Be prepared for comments on any item in the collection. Staff should be clear that they are representing the Rockingham County Public Library and the intellectual freedom philosophy of libraries in general. It is not the staff person’s view that is under consideration.

- Listen carefully and respectfully to the customer and maintain a non-judgmental manner. Allow each person to express feelings, at length, if necessary.

- Offer the customer a copy of the Rockingham County Public Library “Materials Selection Policy” and attachments and explain the intellectual freedom philosophy. Attachments include the “Introduction”, the “Library Bill of Rights”, and “Free Access to Libraries for Minors, and The Freedom to Read Statement”.

- Concepts regarding intellectual freedom follow:
  
  o It is the responsibility of the Library to include a broad spectrum of materials, not to exclude materials.
  o Libraries do not necessarily endorse the ideas represented by these materials.
  o Library staff does not assume the role of a parent in restricting the access of minors to materials and services.

- If the Rockingham County citizen wants to submit a written complaint, offer him/her the “Citizen’s Comment on Library Materials” form. This form may be returned to the library or mailed to the Director. Copies will be kept on file.
• If the patron wants to talk to someone “higher up”:
  o Refer the complaint to the managing librarian or supervisor in charge. If the
    supervisor is out of the building, offer to have him/her call the patron back
    as soon as possible.
  o If asked, give the Director’s name and phone number.
  o Notify the Director of the patron’s name and complaint
  o Complete the “Citizen’s Comment of Library Materials” form.

• The Director will consult with appropriate staff that will consider the complaint
  and evaluate the disputed material.

• The Director will send a letter to the complainant, stating that the matter is
  under consideration. (Sample of letter attached).

• The Director will notify the Library Board of Trustees about the complaint.

• Within two weeks the decision of the Director and the staff will be
  communicated in writing to the complainant and to the Board of Trustees.

• Should the complainant wish to appeal the decision, this request should be
  forwarded to the Director who will inform the Trustees. The written appeal by
  the complainant must be made within two weeks of the staff decision.

• The Board of Trustees and the Director will take this matter under advisement;
  the complainant will be informed of the decision as soon as possible.

• The Library Director and the Board of Trustees will follow up on any appeal
  process with the patron.

• If the Trustees’ and the Library Director’s decision is appealed the procedure
  will be forwarded to the County Manager for further action.

• Confidentiality of the complaint is very important; staff should not discuss the
  incident at the circulation desk or any other public area.