

THOMAS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

POLICY MANUAL

I. Mission Statement, Goals and Governance

A. Mission Statement

Thomas County Public Library System (TCPLS) provides open access to information, recreational and educational purposes. TCPLS is committed to provide its users an atmosphere and environment free from unnecessary distractions and conducive to the most efficient use of library facilities.

B. Goals

To implement the mission statement the Library has set 5 goals:

1. The Library provides high-demand, high interest materials of a popular nature in a variety of formats to meet the educational and recreational needs of the communities.
2. The Library provides reference materials and services that answer the information needs of the community, or provides direction to additional sources of information.
3. The Library provides a source for ongoing education; programs and services to meet community needs; and equality of services for the residents of Thomas County.
4. The Library collects, preserves and provides access to a variety of materials that are written by and/or about Thomas County citizens in both a current and historic context.
5. The Library evaluates current services, performs user surveys and makes plans for new services that will meet the community's needs now and in the future.

C. Governance

Thomas County Public Library System is governed by a Board of Trustees consisting of 9 voting members and 4 ex-officio members.

All policies, adopted by the Library Board of Trustees are in strict compliance with part 2 dated 3/29/84 of Article 2 of Chapter 5 of Title 20 of the *Official Code of Georgia Annotated*, and any amendments noted hereafter relating to County and

Regional Public Libraries. (See Appendix I-Constitution and Bylaws of the Library and the Board of Trustees)

II. Facilities and Operations

TCPLS is composed of six facilities: headquarters in Thomasville and five service outlets in Boston, Coolidge, Meigs, Ochlocknee and Pavo. The definition of a service outlet is any Library facility that is open less than 18 hours per week, according to state regulations.

- The headquarters is responsible for all activities in each Library. All buildings are county property and are maintained and operated through the Library system budget. All rules, policies and regulations apply to each Library in the system. The Director is responsible for direction of these activities.
- Hours of operation, within budgetary restraints, would include the headquarters in Thomasville to operate daily Monday through Sunday, with a minimum of two nights operation after 6:00pm. Service outlets will operate 18 hours weekly depending on funding and usage.
- TCPLS is a county Library system with primary funding received as part of the Special Purpose Sales Tax approved by county voters in 1992.
- TCPLS is additionally funded by the state in the form of awards and grants. Funds are also sought through grants from Federal, State and Local funds.
- TCPLS is funded through activities and efforts of the Friends of the Library.
- TCPLS accepts gifts of funds, materials, equipment, etc. when appropriate and to fill a need.
- TCPLS offers meeting rooms for community or studying needs. (See Guidelines – Appendix VI – A,B &C)
- TCPLS offers additional services through copies and reader printers.
- TCPLS offers current technology for the public when funds are available.
- TCPLS offers its facilities for exhibits or displays for community information and creativity.
- Other services:
 - Reference
 - Inter Library Loans (ILL)
 - Cooperating Collection of the Foundation Center
 - Large Print Books

Audio books; books on CD; videos; CDs; DVD's; playaways
 Basic Literacy
 Computer Literacy Instruction
 Participating in the statewide circulation system -PINES
 E-books and downloadable books

III. Patron Rules and Regulations

A. Behavior Prohibited by Rules

- Engaging in disorderly conduct, fighting or challenging to fight, or using offensive words to provoke violence.
- Using obscene or abusive acts and/or language
- Loud or disruptive behavior
- Rudeness to employees, other patrons or security personnel
- Indecent exposure
- Misuse of restrooms
- Physically, psychologically or sexually harassing staff or patrons, including but not limited to, staring at, inappropriately touching, following individuals around the library premises or interfering with the free movement of any person.

B. Actions Prohibited by Rules

- Parking under carport; stopping to let out individuals and picking them up should be brief to allow others the same courtesy
- Distributing or posting printed materials/literature that have not been approved by the Library
- Selling or soliciting for money or items or services
- Changing of clothes or bathing in the restrooms
- Removing Library materials from the premises without authorization through established lending procedures
- Abusing books, materials or equipment
- Eating or drinking: bringing food or beverages into the Library

- Smoking or other uses of tobacco inside the Library or within 25 feet of the Library entrance
- Possessing or consuming alcohol or illegal drugs or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Not wearing shoes or shirts
- Bringing bedrolls, frame backpacks or suitcases
- Littering
- Loitering in the lobby, stacks, restrooms or parking lot
- Using the Library phone for extended periods (more than 3 minutes)
- Wandering from one area to another
- Putting feet or legs on the furniture
- Moving Library furnishing without permission
- Sleeping
- Playing cards or games of any kind unless approved by Library staff members
- Bringing animals or pets into the Library (except guide dogs or others approved by the Library)
- For traffic safety reasons, children should not wait in front of the Library or in the parking lot for their rides: parents are requested to park their cars and come into the Library to pick up their children. Children should notify the Library staff if they are briefly (5 minutes) waiting for a ride.
- Any illegal acts or conduct in violation of Federal, State or local law, ordinance or regulation
- Wearing headphones with the volume turned up loud enough for others to hear.
- Cell phones should be set to silent or vibration mode; users are to answer their cell phones in the lobby or in front of the building.

C. Patrons' Right of Privacy

The foremost relationship the Library must foster is that between the Library and the patrons. The patron is our reason for being and the Library must continually be responsive to his/her needs. A feeling of trust and privacy must be maintained. In response to this belief, the following resolution was adopted by the Library Board and its strict adherence is expected:

Whereas the Board of Trustees of the Thomas County Public Library System appreciates the difficulty experienced by many law enforcement agencies in the pursuit of justice; and whereas, the Board recognizes and approves the goal of bringing criminals to justice but not at the sacrifice of basic personal liberties enjoyed by all the population; and whereas the Library Director believes that the releasing of any information concerning a patron would amount to an invasion of privacy which would result in a direct betrayal of trust between the Library and its reading public and that a subpoena from an appropriate court should be required from any individual or organization wishing to examine said records and whereas, the said Board endorses this position.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved As Follows:

1. That once a book is place in the Library, the reading examination of said book becomes a private matter with each individual and is not subject to review by this Board or any other body;
2. That this Board's duty to protect the basic rights of readers takes priority over all requests of the above nature;
3. That the intent of this resolution is to clarify the Board's position, and to reassure Library users that no information of this nature will be revealed hereafter.

The right of privacy also includes staff records (vacation, sick leave, salary, evaluation, etc.) and information contained in City Directories.

In cases of extreme emergency, the Library Director can submit a request for the information stipulated above to be released for a special purpose. That request shall be made in writing to the Board Chairman who can reply immediately or request a meeting of the Executive Committee and/or the Library Board to make that exception.

Please note from above that a subpoena from an appropriate court can solicit information cited. (24-9-46 GA Code)

D. Patron Safety and Accidents

It is the responsibility of every staff member to provide patrons with a safe environment in the Library and on Library property. Employees should be alert to any safety hazards and report them to a superior or personally correct the situation immediately.

If an accident does occur, immediate attention is given to any patrons involved, outside medical and police aid is requested, if needed. Afterwards, a full report is written and submitted to the Director. This report should include all details necessary to adequately describe the circumstances of the accident.

Library staff is mandated to report any situation that a child has been abused immediately to the authorities: whether physical, sexual, neglect or sexual exploitation.

IV. Circulation of Library Materials

The objective of an effective circulation policy is to define clearly the Library's procedures and regulations for the checkout and return of materials. All rules and regulations which follow apply to each Library facility in the County System unless otherwise stipulated by the Director.

A. Library Cards

All county and Georgia residents, students, county property owners, employees of county businesses or services relating to Thomas County are eligible for free library service. Proof of eligibility is required: a picture I.D. (i.e. driver's license) and proof of current address. Non-Georgia residents may pay a yearly fee for services.

A penalty charge will be made to replace lost or damaged cards. Patrons will be responsible for contacting the Library immediately concerning lost or stolen cards. Otherwise the patron will be held responsible for any transactions made on the card until notification is given to the Library.

Adult cards are issued to anyone age 18 or older. Juvenile cards are issued from birth to age 17 with written consent of a parent or guardian.

Restrictions are placed on all circulations as to the number of materials per circulation; total number of materials in circulation; videos, audiocassettes, CDs and circulating magazines and renewal privileges, based on PINES policy.

All cards are updated every two years to confirm patrons' address and phone number for information on a periodic basis.

All restrictions on circulation are approved by the Director.

B. Circulation guidelines (See TCPLS/PINES Library Card registration handout- Appendix VII)

- All materials have restricted loan periods.
- The number of reserved items is limited.
- Limits are placed on renewal of materials.
- Fines are assessed daily on overdue materials to reach a set amount.
- Borrowing privilege may be suspended when fine amounts exceed Library limits.
- Fines may be reduced or forgiven by Library staff members as directed by the Director.
- Lost or damaged materials costs are determined based on current value of the material.
- Materials damaged by natural disaster (fire, flood, etc.) can be forgiven.
- Audio-visual equipment loans are on a limited time and patrons are held responsible for any damage.

C. Legal Implications of Lost and Damaged Materials

Code of Georgia:

1. Unauthorized Removal: 20-5-54.1 Any person who, within authority and with the intention of depriving the Public Library of the ownership of such property, willfully conceals a book or other Public Library property, while still on the premises of such Public Library, or willfully or without authority removes any books or other property from any Public Library shall be guilty of a misdemeanor; provided, however, that if the replacement cost of the Public library property is less than \$25.00, the punishment shall be a fine of not more than \$250.00. Proof of willful concealment of any book or other Public Library property while still on the premises of such Public Library shall be prima facie evidence of intent to violate this Code section.

2. Abuse of Library Materials: 20-5-52.1 Any person who shall steal or unlawfully take or willfully or maliciously write upon, cut, tear, deface, disfigure, soil, obliterate, break, or destroy or who shall sell or buy or receive, knowing it to have been stolen, any book, pamphlet, document, newspaper, periodical, map, chart, picture, portrait, engraving, statue, coin, medal, equipment, specimen, recording, video product, microform, computer software, film or other work of literature or object of art or the equipment necessary to its display or use belonging to or in the care of the Public Library shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

4. Overdue Books: 20-5-52 Any person who borrows from any Public Library any book, pamphlet, document, newspaper, periodic, map, chart, picture, portrait, engraving, statue, coin, medal, equipment, specimen, recording, video product, microform, computer software, film or other work of literature or

object of art or the equipment necessary to its display or use shall be given written notice, mailed to his last known address or delivered in person, to return such article or equipment within 15 days after the date of such notification. Such notice shall contain copy of this Code section. If such a person shall thereafter willfully and knowingly fail to return such article or equipment within 15 days, such person shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$500.00 or imprisonment for not more than 30 days and shall be required to return such article or equipment or provide reimbursement for the replacement cost of such article or equipment.

D. Unique Management Services

The library may use a collection agency to encourage patrons to return overdue materials. This is for accounts that are 60 days overdue (after the PINES 90 days) with a \$25.00 minimum fine.

V. Collection Development Policy

With budgetary and space constraints, the Library can only acquire a limited number of the thousands of books published annually. Selection is done carefully and is based upon true principal rather than personal opinion, reason rather than prejudice and judgment rather than censorship.

A. Responsibility for Selection

Selection is the administrative responsibility of the Director in cooperation with staff and public input. The Library Board is the final authority in determination of policy to guide the selection of materials.

B. Criteria

TCPLS's goal is to purchase the best materials available which meet the needs of the community and in the confines of the budget.

Each resource must be considered for its value, its format, and the audience for which it is intended. No single criterion is applicable to all purchase and access decisions. Some resources may be judged primarily for their artistic merit, scholarship or value to humanity; others are chosen to satisfy the informational, recreational or educational interests of the community.

Librarians apply their judgment and experience in selecting materials according to the criteria listed below. All criteria do not apply to each item. Works of imagination are judged by different standards than are works of information and opinion. Works that present an aspect of life honestly are not necessarily excluded because of frankness of

expression. Materials are judged as a whole rather than on isolated passages. In considering titles, librarians consult reviews, bibliographies and other respected evaluative sources. The Library generally purchases current best sellers, giving priority to demand than to reviews or other relevant criteria. The criteria includes:

- suitability of physical form for Library use
- suitability of subject and style for intended audience
- present and potential relevance to local interests and needs
- appropriateness and effectiveness of medium to content
- number and nature of requests from Library users
- historical significance
- importance as a document of the times
- relation to existing collection, alternative formats, and other materials on subject
- reputation and/or significance of the author/artist and publisher/producer
- authority, competence and purpose of the author/artist
- attention of critics, reviewers and public
- comprehensiveness and depth of treatment
- objectivity
- clarity, accuracy, logic of presentation
- representation of a minority point of view
- relevance to the experiences and contributions of diverse populations
- quality of illustrations
- originality
- vitality, readability or ability to sustain interest
- effective characterization
- authenticity of historical or social setting
- value of resource in relation to cost

C. Donations/Appraisals

TCPLS welcomes donations with the understanding that the materials will be subject to the same selection criteria as stated. Materials not added to the collection will be sold, exchanged, donated to other organizations or discarded.

TCPLS does not appraise donations for tax purposes. It will issue a statement indicating the number and type of materials but it is the owner's responsibility to determine the appraised value.

D. Controversial Materials

TCPLS subscribes to the ALA Library's Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statements. (Appendix II and III)

Complaints from a Library patron concerning having or not having a selected item is handled using proper procedures. (Appendix IV)

E. Special Collections

TCPLS maintains special collections that include:

- Local History Collection (including works by local authors);
- Large Print Collection; Non-Book materials (videos, ~~books on tape~~ and CD, music CDs and DVD's);
- Reference Collection (Adult, Young Adult, Children, Galileo); and
- Periodical Collection.

F. Weeding and Discarding Library Materials

To maintain the vitality of the collection, materials are regularly weeded. This is the process of withdrawing materials which no longer meet the criteria for inclusion in the Library's collection and is an integral part of collection management.

Factors involved in the decision to weed materials are:

- Poor physical condition
- Superfluous because of duplicate titles or because demand no longer exists
- Obsolete, superseded edition, no longer accurate- this does not sanction the removal of materials because of controversy

If suitable, discarded materials will be sold in Library book sales, by Library staff and Friends of the Library.

VI. Internet Use Policy

This policy impacts all computers in the System that have Internet access.

The Internet is a diverse tool that offers unique resources to the community. It is increasingly essential to learning. It offers new freedoms and demands new responsibilities. TCPLS provides *filtered* access to the Internet as one means of fulfilling its mission to make informational, recreational and cultural resources available to its patrons in a variety of formats and as a means of complying with applicable laws.

A. Responsibilities of the Library

It is the responsibility of TCPLS to ensure that policies governing Library use of the Internet are in compliance with federal, state and local laws and regulations.

Because the Internet is a fluid environment, the information available is constantly changing; therefore, it is impossible to predict with certainty what information

patrons might locate. Just as the purchase, availability and use of other Library materials does not indicate endorsement of their contents by the Library staff and Board, *neither does making electronic information available to patrons imply endorsement of that content.*

By using the Library's Internet service, users release and discharge the Library system and its staff from any liability which might arise from the use of the service, including liability in relation to defamatory or offensive material or any breach of copyright which may occur as a result of use.

B. Responsibility of Patrons and Parents of Minors

TCPLS upholds and affirms the right of individuals to have access to constitutionally protected materials, and also affirms the right and responsibility of parents to determine and monitor their children's use of Library materials and resources, including those available from the Internet. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to monitor and supervise their children's use of the Internet in selecting material that is consistent with personal and family values, and appropriate for the age and understanding of the children.

TCPLS assumes no responsibility for any damage, direct or indirect, that users or anyone else may suffer through access to the Internet at any of our libraries.

All Internet users at a TCPLS Library agree to hold the Library, including the Board and the Library staff, harmless from any claims, losses, damages, obligations or liabilities relating to any reason, including:

1. Infringement of U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) governing the reproduction, distributions, adaptation, public performance and public display of copyrighted material;
2. The use and/or accuracy of information obtained through the Library's electronic information system;
3. Damage to non-Library software or hardware resulting from viruses downloaded via the Library's Internet services.

C. Filtering

All computers that access the Internet will have filtering software installed that meets legal requirements. The software is a measure taken to filter Internet access to visual depictions that are obscene, contain child pornography or are harmful to minors. Use of the software will be enforced by the Library.

No filtering technology is 100% effective and cannot substitute for the judgment and supervision of parents who make decisions for their child based on their family's values and the child's age and maturity. Parents are therefore ultimately responsible

for monitoring the Internet activity of their children even though filtering software is used.

Filtering software may block legal material that some Library users may find useful, and it may not block all material that some may find offensive. The filter may be disabled at the request of an adult patron for “bona fide research or other lawful purpose.” The Library staff cannot be responsible for deciding whether the research to be done is bona fide or lawful.

When filtering is disabled (or ineffective), that patron may not view materials that are legally obscene, contain child pornography or are harmful to minors. It is the nature of the Internet that such materials can be accidentally accessed on occasion. The Library acknowledges that some such sites open additional windows and block the patron from exiting. **A patron who accidentally opens an inappropriate web site and cannot get out of it should report this fact to the Reference Desk immediately.**

D. Rules and Guidelines

Patrons should be aware of the following:

- **The use of TCPLS’s Internet service is a privilege and a conditional service, not a right**, and inappropriate use of this conditional service can result in the cancellation of that privilege.
- TCPLS uses a program to register users on adult computers. Library cards must be updated for computer use.
- The Internet access computers as well as other Library computers are normally available, subject to periodic maintenance or unscheduled outages, during regular Library hours.
- Use of the Internet access computers is on a first-come, first-served basis. Each affiliated Library may impose time limits in order to ensure equitable access to all patrons.
- Not all sources on the Internet provide accurate, complete or current information. Patrons need to be good information consumers, carefully examining the source of the information, and questioning and evaluating the validity of the information they find.
- Library computer terminals are neither private nor secure.
- Library staff has the authority to end an Internet session at any time.
- Accessing the Internet at the Library assumes compliance with the Library’s Internet policy.
- The Library does not provide e-mail accounts to patrons.
- The Library is concerned about the safety and security of minors. **Therefore, no patron under age 11 may access the Internet without a parent or guardian present with the child at all times.** When using e-mail, minors must take extreme caution in regard to information of a personal nature. Minors should not

reveal their personal home address, location, home phone number or other identifying information.

- Responsibility for loss of data and for resolution of problems relating to any invasion of the user's privacy rests with the user. The Library assumes no liability for loss or damage to the user's data or to injury arising from invasion of the user's privacy.

It is the policy of TCPLS to maintain an environment that promotes ethical and responsible conduct in all online activities by staff and patrons. This policy is a practical and logical extension of our community's commitment to conduct that is legal, responsible, ethical and considerate of others.

1. Uploading or creating computer viruses is considered a criminal offense and will result in immediate loss of Internet privileges and/or criminal prosecution.
2. Users are financially responsible for any charges they incur from the use of the Internet, including the cost of printing and online purchases.
3. The user shall accept the computer as it is set up by the Library and make no changes to its configuration. Users may not attach other hardware to the Library computers or install their own software.
4. The downloading of illegal information from the Internet could lead to prosecution. The user may not use the Internet for any illegal activity, including copyright violation, or place any material on the Internet related to any illegal activity. Access to material that is obscene, contains child pornography or is harmful to minors is prohibited.
5. Minors may not access inappropriate material on the Internet and World Wide Web.
6. Giving our personal information about another person, including home address and phone number, is strictly prohibited.
7. Users shall not seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users or misrepresent other users on the Internet.
8. No user of the Internet shall disrupt the use of the Internet by others; hardware or software shall not be destroyed, modified or abused in any way.
9. Malicious use of the Internet to develop or use programs that harass other users or infiltrate a computer or computing system and/or damage the software components of a computer or computer device is prohibited.

10. Sending hate mail or chain letters, harassment, and discriminatory remarks are prohibited.

TCPLS complies with applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

E. Penalties for Violation

Problems arising from application of this policy will be handled as follows:

In the case of creating or purposefully uploading a computer virus or Trojan horse to the network or to any computing device, the patron shall lose all Library privileges immediately and permanently. If a staff member creates or purposefully uploads a computer virus or Trojan horse to the network or other computing device, he/she will be dismissed immediately from employment at TCPLS.

In all other instances, the following shall apply:

First Violation: Internet/Computer privileges will be revoked for two (2) weeks.

Second Violation: Internet/Computer privileges will be revoked for three (3) months.

Third Violation: Internet/Computer privileges will be revoked permanently.

F. Appeals Process

An Internet user whose Internet privileges have been revoked shall have the right to appeal and/or request Internet access privileges be reinstated. An appeal must be in writing and submitted to a Department Manager within five days of the prohibition. Within ten days of the receipt of the appeal, the Department Manager and the Director shall review the matter and notify the patron in writing of their decision.

If their decision is adverse to the patron, the patron may appeal in writing within five days to the Library Board of Trustees, which shall consider the matter and issue its decision in writing following the next regularly scheduled board meeting. No further appeals to the Library will be considered.

G. Definitions

Child Pornography – The federal child pornography statute, *18 U.S.C.2256*, defines “child pornography” as “any visual depiction” of a minor under 18 years old engaging in “sexually explicit conduct”, which includes “actual or simulated” sexual intercourse, bestiality, masturbation, sadistic or masochistic abuse, or “lascivious exhibition of the genitals or pubic area”. The statute’s definition includes not only actual

depictions of sexually explicit conduct involving minors, but also images that “appear to be” minors engaging in sexually explicitly conduct.

Harmful to Minors – Any depiction which:

1. taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion;
2. depicts, describes, or represents in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, an actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and
3. taken as a whole lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors. (Definition from the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and 47 U.S.C. 254).

Minor – CIPA definition: An individual who has attained the age of 17. *Official Code of Georgia* definition (*OCGA 16-12-102(1)*): One who is under 18 years of age. As TCPLS must comply with federal law, which takes precedence over state law, the CIPA definition shall be applied.

NCIPA – Neighborhood Children’s Internet Protection Act

Obscene – Obscene materials are (in the CIPA) said to be defined by *USC 18 Sec 1460*, but in fact all this citation does is define what is meant by “visual depiction” of obscenity. The actual legal definition of “obscene” has not been codified, but instead lies in the Supreme Court decision *Miller vs. California* of 1973. The “Miller Test” defines obscenity as material possessing **all three** of the following characteristics:

1. an average person applying contemporary community standards, would find the material, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest;
2. the material depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual contact as specifically defined by applicable state law; **and**
3. the material, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

The State of Georgia’s definition of obscenity closely follows the Supreme Court guidelines given above. According to *OCGA 16-12-80*, material is obscene if:

1. To the average person applying contemporary community standards, taken as a whole, it predominately appeals to the prurient interest, that is, a shameful or morbid interest in nudity, sex, or excretion;
2. The material taken as a whole lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value; **and**
3. The material depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, conduct specifically defined in the following subparagraphs (a) through (e) of this section:
 - a. Acts of sexual intercourse, heterosexual or homosexual, normal or perverted, actual or simulated;

- b. Acts of masturbation;
- c. Acts involving excretory functions or lewd exhibition of the genitals;
- d. Acts of bestiality or the fondling of sex organs of animals; or
- e. Sexual acts of flagellation, torture, or other violence indicating a sadomasochistic sexual relationship.

Trojan Horse – “A Trojan horse is an apparently useful program containing hidden functions that can exploit the privileges of the user [running the program], with a resulting security threat. A Trojan horse does things that the program user did not intend. Trojan horses rely on users to install them, or they can be installed by intruders who have gained unauthorized access by other means. Then, an intruder attempting to subvert a system using a Trojan horse relies on other users running the Trojan horse to be successful.” (Definition from Carnegie Mellon Software Engineering Institute, CERT Advisory CA-1999-02 Trojan Horses, <http://www.cert.org/advisories/CA-1999-02.html>)

Appendix I

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

i. Constitution and By Laws

The Board of Trustees of each County and Regional Library shall have a written Constitution and Bylaws stating policy, which shall be approved by the Board.

Policies stated in the Constitution of the County Board may not be in conflict with the policies of the Constitution of Regional Board and State and Federal laws and regulations.

All current Constitutions and Bylaws must be on file in the Office of Public Libraries of the Board of Regents and all amendments must be filed with the Office immediately upon adoption.

ii. Constitution for the Thomas County Public Library System

ARTICLE I- NAME

The name of the organization shall be the Thomas County Public Library System.

ARTICLE II- HEADQUARTERS

The headquarters for the Library system shall be located in Thomasville, Georgia.

ARTICLE III- PURPOSE

The purpose of the Library shall be to extend public Library service to all citizens, adult and juvenile, in Thomas County, to effectively assemble, house, administer and disseminate Library materials and information for the educational, cultural, recreational and aesthetic enjoyment of the citizens of Thomas County.

ARTICLE IV- LEGAL AUTHORITY

The legal authority of public libraries and boards of trustees is described in Article 2, Chapter 5, Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, and any amendments noted thereafter.

ARTICLE V- GOVERNING BOARD

The governing body of the Library shall consist of a nine (9) member Board of Trustees who are appointed to the Library Board by the County Commissioners.

<i>City Nominations</i>	<i>1st Term Appointed</i>	<i>Term Expires</i>
Position 1	07/01/1993	06/30/2002*
Position 2	07/01/1993	06/30/2001*
Position 3	07/01/1993	06/30/2000*
<i>County Nominations</i>		
Position 4	07/01/1993	06/30/2002*
Position 5	07/01/1993	06/30/2001*
Position 6	07/01/1993	06/30/2001*

Position 7	07/01/1993	06/30/2000*
<i>Small Town Nominations</i>		
Position 8	07/01/1993	06/30/2002*
Position 9	07/01/1993	06/30/2001*

*Every Three Years Thereafter

Terms

Terms are on fiscal year - July 1 thru June 30. Terms are limited to two successive terms.

First Board will have staggered terms; thereafter terms will be for 3 years.

Board Members shall receive no compensation but may be reimbursed for any reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of Library business, or if stipulated in the terms of any bequest or gift. Membership dues or fees for individual membership of Board Members in State, Regional and National Library Associations may be paid from operating funds.

Each nominating body reserves the right to review their representatives annually and make new nominations at their discretion, if deemed necessary.

Board Members shall be removed for failure to attend 3 consecutive meetings with unexcused absences.

The following Ex-Officio Members shall be appointed as designated and shall attend general Board and Committee Meetings as advisors:

Non-Voting Ex-Officios	1 st Term Appointed	Term Expires
Position 10 (Mayor or Nominee)	07/01/1993	06/30/2001*
Position 11 (County Commission Chairman or Nominee)	07/01/1993	06/30/2001*
Position 12 (City School Superintendent or Nominee)	07/01/1993	06/30/2001*
Position 13 (County School Superintendent or Nominee)	07/01/1993	06/30/2001*

*Every Three Years Thereafter.

Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as appointments are made. If a vacancy occurs prior to the expiration of a trustee’s term, the new appointee shall complete the unexpired term.

ARTICLE VI - OFFICERS

The officers of the Board of Trustees shall be a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, and a Secretary elected from those serving on the board. These officers shall perform the duties prescribed by the By Laws and the parliamentary authority adopted by the Board.

Nomination shall be made by a committee of three Board Members appointed by the Chairman

of the Board. The Chairman and/or the Library Director may serve as one of the three members of the nominating committee.

Standing Committees shall consist of the Finance Committee, the Long-Range Planning Committed, the Personnel Committee and the Policy Committee. Other committees shall be appointed by the Chairman, as needed.

The Officers shall be elected at the July meeting to serve for one year or until their successors are elected, and their term of office shall begin at the close of the meeting at which they are elected.

The Treasurer, the Director and any members of the staff authorized to handle Library funds shall be bonded for an amount commensurate with the amount of funds handles, determined by the Board and entered in the minutes, and a copy of the bond shall be registered with the Georgia Public Library Services of the Board of Regents.

All Federal, State, and Local Funds used for the operation and improvement of the services and facilities of the Thomas County Public Library System shall be received by the Treasurer and shall be used in accordance with the budget approved by the Board.

ARTICLE VII-EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

An Executive Committee, composed of officers of the board, shall be shall be entrusted to govern in the names of the Board of Trustees between meetings of the Board.

ARTICLE VIII- INTERLIBRARY COOPERATION

The Thomas County Public Library System may enter into cooperative endeavors with other Library systems for the purpose of sharing personnel, materials and services by confederation or by merger as seen fit by the governing bodies of the Library system. Such cooperative endeavors must be within the limits of funds available to the Boards of Trustees, conducive to mutual growth and development of Library services, and not in violation of state and federal laws, regulations or other agreements, contracts or Library board policies.

ARTICLE IX- CONTRACTS

The Thomas County Public Library System is authorized to make and enter into such contracts or agreements, for all or any part of the county Library system, as are deemed necessary and desirable under the provisions of Article 2, Chapter 5, Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (20-5-49), and any amendments noted hereafter.

ARTICLE X- AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION

This Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Board of Trustees by a two-thirds vote of the members present, provided that notice is made in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting, and provided that a quorum is present. All amendments to the Constitution shall be filed upon adoption.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND DIRECTOR

BYLAWS FOR THE THOMAS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

ARTICLE I – DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARD MEMBERS

The County Board of Trustees is the legal governing body of the Thomas County Library System. It shall be the duty and responsibility of members of the Library Board of Trustees:

To employ a director for TCPLS who meets state certification requirements and such other employees as necessary upon the recommendation of the director. Authority for the technical administration and supervision of the libraries shall be vested in the director.

To approve budgets prepared by the Director and to assume responsibility for the presentation of the Library system's fiscal needs to the supporting agencies.

To attend Board Meetings.

To establish policies governing Library programs.

To set policy for the receipt and administration of gifts of money and property.

To present financial and progressive reports to governing officials and to the public.

To notify the Director in advance of all meetings of the board or committees.

ARTICLE II – DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

The Chairman shall preside at all regular or called Board Meetings. He/she shall appoint all committees.

The Vice-Chairman shall preside in the absence of the Chairman. All other duties of the Vice-Chairman shall be assigned by the Chairman.

The Secretary shall record the official actions of the Board, keep a record of attendance at Board Meetings, and have the custody of the official books, which shall be housed in the county Library headquarters. He/She/They shall notify the proper appointing authorities of vacancies, which may occur on the Thomas County Public Library Board. He/She/They shall report changes of the membership to the Office of Public Library Services of the Board of Regents. The Secretary shall send copies of the annual report of activities, income and expenditures to each funding agency.

The Treasurer shall give oversight to ensure that a deposit of all moneys received are deposited by staff in a bank or banks that are approved by the Board of Trustees. He/She/They shall prompt staff to notify, in writing, the supporting agency, whose appropriations are not paid promptly and in full to the library. The treasurer shall review all financial transactions that the Library staff conducts through the fiscal year. The treasurer shall review all budgets, financial reports, and fiscal records that are prepared by the staff and are to be presented to the Library Board of

Trustees for review and/or vote. The Chairman, the Treasurer, the Secretary, and the Director are each authorized to sign checks. Any two of the four may sign. An account of receipts and expenditures must be kept by staff and a report made to each monthly meeting. The accounts shall be audited at the direction of the Board and according to State Aid Criteria and other State regulations. Official copies of all financial reports and the Library's financial books shall be kept in the Thomas County Library System at all times.

ARTICLE III-MEETINGS

The Thomas County Library Board shall hold up to 12 regular meetings during the fiscal year. Meetings shall be held at the headquarters Library or at some other location as designated by the Chairman.

Special meetings may be called by the Chairman or upon written request of three Board members, for the transaction of business stated in the call for the meeting. No business other than that for which the meeting was called may be discussed or conducted at a called meeting.

Prior to each regular or called meeting, the Director of the Thomas County Public Library System shall notify each member of the date, time and place of the County Library Board Meeting.

Meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by the Chairman to transact any business requiring attention between regular meetings of the full Thomas County Library Board.

All meetings must be open to the public and the news media. The County Board may, however, enter into a closed session for the discussion of proposed and pending litigation, deliberations on acquisition or sale of real property, or hearings or discussions on the appointment, discipline, or dismissal of an individual employee, without restricting the employee's right to a public hearing, if requested. If the Board enters into a close session, no formal action will be taken. To be legally binding, all decisions must be formally moved and adopted in an open board meeting.

The latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order (revised) when not in conflict with the Constitution and By Laws, shall govern the proceedings of the Board of Trustees of the Thomas County Public Library System.

Each member of the Thomas County Board of Trustees shall have one vote. The chairman shall not vote except in the case of a tie vote, at which time the chairman shall vote to break the tie.

Five members of the Board of Trustees constitute a quorum. No official business may be conducted without a quorum. Except as state in ARTICLE VII of this document, a simple majority affirmative vote of the quorum present and voting shall be necessary to approve any action before the Board.

The Order of business for meetings shall be:

- Call to Order
- Approval of Minutes of previous meeting

- Treasurer's Report
- System Director's Report
- Reports of Committees
- Unfinished business
- New Business
- Adjournment

ARTICLE IV-REPORTS

The Thomas County Public Library System is responsible for all reports as deemed necessary by local, state and federal funding agencies. An annual report of activities, income and expenditures shall be filed with each funding agency. All reports necessary to obtain funds or meet requirement of the law shall be filed with the Georgia Public Library Services

ARTICLE V-ATTENDANCE

A Board Member shall be removed for cause or for failure to attend three consecutive regularly scheduled meetings.

A letter reporting the removal and specifying the cause shall be sent to the affected Board Member and to the Agency responsible for his/her appointment. The Agency shall be asked to appoint another representative to fill that member's unexpired term.

ARTICLE VI- PENALTIES

Employees or agents of the Thomas County Public Library System may cause the arrest, fine and imprisonment of persons who borrow, and fail to return books and other property owned by the Thomas County Public Library System; deface, damage, steal or otherwise improperly use and/or abuse Library property; or commit other violations as described in the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, ARTICLE II, Chapter 5, Title 20 and any amendments noted thereafter.

ARTICLE VII-AMENDMENTS

These By Laws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Board of Trustees by a two-thirds vote of the members present, provided that notice is made in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting, and provided that quorum is present. All amendments to these By Laws shall be filed with the Georgia Public Library Services of the Board of Regents immediately upon adoption.

i. Additional Policies Relating to Director

The Director of the TCPLS must hold at least a Grade 5(b) Librarian's Professional Graduate Certificate as defined by the State Board for the Certification of Librarians.

The Director shall be the administrative head of the Library system under the direction and review of the Board.

It is the duty and responsibility of the Director:

- To recommend for employment or termination other staff members, as necessary, in compliance with applicable laws and the availability of funds, and to employ and terminate other staff members if so authorized by the Board of Trustees. The Director submits to the Library Board for approval of all promotions and salary increases.
- To attend all meetings called by the Georgia Public Library Services of the Board of Regents or send a substitute authorized by the Director.
- To prepare any local, state, or federal budgets.
- To notify the Board of Trustees and the Georgia Public Library Services of the Board of Regents of any failure to comply with:
 - Policies of the Board
 - Criteria for state aid
 - State and Federal rules and regulations
 - All applicable local, state or federal laws
- To have the authority from the Library Board to submit grant requests for state and/or federal programs that would enhance the Library system
- To administer the total Library program, including all affiliated libraries, in accordance with policies adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Thomas County Public Library System
- To attend all meetings of the Library Board of Trustees, or any affiliated boards, or to designate a person to attend his/her place
- To serve as Chief Executive Officer of the organization performing whatever business functions are required by the Board of Trustees including signing checks, preparing specifications, etc.

Appendix II

LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other Library resources should be provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all people of the community the Library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a Library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948. Amended February 2, 1961, and January 23, 1980, inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996, by the ALA Council.

Appendix III

FREEDOM TO READ

The Library Board bases the selection of Library materials on the Freedom to Read Statement of the American Library Association. Basically the statement indicates:

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. We therefore affirm these positions:

1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.
2. Publishers, librarians and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation contained in the books they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what books should be published or circulated.
3. It is contrary to public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.
4. There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.
5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing it or its author as subversive or dangerous.
6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.
7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.

Adopted June 25, 1953; revised January 28, 1972, January 16, 1991, July 12, 2000, June 30, 2004 by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee

Appendix IV

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING CHALLENGES ABOUT MATERIALS

Any challenges or complaints from a Library patron concerning the Library's having selected or not selected a particular item is to be handled using the following procedures.

1. Form completed by patron. (Appendix IV – A)
2. Complaint received by Library personnel and forwarded to Director.
3. The Director acknowledges complaint to the patron. (Appendix IV – B). The Director engages the professional staff to review the complaint and forwards a written statement to the patron within five days.
4. At the same time that the complaint is sent to the professional staff for investigation, a copy of the complaint will be given to the members of the Library Board of Trustees as a matter of information.
5. A copy of the recommended action will be sent to the board members. (Appendix IV – C)
6. The complainant will be given the opportunity to appeal the recommendation of the professional staff to the Board of Trustees. He will be notified of this option in writing at the time the initial recommendation is sent to him.
7. If a request for an appeal is filed with the Board of Trustees, the complainant will be placed on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled meeting.
8. The decision of the Library Board shall be considered final.
9. Through this process, communication will be maintained with the Chairman of the Georgia Library Association Intellectual Freedom Interest Group, with ALA's Office of Intellectual Freedom and with the person assigned to the Library by the Georgia Public Library Services.

Appendix IV – A

**Thomas County Public Library System
Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials**

Date: _____ Library Card Number: _____

From: _____
Full Name Telephone Number

_____ Mailing Address City Zip Code

WHOM DO YOU REPRESENT?

___ Self ___ Organization (please specify) _____

Author _____

Title _____

Subject _____

Hardback ___ Paperback ___ A/V Material ___ Periodical ___

Classification number of item _____

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF ITEM IN LIBRARY COLLECTION

3. Have you read the book or listened to/viewed the item in its entirety? If not, why not?

4. Have you seen or heard reviews of this material? _____ If 'yes', please name the source.

5. What do you believe is the theme of this work? _____

6. To what in the work do you object? Please be specific, cite pages.

7. What would you like the Library to do with this material?

8. In its place, what work would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of the subject? _____

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIAL NOT OWNED BY LIBRARY

9. What do you feel that this material should be in the library?

10. Please list any reviews or recommendations of this material and its source.

The Thomas County Public Library System appreciates your interest in our Library's collection. You will receive written notification of the disposition of this request.

SIGNATURE OF COMPLAINANT: _____

RECEIVED BY: _____

DATE & TIME RECEIVED: _____

Attached are recently revised policies as of the year 2018/2019. These policies supersede policies listed in the 2014 version of the TCPLSystem Policy Manual.

Policy for Limited Public Display of Posters and Fliers of Not-For-Profit Organizations in Thomas County Public Library System

Policy:

This policy of the Thomas County Public Library System (TCPLS) is meant to establish a limited public forum for the display, distribution, and exhibit of materials from or for not-for-profit organizations. Limited display space within the library requires that materials accepted for posting, display, distribution or exhibit be governed by regulations listed below. This policy governs the use of literature distribution racks, bulletin boards, and display cases in the TCPLS, including the libraries of Boston, Coolidge, Meigs, Ochlocknee and Pavo.

Library Bulletin Boards for Public Use

Materials from or for not-for-profit organizations and/or functions may be accepted for posting or display on a space available basis. In the case of space limitations, priority will be given to events held by, endorsed or co-partnered with the libraries of the TCPLS.

Only one posting per group, individual, or event is permitted on any one public bulletin board at any one time (the same posting may appear in more than one Library facility at the same time).

The Library assumes no responsibility for the preservation or protection of materials.

Materials may be disposed of by the Library staff as needed.

Each posting must clearly show the name of the group or individual responsible for the posting on the **face** of the posting. Additionally, the **back** of the posting must clearly state the responsible person's name and contact information. The Library Director or branch managers will not authorize posting of any bulletin that lacks this contact information.

Items from commercial or profit-making organizations will not be accepted for display or distribution. This regulation includes but is not limited to the following: advertisements from individuals for child care, tutoring, music lessons, items for sale, boutiques, and garage sales.

Items which are political in nature and items using this distribution and display opportunity solely to pray and proselytize will not be accepted for posting or display.

The Library Director or designees retain the right to refuse any material for display even if it is within the guidelines. Basis for refusal may include size, content, appearance, or space limitations.

Individual branch managers will determine when material will be posted or displayed and when it will be removed.

If in doubt as to the acceptability of material for posting, the final decision for display or distribution will rest with the Library Director.

All items to be posted by the Library must be left with the local branch library manager in order to verify that the item(s) are in compliance with this policy. Items or fliers which are faxed, emailed or sent in similar electronic fashion or via postal service will not be accepted.

TCPLS and the counties and communities that it serves do not endorse nor sponsor the organizations or activities described in announcements and fliers, displayed in the Library. The display of this material is provided as a community service.

Gift/Donation Policy and Release Form

The Thomas County Public Library System welcomes gifts of materials or funds to purchase materials.

Once given to the library system:

- All items become the property of the Thomas County Public Library System and will be evaluated for inclusion into the library collection.
- Receipts may be given to the donor, listing number of items donated, however, staff may not assign a dollar amount to the donations.
- Donations may be received by any of the library branches in the Thomas County Public Library System.
- All materials donations must meet established material selection criteria before being added to the collection. As a result, donations may be added to the best suitable TCPLS library branch, sold at a public book sale or recycled as deemed necessary.

The following materials cannot be processed because of space limitations, cost of processing and selection criteria.

- Worn or dirty, stained, mildew, damaged, brittle and/or yellowed
- Highlighted, written or marked
- Advanced reader copies or proofs
- Incomplete sets such as encyclopedias, etc.
- Editions of a handbook or manual if a newer edition is available in the PINES system.
- Outdated information (such as travel, medicine, science, and personal finance)
- Fiction and Non-fiction older than 7 years, unless in demand or of local interest
- Magazines and newspapers unless in demand or of local interest
- Textbooks and workbooks, out of date encyclopedias
- Condensed books, Readers' Digest books, and book club editions
- Audio cassettes
- Music CDs that are promotional copies or "ripped-copied"
- Video (VHS) tapes
- Discarded materials from other library systems or from schools or previous rental copies
- Materials with property stamps from other libraries, rental companies, schools, etc.
- Mass-market paperbacks (small)
- No hardbacks without covers

The branch where the gift is received will have first consideration for the materials to be added to the collection, however, if the materials are not needed at that branch, the materials may be transferred to another TCPLS branch for addition to their library collection.

Please read the attached information. If the terms are acceptable, please sign and date below.

Printed Name: _____

Date _____

Signature: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Number of items donated: _____

Staff Signature: _____

Individuals who leave materials outside the library without previous contact with library staff are assumed to be in agreement with this policy and may not return at a later date to re-collect donated materials or request a receipt.

Child and Dependent Safety Policy

Approved by Thomas County Library Board

June 17, 2019

The Thomas County Public Library System is committed to providing its users an atmosphere and environment free from unnecessary distractions and conducive to the most efficient use of library facilities. Part of this commitment is a concern for the safety and welfare of everyone who visits the library.

Library facilities are public buildings, and as such, have special security concerns. Children or dependent persons left unattended may be at risk.

The Library staff has many responsibilities, and they are neither trained nor expected to provide care and supervision for children or dependent persons of any age.

- **Children under 10 years of age must remain under the supervision of the parent or caregiver, who must remain in the immediate area and within eyesight of children.**
- Parents, legal guardians, and caregivers are responsible for the care and behavior of children and dependent persons at all times while in Library buildings.
- Dependent persons may include persons incapacitated due to physical and/or mental disabilities or other conditions who are dependent on others for their safety and well-being.

A child who is attending a library program need not be accompanied into that program by a parent, unless otherwise indicated. The parent or guardian must, however, remain in the vicinity until the program is complete.

- Parents and caregivers must, however, be present in the building during the programming in case an emergency should arise.

If necessary at any time, staff will contact the appropriate law enforcement or social services authorities to assume responsibility for the welfare of a child or dependent person in need of attention.

Persons Left Unattended

When Library staff recognizes that a child or dependent person has been left unattended in the library or on its premises, they will attempt to identify and locate the responsible parent, legal guardian, and caregiver or law enforcement.

- Staff will search the library building and/or grounds in an effort to locate the responsible party.
- If they cannot be located, a staff member will monitor the person until the parent, legal guardian, or caregiver returns to the library.
- When the responsible party is located, the *Child and Dependent Safety Policy* will be explained and a copy given to them.
- Staff will fill out an incident report and record the parent's, legal guardians, or caregiver's name, address, and telephone number and the name of the unattended person.
- Staff will refer any additional incidents to law enforcement.

Unattended Persons after Closing Time

For purposes of this *Unattended Persons* section, the Thomasville Police Department recommends defining the term "minor" to mean any child 15 years or younger)

Parents, legal guardians, and caregivers are responsible for being aware of the times the Library opens and closes. Library staff must exercise appropriate procedures to ensure the safety of unattended persons, either minors 15 years of age and younger or dependent persons of any age, especially when the library is closing.

- Thirty minutes prior to closing time, staff will make an effort to ascertain that any minors or dependent persons of any age have arrangements for transportation from the library?
- If no ride has arrived by closing time, after 15 minutes staff will call the local Police Department. In instances of minors of a significantly young age (9 years and younger), staff will contact local law enforcement immediately at closing time if parent or guardian has not been located.
- For security reasons, two staff members must remain with a minor at all times until law enforcement arrives. Staff are not authorized to detain minors or dependent persons and should not try to prevent them from leaving on their own.
- Law enforcement will monitor persons left unattended until transportation arrives.
- Staff will fill out an incident report form: record the parent's, legal guardian's, or caregiver's name, address, and telephone number and the name of the unattended person.
- Staff will refer any additional incidents to law enforcement.

Library staff members are not authorized to provide transportation to unattended minors or dependent persons, or leave them alone in the building or on the library premises.

Financial Policies

Approved by Thomas County Library Board

April 15, 2019

Budget Policy

The Library operates on a fiscal year, July 1 through June 30. The annual budget will be adopted for the same time frame.

- The Library Board Finance Committee will review the budget prior to the approval of the Library Board.
- Approval shall take place at the May Library Board meeting prior to the start of the fiscal year.
- Revenues will be budgeted according to local government funding sources, state grant funds, and library generated charges (fines and fees, etc.).
- Expenditures will be budgeted according to three broad categories – Personnel Costs (to include all salaries, wages, and benefits), Operating Costs (to include all utilities, supplies, and fees incurred in operating the library), and Materials Costs (costs for books, periodicals, and electronic resources purchased for public use).

The budget will be prepared using the modified accrual basis of accounting. Under the modified accrual basis of accounting, revenues are recognized when they are measurable and available.

- Measurable means an amount can be determined accurately.
- Available means the amount has been received or will be received soon enough to pay liabilities of the current period. Availability is defined within sixty days of year end.
- Expenditures are recognized when measurable, incurred, and payable from current assets. Incurred means that the goods or services have been received. Payable from current assets means resources are currently available to pay the obligation.
- In order to control expenditure of funds, a monthly statement of budget to actual revenues and expenditures will be prepared and presented to the Library Board.
- The Library Director shall have authority to move the budget between the three categories of Personnel, Materials, and Operations, with the exception of funds held as reserve or fund balance.
- Any changes that require increasing or decreasing the total revenue or expenditures by utilizing reserve or fund balance funds will be approved by the Library Board.
- The Library will operate each fiscal year with a balanced budget.
- Inasmuch as possible, budgeted revenues will be sufficient to fund budgeted expenditures. To the extent this is not possible, fund balance will be relied on to balance revenues and expenditures. When this occurs, every effort will be made to bring the revenues and expenditures in line by either increasing revenues or decreasing expenditures.

- One-time revenues will not be used to fund ongoing operating expenditures. Instead, these resources will be used to make one-time purchases.
- To the extent possible, operating reserves will at a minimum be maintained at two month's cost of operating the library.
- The monthly cost of operating the library will be determined by dividing the annual budget for personnel, operations, and materials by twelve.

Revenue Policy

- The Library will assume a conservative approach in estimating revenues.
- Items such as donated materials will not be included as revenue unless sold and revenue from sales deposited into library bank accounts.
- Library fines and fees collections for the current fiscal year will be reviewed when estimating the next year's budget.
- Budget for local government revenue will be based on estimated and anticipated Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) support unless notification has been received of approved support from additional local funding for the next fiscal year.
- State Grant revenue will be budgeted at the current level unless information is received amending current amounts.
- Fines and fees charged by the Library will be reviewed annually by the Library Board in conjunction with the budget approval. Changes in fees must be approved by the Library Board.

Capital Assets Policy

The Library has a significant investment in capital assets including books and technology.

- A list of capital assets will be maintained for purposes of ensuring the safekeeping of those assets and planning for replacement. The capital assets threshold is \$5,000 for a single capital asset.
- An inventory of all capital assets will be conducted bi-annually (every other year), with the exception of the materials collection, which will be inventoried by sections (fiction, non-fiction, etc.) on a continuous 5 year cycle. Technology capital assets will be inventoried for purposes of safeguarding and replacement planning.
- The useful lives of capital assets will be as follows:
 - Technology Assets – 3 years
 - Vehicles – 7 years

- Office and Library Furniture – 10 years
 - Buildings – 30 years
 - Repairs necessary to maintain building in good condition will be communicated to responsible local governments.
 - Materials collection – 5 years useful life with 20% annual depreciation.
 - The collection is defined as “the aggregate of all books, CDs, DVDs and other materials with a useful life of more than one year” and will be capitalized as one unit for financial reporting purposes.
- Discrete components of capital assets with significantly shorter lives will be treated as a separate capital asset if value is greater than \$5000.00 or treated as a repair or disposal if value is less than \$5000.00.
 - Throughout the fiscal year, assets may be deemed irrelevant, damaged or unusable by library standards. To ensure maximum benefit is received, items may be put up for sale via auction, book sales or similar methods before being disposed of by recycle or other means as determined by the Library Director or designated personnel.
 - Straight line depreciation will be used with zero salvage value.

Expenditure Policy

- Expenditures should be incurred based on available budget. Only those expenditures that are payable from current assets are recorded.
- The Library Director has the authority to approve all expenditures. Only those expenditures that are used for library purposes are allowable.

Financial Accounting Policy

- Transactions will be recorded using the modified accrual basis of accounting and the current financial resources measurement focus.
- Pronouncements of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board will govern recording of transactions.

Financial Reporting Policy

- At the end of each fiscal year, the Library will prepare an operating statement using the modified accrual basis of accounting.
- The statement will be prepared by revenue source and functional expenditures (Public Service, Technical Services, Support Services, Information Technology, and Maintenance and Operations).

- Annually, the Library will engage a Certified Public Accountant to perform a full audit.
- These procedures will cover various categories and transactions, including payroll, cash receipts, disbursements, capital assets and journal entries. In addition, procedures are to be performed on year-end cash balances.

Deposit and Investment Policy

- The Library will follow all Georgia laws regarding allowable financial institutions and investments. Bank accounts may be opened and closed only upon Library Board approval.
- The Board will designate signatories on the accounts. Should the Library have excess funds available for investment, certificates of deposit from an FDIC insured financial institution may be purchased. The Library Director has the authority to determine when investments will be purchased and maturity dates. The Library Director will, at all times, maintain responsible stewardship of all library funds, insuring that only low-risk investments are entered into with tax generated funds. At all times, balances on deposit at financial institutions must be properly collateralized according to Georgia Code requirements.

Purchasing Policy

The Library will use the following thresholds when making Library purchases.

- All individual item purchases exceeding \$3,000 cost for each item will require a minimum of three telephone quotes.
- All individual item purchases exceeding \$5,000 cost for each item will require a minimum of three written quotes from submitting vendors.
- All individual item purchases exceeding \$10,000 cost for each item will require a minimum of three sealed bids from submitting vendors. Notification of bids will be advertised in the County's legal organ.

Certain purchases will be exempt from the purchasing policy:

1. Professional services such as accounting and legal services, performers, and computer technicians.
2. Library Materials (books, DVDs, magazines, etc).
3. Utilities.
4. Employee Benefits.
5. Travel.

In the event of an emergency, the Library Director may override the purchasing policy. An emergency is defined as loss of normal operating conditions.

- The Library Director has the authority to make purchases using a Library credit card.

- Checks written by the Library in the amount of \$4,000.00 or less will only require the Library Director's signature.
- Checks written by the Library in the amount of \$4,000.01 or greater will require the signatures of the Library Director and either the Library Board Chairperson, Vice Chairperson or Board Treasurer.

Employee Compensation Policy

- Minimum pay rates will be in accordance with federal rates. The Library Board will set the Director's annual salary based on available state funding augmented by local supplements. The Library Board may only vote to increase the Director's rate of pay during annual performance evaluations. Pay increases for the Library Director are not mandatory and solely at the discretion of the Library Board or designated committee.
- The Library Director will set all local employees' compensation using years of experience, performance, and available funding as a guide.
- The Library Director will set salaries for all state paid librarians, if applicable, within the limits of available state funding.

Check Charges

- The library will charge a \$10.00 fee for each returned check.
- All returned check fees will be added to the patron's PINES account.
- No checks under \$1.00 will be accepted.
- All checks must have name, current address, current phone number, DL number and PINES library card number (if applicable).
- No starter checks will be accepted.
- Genealogy research (if applicable) must be paid in advance of receipt of printed or ordered information.

Travel Policy

- The library will adhere to the Georgia State Travel Regulations. (i.e. mileage, per Diem, etc.)

Internet Use Policy

Approved by Thomas County Library Board

March 18, 2019

This policy impacts all computers in the Thomas County Public Library System that have Internet access and all patrons' use of the Library's wireless Internet on personal devices.

The Internet is a diverse tool that offers unique resources to the community. It is increasingly essential to learning. In accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), TCPLS provides **filtered** access to the Internet as one means of fulfilling its mission to make informational, recreational and cultural resources available to its patrons in a variety of formats and as a means of complying with applicable laws.

A. Responsibilities of the Library

It is the responsibility of TCPLS to ensure that policies governing Library use of the Internet are in compliance with federal, state and local laws and regulations.

Because the Internet is a fluid environment, the information available is constantly changing; therefore, it is impossible to predict with certainty what information patrons might locate. ***Making electronic information available to patrons through their use of Library computers and wireless Internet access does not imply Library endorsement of that content.***

By using the Library's Internet service, users release and discharge the Library system and its staff from any liability which might arise from the use of the service, including liability in relation to defamatory or offensive material or any breach of copyright which may occur as a result of use.

B. Responsibility of Patrons and Parents of Minors

TCPLS upholds and affirms the right of individuals to have access to constitutionally protected materials and also affirms the responsibility of parents to determine and monitor their children's use of Library materials and resources, including those available from the Internet. ***It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to monitor and supervise their children's use of the Internet in selecting materials that are consistent with personal and family values, and appropriate for the age and understanding of the children.***

TCPLS assumes no responsibility for any damage, direct or indirect, that users or anyone else may suffer through access to the Internet at any of our libraries.

All Internet users at a TCPLS Library agree to hold the Library, including the Library Board of Trustees and the Library staff, harmless from any claims, losses, damages, obligations or liabilities relating to any reason, including:

1. Infringement of U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) governing the reproduction, distributions, adaptation, public performance and public display of copyrighted material;
2. The use and/or accuracy of information obtained through the Library's electronic information system;
3. Damage to non-Library software or hardware resulting from viruses downloaded via the Library's Internet services.

C. Filtering

All Internet access will be filtered to meet legal requirements. This is a measure taken to restrict Library Internet access to visual depictions that are obscene, contain child pornography or are harmful to minors.

No filtering technology is 100% effective and cannot substitute for the judgment and supervision of parents who make decisions for their child based on their family's values and the child's age and maturity. Parents are therefore ultimately responsible for monitoring the Internet activity of their children even though Internet filtering is used.

Filtering software may sometimes block legal material that some Library users may find useful, and it may not block all material that some may find offensive. The filter may be disabled at the request of an adult patron for "*bona fide research or other lawful purpose*" in accordance with current CIPA and Federal regulations. The Library's IT Manager and the Reference Department Manager are both authorized to disable the filter when a request is approved.

When filtering is disabled (or ineffective), that patron may not view materials that are legally obscene, contain child pornography or are harmful to minors. It is the nature of the Internet that such materials can be accidentally accessed on occasion. The Library acknowledges that some such sites open additional windows and block the patron from exiting. **A patron who accidentally opens an inappropriate web site and cannot get out of it should report this fact to the Reference Desk immediately.**

D. Rules and Guidelines

Patrons should be aware of the following:

- **The use of TCPLS's Internet service is a privilege and a conditional service, not a right,** and inappropriate use of this conditional service can result in the cancellation of that privilege.
- TCPLS uses a software program to register users on adult computers. Library cards must be updated and in good standing for computer use.
- The Internet access computers as well as other Library computers are
- normally available, subject to periodic maintenance or unscheduled outages, during regular Library hours.
- Use of the Internet access computers is on a first-come, first-served basis. Each affiliated Library may impose time limits in order to ensure equitable access to all patrons.
- Library computer terminals are neither private nor secure.
- Library staff has the authority to end an Internet session at any time.
- Accessing the Internet at the Library assumes compliance with the Library's Internet policy.
- The Library does not provide e-mail accounts to patrons.
- The Library is concerned about the safety and security of minors. **Therefore, no patron under age 11 may access the Internet without a parent or guardian present with the child at all times.** When using e-mail, minors must take extreme caution in regard to information of a personal nature. Minors should not reveal their personal home address, location, home phone number or other identifying information.
- Responsibility for loss of data and for resolution of problems relating to any invasion of the user's privacy rests with the user. The Library assumes no liability for loss or damage to the user's data or to injury arising from invasion of the user's privacy.
- Library staff is not authorized to provide technical assistance to customers' personal computers and/or other electronic devices. The Thomas County Public Library System assumes no responsibility for any damages done directly or indirectly to personal data and equipment.

It is the policy of TCPLS to maintain an environment that promotes ethical and responsible conduct in all online activities by staff and patrons. This policy is a practical and logical extension of our community's commitment to behavior that is legal, responsible, ethical and considerate of others.

1. Uploading or creating computer viruses is considered a criminal offense and will result in immediate loss of Internet privileges and/or criminal prosecution.
2. Users are financially responsible for any charges they incur from the use of the Internet, including the cost of printing and online purchases.

3. The user shall accept the computer as it is set up by the Library and make no changes to its configuration. Users may not attach other hardware to the Library computers or install their own software.
4. The user may not use the Internet for any illegal activity, including copyright violation, or place any material on the Internet related to any illegal activity. Access to material that is obscene, contains child pornography or is harmful to minors is prohibited.
5. Minors may not access inappropriate material on the Internet and World Wide Web.
6. Giving out personal information about another person, including home address and phone number, is strictly prohibited.
7. Users shall not seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users or misrepresent other users on the Internet.
8. No user of the Internet shall disrupt the use of the Internet by others; hardware or software shall not be destroyed, modified or abused in any way.
9. Malicious use of the Internet to develop or use programs that harass other users or infiltrate a computer or computing system and/or damage the software components of a computer or computer device is prohibited.

TCPLS complies with applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

E. Penalties for Violation

Problems arising from application of this policy will be handled as follows:

In the case of creating or purposefully uploading a computer virus to the network or to any computing device, the patron shall lose all Library privileges immediately and permanently. If a staff member knowingly creates or purposefully uploads a computer virus to the network or other computing device, he/she will be dismissed immediately from employment at TCPLS. Violations may be referred to law enforcement at the discretion of the Director if the Director deems that a law may have been broken or if the library has suffered material harm as a result of the virus.

In all other instances, the following shall apply to Library patrons:

First Violation: Internet/Computer privileges will be revoked for two (2) weeks.

Second Violation: Internet/Computer privileges will be revoked for three (3) months.

Third Violation: Internet/Computer privileges will be revoked permanently.

F. Appeals Process

An Internet user whose Internet privileges have been revoked shall have the right to appeal and/or request Internet access privileges be reinstated. An appeal must be in writing and submitted to a Department Manager within five days of the prohibition. Within ten days of the receipt of the appeal, the Department Manager and the Director shall review the matter and notify the patron in writing of their decision.

If their decision is adverse to the patron, the patron may appeal in writing within five days to the Library Board of Trustees, which shall consider the matter and issue its decision in writing following the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

No further appeals to the Library will be considered.

G. Definitions

Child Pornography – The federal child pornography statute, *18 U.S.C.2256*, defines “child pornography” as “any visual depiction” of a minor under 18 years old engaging in “sexually explicit conduct”, which includes “actual or simulated” sexual intercourse, bestiality, masturbation, sadistic or masochistic abuse, or “lascivious exhibition of the genitals or pubic area”. The statute’s definition includes not only actual depictions of sexually explicit conduct involving minors, but also images that “appear to be” minors engaging in sexually explicitly conduct.

Harmful to Minors – Any depiction which:

1. taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion;
2. depicts, describes, or represents in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, an actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual act, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and
3. taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors. (Definition from the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and *47 U.S.C. 254*).

Minor – CIPA definition: An individual who has not attained the age of 17. *Official Code of Georgia* definition (*OCGA 16-12-102(1)*): One who is under 18 years of age. As TCPLS must comply with federal law, which takes precedence over state law, the CIPA definition shall be applied.

NCIPA – Neighborhood Children’s Internet Protection Act

Obscene – The actual legal definition of “obscene” has not been codified, but instead lies in the Supreme Court decision *Miller vs. California* of 1973. The “Miller Test” defines obscenity as material possessing **all three** of the following characteristics:

1. an average person applying contemporary community standards, would find that the material, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest,
2. the material depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual contact as specifically defined by applicable state law; **and**
3. the material, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

The State of Georgia’s definition of obscenity closely follows the Supreme Court guidelines given above. According to *OCGA 16-12-80*, material is obscene if:

1. To the average person applying contemporary community standards, taken as a whole, it predominately appeals to the prurient interest, that is, a shameful or morbid interest in nudity, sex, or excretion;
2. The material taken as a whole lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value; **and**
3. The material depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, conduct specifically defined in the following subparagraphs (a) through (e) of this section:
 - a. Acts of sexual intercourse, heterosexual or homosexual, normal or perverted, actual or simulated;
 - b. Acts of masturbation;
 - c. Acts involving excretory functions or lewd exhibition of the genitals;
 - d. Acts of bestiality or the fondling of sex organs of animals; or
 - e. Sexual acts of flagellation, torture, or other violence indicating a sadomasochistic sexual relationship.

Meeting Rooms Policy & Procedures

*Approved by Thomas County Library Board
May 20, 2019*

This policy applies the Henry Flipper Meeting Room and all other Thomas County Public Library System meeting and conference room spaces.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the Thomas County Public Library meeting and conference rooms is to provide a space for library/library-related activities and community, non-profit events and activities. The needs of the Library and the Friends of the Library group will take precedence. The library reserves the right to cancel or reschedule any meeting or move a meeting into a different room in the event of a meeting room conflict.

All state and local fire codes must be observed in addition to all city or county ordinances.

Acceptable Use

- The meeting and conference rooms are available for use by educational, cultural, civic, social, political, religious (administrative purposes only), professional, and other non-profit organizations, or to persons volunteering as tutors as part of a non-profit program.
- Businesses may use the meeting and conference rooms for training or other purposes as long as no commercial activity transpires.
- The meeting rooms may not be used for private parties or private celebrations, such as wedding receptions, birthday parties, baby showers, etc.
- The meeting and conference rooms are not available to non-library related or sponsored groups, or individuals for the promotion or sale of services or products, fundraising, soliciting, or conducting classes for profit.
- No admission or attendance charge or required donation may be assessed by any non-library group using the meeting and conference rooms.
- All meetings held in the meeting and conference rooms must be open to the general public.
- Groups using the meeting and conference rooms shall clean, return tables/chairs to their original positions and vacate rooms fifteen (15) minutes prior to closing time of the library.

Availability

The meeting and conference rooms are available during regular library business hours only, unless prior approval is received from the Library Director or designated representative.

Meetings must end, furniture returned to original positions and trash removed at least fifteen minutes before the library's closing time and the person that reserved the room **MUST** check out with library staff before exiting the building.

The meeting and conference rooms will not be available when the library is closed due to bad weather, holidays, or other emergency conditions.

Reservations

The meeting and conference rooms must be reserved at least 24 hours in advance. Walk-in requests may be considered by the Director or designated representative when rooms are not in use. The requester must be an adult and will be held responsible for the orderly conduct of the group, and in the event of any damage to library property and/or equipment that individual will be liable.

The library also reserves the right to reject any application if it is determined that the organization has abused its past privileges in using the meeting and conference rooms. Reservations are not considered confirmed until the completed and signed application form is received by the library. Reservations for the meeting and conference rooms may be accepted for on-going daily (short-term), weekly, or monthly meetings provided the requestor/group has not previously violated the meeting room policy. Ongoing reservations may be suspended if the Director determines that adequate and fair accessibility for all persons/groups to reserve the rooms has become too limited.

The Library Director or designated representative must approve all reservations as well as signs announcing the meetings. All reservations must include setup and breakdown time.

Cancellations must be received at least 24 hours prior to meeting. Persons/groups failing to attend scheduled meetings without notifying the library of room reservation cancellation may be subject to future reservation restrictions.

Food, Refreshments, and Smoking

Simple refreshments and snacks may be served, but are restricted to the meeting rooms and are not permitted in other parts of the library except during library-sponsored events.

Cooking, smoking and alcoholic beverages are prohibited. A group serving refreshments is responsible for providing all serving containers/utensils and for cleaning up following the meeting.

The requester will accept responsibility for assuring that no alcoholic beverages or controlled substances are brought into the Library.

Furniture, Equipment, Etc.

Requesters are responsible for arranging the chairs, tables, and other equipment to meet their own needs and leaving the room in the order in which it is found, vacuuming if necessary, and putting trash in appropriate receptacles. Library materials or equipment stored in the area should not be moved.

Library staff is not available to operate equipment unless the event is library sponsored.

No material of any kind can be posted directly on the walls of the meeting and conference rooms unless prior approval is received from the Library Director or his/her designated representative. Non-library materials and equipment used by the group must be removed at the end of the meeting.

Under no circumstances should the Henry Flipper Meeting Room users attempt to operate the divider panels that separate Flipper Rooms A and B. For liability purposes, only qualified library staff are authorized to operate the room divider.

Liability

The library makes no endorsement, expressed or implied, of any non-library event or activity held in the Thomas County Public Library meeting and conference rooms. The Library Board and the library staff do not assume any liability for groups or individuals attending any meeting or program in the library. Any person(s) or group using the meeting and conference rooms agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the Thomas County Public Library, The Library Board of Trustees, Thomas County and the City of Thomasville and their employees from any liability relating to use of the Library meeting and conference rooms.

The Applicant shall be financially responsible for any damage to furniture or rooms.

Please fill out the attached Reservation Request Form and return to the Thomasville Library located at 201 Madison Street, Thomasville, GA 31792

Maximum Room Occupancies

Henry Flipper Room A & B – 120 seated/150 standing

Henry Flipper Room A and B combined – 240 seated/300 standing

Library Conference Room – 14 seated at table/25 total

Thomas County Public Library Meeting and Conference Room Reservation Request Form

Circle Room (s) Requested:

Flipper Room “A” Flipper Room “B” Flipper Rooms “A & B” Thomasville Library Conference Room

Your Name	
Your Organization’s Name	
Phone Number	
Email	
Date(s) Needed	
Meeting Start Time (including set-up)	
Meeting End Time (including clean-up)	
Approximate number of attendees	Adults _____ Children _____
Purpose of Meeting	

I have read the Thomas County Public Library System’s Meeting and Conference Room Policy and Procedures and understand that I am responsible for my organization’s adherence to the policy and procedures. Failure to follow this policy and these procedures may prevent my organization from using the Thomas County Public Library System’s meeting and conference rooms in the future.

Applicant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Approved by: _____

Date: _____