion and a variety of viewpoints. The Library is not obligated to present a program representing multiple or opposing viewpoints within one program or series.

"Library sponsorship of a program does not constitute an endorsement of the content of the program or the views expressed by the participants, any more than the purchase of materials for the library collection constitutes an endorsement of the contents of the material or the views of its creator. Library staff selects topics, speakers, and resource materials for library-initiated programs based on the interests and information needs of the community. Topics, speakers, and resource materials are not excluded from library-initiated programs because of possible controversy<sup>5</sup>."

### **Charges**

No admission will be charged for Library programs. Sales and donations are allowed only under the following conditions:

- Fund-raising to benefit the Library by the Friends of Townsend Public Library, or the Townsend Public Library Endowment, Inc.
- Fund-raising for program cost-recovery purposes by co-sponsors of Library programs, such as Materials fees.
- The sale of items by authors and artists as part of a Library program.

The Library may participate as a co-sponsor in off-site programs that require a fee for attendance for program cost-recovery purposes.

Exceptions to the above may be made at the discretion of the Library Director.

---

<sup>5</sup> "Library-Initiated Programs as a Resource: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights"

**Attendance**

Every attempt will be made to accommodate all who wish to attend a program. However, when safety or the nature of a program requires it, attendance may be limited. When limits must be enforced, attendance will be determined on a first-come, first-served basis or by pre-registration. Preference will be given to Townsend residents. All of the Library's public meeting rooms have a posted capacity as determined by the Townsend Fire Department.

For some programs, the nature of the program may require limiting attendance based on age.

**Statements of Concern Regarding Programs and Collections**

Concerns by Townsend Public Library Card Holders or Townsend residents shall be dealt with promptly and courteously.

**Expressions of Concern**

1. The appropriate staff will first discuss the program or resource with the complainant. After discussion, if the complainant wishes, they may discuss their concerns with the Library Director or Assistant Director.
2. After discussion with the Library Director or Assistant Director, if the complainant is still concerned about library programs or resources, they may submit an official complaint to the Board using the "Complaint Form."

**Formal Complaint Process**

The official complaint on the "Complaint Form"<sup>6</sup> will be considered by the Board at a regular meeting.

1. At the meeting, the complainant may present their comments.
2. The Library Director shall present a staff response.
3. The Board shall make a final ruling on the concern.
4. A written response shall be sent to the complainant.

**Personnel**

As employees of the Town of Townsend, the Library Director and staff are subject to the personnel policies of the town.

**VOLUNTEERS**

Individuals interested in volunteering at the Townsend Public Library must complete a Volunteer Application Form or Teen Volunteer Application Form. Potential volunteers over age 18 must also complete a Criminal Offense Record Investigation (CORI) form according to the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. All volunteers who serve the library in any capacity are expected to adhere to the Town Code of Conduct and Harassment Policy as outlined in Town Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual behave in a respectful, professional manner. This

---

<sup>6</sup> Library Resources Complaint Form: Appendix II

includes any interaction with each other, as well as with the public, whether in person or through any electronic means.

# GIFT OFFER FORM

Names: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

The above-named persons, herein referred to as the Donor, offer to the Townsend Public Library the following items:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

(Attach another sheet if necessary.)

☐ Please check box that Donor has a right to materials offered.

In honor/memory of: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (If applicable)

(If applicable) The valuation of said gifts has been determined by an independent appraisal to be \$ \_\_\_\_\_, as per the attached appraisal.

The Donor hereby understands that the use and disposal of said gifts shall be at the sole discretion of the Board of Library Trustees in accordance with the Library Gift Policy.

I/we agree with the terms of the Library Gift Policy:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Donor Signatures \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Director Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

The Board of Trustees of the Townsend Public Library hereby accepts said gifts:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## LOAN OFFER FORM

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

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

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

The above-named persons, herein referred to as the Donor, offer to loan the Townsend Public Library the following items:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Attach another sheet if necessary.)

For the following time period:

From \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Additional terms of loan (if applicable):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please check box that Donor has a right to materials offered.

The Donor hereby understands that the use shall be at the sole discretion of the Board of Library Trustees in accordance with the Library Gift/Loan Policy.

I/we agree with the terms of the Library Loan Policy:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Donor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Library Director Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## COMPLAINT FORM

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Resident or Townsend Public Library Card  
holder: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Resource of concern:

☐ Book or Magazine   ☐ Video   ☐ Audio Book   ☐ Music Media

☐ Video Game   ☐ Electronic information   ☐ Other

Title/Author/Artist: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you examined the entire resource?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

2. Programming concern:

☐ Library program   ☐ Display/Exhibit   ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Title/Date/Time/Location: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you find out about the resource or program? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (Continues on next page)

What are your concerns about the resource or program? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What action do you seek as a result of this complaint? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_