

Baxter Memorial Library - Mission Statement and Policies

1. Baxter Memorial Library: Mission Statement

Our mission is to inform, enrich, and nurture a community of lifelong learners.

1.1 Baxter Memorial Library: Vision Statement

Our vision is to connect the people of Sharon with one another using the broad resources of the library in order to support lifelong learning, the joys of reading, and the exchange of diverse ideas within a supportive and comfortable environment.

1.2 Baxter Memorial Library: Diversity Statement

Our patrons are central to our mission and EVERYONE is welcome! We encourage and celebrate diversity of culture, ideas, and individuals. Diversity includes all individual human characteristics and ideas: race, gender, age, sexual orientation, lifestyle, ability, economic status, religion, and worldview.

2. Baxter Memorial Library: Policies

2.1 Confidentiality of Library Records

Vermont law (Act 129) provides that a library patron's records (those required to be completed for borrowing privilege eligibility and those that reveal a patron's individual library activities, including electronic or print materials viewed, research questions posed, any materials requested through interlibrary loan or borrowed, or any other service or consultation the patron requests) shall, subject to specified exemptions, remain confidential. These exemptions include: the patron's granting permission for the record's disclosure, the library's disclosure of the record to its employees, volunteers, and agents to the extent necessary for administrative purposes, in response to an authorized judicial warrant directing disclosure and to custodial parents or guardians if the patron is under age 16. Statistical information reporting library activities may be disclosed provided that names of patrons or other individually identifying information is not included.

Law enforcement officials require a judicial order or warrant to obtain library records. The library will cooperate with legal authorities with appropriate documentation.

While the Library cannot guarantee the privacy of data or computer usage of the public access computers, it considers such privacy to be extremely important. The Library follows best practices to secure the network and its computers and to ensure that search histories are erased between computer sessions. It is also clearly stated in this policy that infringement upon the rights and privacy of others is unacceptable use of these resources.

2.2 Nondiscrimination

The Board of Trustees affirms the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View documents as statements of each individual's right to freedom of choice in information and materials use.

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Baxter Memorial Library shall serve everyone, without discrimination, in accordance with the Vermont Public Accommodation Law (21 VSA, Sec. 271). In addition, the library takes particular care to serve everyone, regardless of reading ability, age, or economic status.

Selection of library staff is based solely upon the ability to fulfill the requirements of the job description, with due consideration of personal, educational, and physical qualifications and aptitudes for the position involved. Baxter Memorial Library does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, or handicap in the employment of personnel.

2.3 Collection Development

Selection of materials for the Library is the responsibility of the Librarian and is done with knowledge of patron interests as a key determining factor. The following are selection guidelines:

1. Selection of books, periodicals, and/or other materials shall be based on their contribution to the interests, positive growth, and enlightenment of all people in the community. Race, nationality, or the political or social views of the author shall not be a determining factor in book selection.
2. The Library's materials selection reflects the importance of basic core materials of permanent value and materials on current issues and problems. The Library recognizes its obligation to provide reference and research materials in response to specific questions and for continuing research. Specialized collections intended primarily for exhaustive research are available through interlibrary loan (ILL). Therefore, the Library weighs carefully its purchasing of specialized works.
3. The Library is pleased to accept book donations with the understanding that the materials will be added to the collection only when needed; if not added, the library has the right to disposal and may sell, give away, or discard the item(s) at the Librarian's discretion.
4. One of the essential purposes of the Library is to provide a source where individuals may examine many points of view and make their own decisions. To this end, the Library provides materials representing a variety of approaches to public issues of a controversial nature.
5. The Library's children's materials are purchased for a wide range of ages, abilities, and interests, and a variety of reading levels. The Library is also mindful of the needs of parents and teachers. Responsibility for a child's reading and access to Library materials rests with the parents and/or legal guardians; selection of Library materials will not be influenced by the possibility that an individual's parent or guardian may object.
6. The Librarian will provide referral to the Vermont Department of Special Services for library users with disabilities.
7. The Library does not voice particular beliefs or views, nor is the selection of any given item equivalent to endorsement of the viewpoint of the author expressed within. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and no cataloged book or other item will be sequestered, except for the express purpose of protecting it from injury or theft.

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8. When a patron objects to the presence or absence of any library material, their complaint will be given a fair hearing. The librarian will examine the item in question to determine if it conforms to the Collection Development policy and make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees. The Trustees will decide whether or not to add or withdraw the material in question and will document their decision in a letter to the complainant.

The Board of Trustees of Baxter Memorial Library, recognizing that a small public library best serves the community by providing a collection of materials which is actively used, supports the concept of regular weeding of Library materials based on usage, copyright, and condition.

1. Regular weeding maintains the dynamic quality of the collection. Continuous review and evaluation is important not only for saving space but to maintain the collection's accuracy, check its physical condition, and assess its strengths and weaknesses.
2. Decisions about which materials to discard shall be made by the Librarian based on standards contained in references used by professional librarians, such as the Public Library Catalog and Fiction Catalog and the C.R.E.W. manual for weeding Library collections (published by the University of Texas).
3. Disposition of discarded materials shall be left to the discretion of the Librarian.

2.4 Personnel

The Board of Trustees shall have primary responsibility for personnel management related to the Library Director and staff including but not limited to salary and benefits, hiring, performance evaluations, probation, termination, grievances, conduct, and use of volunteers. The Board and the Library's employee(s) shall be guided by the Town of Sharon Personnel Policies except where specific policies of the Library conflict, in which case the Library policies shall control.

To wit:

1. **Vacation Leave.** Library employees shall receive a minimum of two weeks paid vacation per year with a week defined as the number of hours in their usual and customary work week. At the end of each fiscal year, one week of unused vacation leave may carry over into the new fiscal year. An employee must work for the Library for a minimum of three months before he or she can use accrued vacation leave.
2. **Holiday Leave.** Library employees shall receive the following paid holidays if the holiday falls on a day that the Library employee usually work, and with the holiday defined as the number of hours in their usual and customary workday: New Year's Day, Town Meeting Day, Memorial Day, July 4, Labor Day, Indigenous Peoples' Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.

2.5 Public Use of Electronic Resources

Baxter Memorial Library seeks to serve the learning, information, and personal enrichment needs of people of all ages in the Sharon community. To pursue this mission, the Library seeks to expand individual access to information through the use of current technologies, such as public Internet access, online research databases, computer applications, and printing.

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The Internet is a decentralized network of computers whose files have been made available to anyone with Internet access. As an information resource it is not within the scope of the Library's materials selection policy. Therefore, the Library is unable to assume responsibility for the quality of information accessed through the Internet. Parents or guardians, not the Library, are responsible for the information selected and/or accessed by their children under the age of sixteen.

The Library provides wireless access to the Internet so patrons may access it on their computers capable of receiving wireless signals. The Library cannot assume responsibility for the security of personally owned hardware and software used on Library premises.

Currently, the American Library Association does not endorse using Internet filters in libraries because they block access to information that is legal and useful, and because they cannot distinguish between protected and unprotected speech. Filters are not installed on any computers at Baxter Memorial Library. Responsibility for a child's access to the internet via Library computers rests with the parents and/or legal guardians.

The freedom to access information is a fundamental right, but use of library equipment is a privilege. Users shall respect the rights of other computer users, library patrons, and staff, including the use of personal devices that use the wireless capacity of the library. Users shall respect the policies, rights and conventions of all the organizations and individuals who use the Internet.

Unacceptable uses of the Internet include but are not limited to the following:

- Use of the resources for any purpose that violates federal, state or local laws
- Harassment of others
- Libeling or slandering others
- Destruction of or damage to equipment, software, or data belonging to the library or other users
- Disruption or unauthorized monitoring of electronic communications
- Infringement upon the rights and privacy of others
- Unauthorized use of computer accounts or access codes
- Unauthorized copying of copyright-protected material
- Unauthorized disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal information regarding minors
- Downloading of external applications to the hard drive of the public access computers.
- Intentional interference with or circumvention of normal operation of Library technology

Although the freedom to access information is a fundamental right, library users must exercise that right responsibly by respecting the rights of others. The Library will not censor access to the Internet. Nevertheless, the Library is committed to providing an environment free from harassment. Display of sexually explicit graphics or otherwise offensive material is inappropriate for an open public environment and is prohibited. Although the Library takes harassment violations very seriously, there will be no supervision by the Library of what is accessed via the Library's public access computers. This responsibility falls to library patrons.

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- The Library provides assistance with using computers for information retrieval, but the Library cannot guarantee assistance with other computer uses.
- There is a printing charge.
- Failure to use the equipment appropriately and responsibly may result in restriction or suspension of computer use privileges, determined on a case by case basis at the discretion of the Librarian. Computer users will be informed in writing if their privileges have been restricted or suspended due to violations of this Policy.
- Any damage to library computers may be charged to the user.
- Illegal use may be subject to prosecution by local, state, or federal authorities.

2.6 Operating Procedures

1. Service will not be denied because of racial, social, economic or political status. There will be no charge to use the library.
2. Depending on the item, library materials are loaned out for between three and thirty days.
3. Fines will not be charged for overdue books. Donations are welcome in a conscience jar.
4. When a loaned item (book, audio, etc.) is at least one month overdue, at the discretion of the librarian the patron will receive written notification requesting its return.
5. A second notification may be given if the item is not returned after two weeks.
6. When an item is at least eight weeks overdue and two notifications have been given, the patron will receive an invoice for the cost of the item. The amount to be paid will be determined in accordance with the replacement cost and age of the item.
7. If the patron does not return or pay for the item after receiving an invoice, the librarian may suspend loaning privileges until either the item or payment is received. The librarian will notify the trustees promptly of such a suspension.
8. The use of the library or its services may be denied by the librarian for due cause. Such cause may be failure to return loaned items or pay for lost/damaged materials, destruction of library property, or objectionable conduct on library premises. The librarian will notify trustees of any such action.
9. Library patron records and circulation records will be made confidential. Assigned circulation numbers will be offered to all patrons. With the exception of annual operation records compiled for the town and Vermont Department of Libraries, library records will not be available to the public.
10. The library will attempt to be open at hours convenient to the community, a minimum of 14 hours per week, including some time during evenings and weekends. If normal library hours fall during a holiday period, the library will be closed. Prior notice of holiday closings will be posted publicly.

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11. Use of the library for group meetings will be granted at the discretion of the librarian and Board of Trustees in accordance with the attached 'Building Use Policy.'

12. Baxter Memorial Library is a smoke and drug free environment.

2.7 Ownership and Governance

Baxter Memorial Library operates as a non-municipal public library.

The library is operated by a five-member Board of Trustees elected by the Town of Sharon at annual Town Meeting to serve three year terms. Baxter Library Trustees have governance over library operations and library policy, and ownership of the contents of the library.

The town of Sharon owns the building and grounds of the library as of a June 2010 deed transfer. The town is also the official employer of the librarian.

The library receives some portion of its funding from the town's general taxpayer fund. In acknowledgement of this, town/public oversight is granted in the following ways:

- The board provides the town an annual written report of the operating and financial status of the library
- Trustees are elected publicly at Town Meeting
- Trustee meetings are warned and open to the public, conforming to VT Open Meeting Law.

Public funds and endowment funds are supplemented by fundraising efforts to provide an operating budget.

Letter of Agreement

A written Letter of Agreement, signed January 27, 2011, delineates the current arrangement between the town select board and the library trustees as to which expenses are paid by the town and where the rights and responsibilities lie. This letter may be reviewed and revised after discussion by both parties.

Responsibilities of the trustees

It is the basic responsibility of the Board of Trustees to set library policy, support and evaluate the librarian, manage library endowment and fundraising monies, manage the library budget, promote and plan for library use according to community need.

The librarian is a town employee under the direct oversight of the library trustees. Trustees have the right and responsibility of making recommendations to the town about hiring and terminating

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librarians, making pay recommendations, conducting annual performance evaluations with the librarian, and oversight of the personnel policy.

Responsibilities of the librarian

It is the responsibility of the librarian to manage the daily operation of the library and its programs, select and weed books and materials, oversee light maintenance of the facility, keep basic records, satisfy patron requests through interlibrary loan and cooperating libraries, report at monthly trustee meetings. (Job descriptions for librarian and volunteers are on file.)

Responsibilities of the Town of Sharon

The town is responsible for maintenance of the building and grounds (except for the gardens), paying the librarian's salary, and paying the other expenses agreed upon in the Letter of Agreement (generally facilities/utilities expenses).

2.8 Review and Revision of Policies

The Board of Trustees shall review these policies at least every three years. During this process any necessary changes or revisions may be made.

Dated this _____ day of _____, 2022.

FOR THE BAXTER MEMORIAL LIBRARY BY ITS TRUSTEES:

_____ Emma Basham, Trustee Chairperson

_____ Sandy Johnston, Trustee Treasurer

_____ Marian Weatherbee, Trustee Secretary

_____ Kit Hood, Trustee

_____ Laura DeCapua, Trustee

Approved June 21, 2016

Amended September 22, 2022

Addenda:

Library Use Policy and Procedures, approved July 21, 2022

(guidelines for use of the library by outside groups)

Patron Behavior Policy, approved July 21, 2022

(guidelines for patron behavior and sanctions if necessary)