

Date: January 3, 2022

To: ImagineIF Libraries Board of Trustees

From: Sean Anderson, Starr White, Kat Wilson, Martha Furman (resigned 12/10)

ImagineIF Board of Trustees:

In October and November 2021, several residents completed a Citizen Comment on Library Materials form, requesting that the library remove the book Gender Queer by Maia Kobabe from our holdings.

The complainants are:

- Carmen Cuthbertson; **[Contact information redacted at complainant's request]**
- Brenda Cuthbertson; 124 Ranchetts Rd., Bigfork, MT 59911
- Gary Cuthbertson; 124 Ranchetts Rd., Bigfork, MT 59911
- Doug Wilkey; 120 Buffalo Stage, Kalispell, MT 59901; 406-253-3792
- Kelly Wilkey; 120 Buffalo Stage, Kalispell, MT 59901; 406-253-0936
- Loren Handrich; **[Contact information redacted at complainant's request]**
- Richard Handrich; **[Contact information redacted at complainant's request]**
- Patti Hayes; 918 Triplett Rd., Kalispell, MT 59901; 406-309-1078

Upon receipt of the initial complaint, then Interim Director Martha Furman assembled a committee of four professional librarians to read the book in question, and judge the application of the library's Collection Development Policy on that book. The members of that committee are listed above as the senders of this memo.

After carefully considering the work as a whole, the committee unanimously agrees that the book fits ImagineIF Library's collection, and should remain available to the people of Flathead County, in the Adult Graphic Novel Collection where it has been cataloged since it was acquired in 2020. This memo is intended to detail the committee's consideration of the title, and explain the reasoning behind this recommendation.

First, the title fulfills all of the Selection Criteria laid out in Section 5 of the library's Collection Development Policy. The committee would like to note that the Collection Development policy does not require that an item meet *all* of the criteria listed above, nor does meeting any of these criteria necessarily *require* the library to select an item. The selection criteria included in the policy are:

- Customer demand and interest,
- Critical Reviews,
- Presentation and readability,
- An attempt to balance all sides of an issue,
- Author's reputation and significance as a writer,
- Reputation and standing of the publisher,
- Local or national significance,
- Availability of the material or information elsewhere,
- Quality of the physical format,
- Reasonable Cost.

Second, as part of the library's collection, this and all other titles are protected by the policy's statements on Complaints and Censorship (Section 11), which state that the library's collections should represent the needs and interests of a diverse population, and therefore may contain materials that individuals may find unacceptable or disturbing.

Section 11 of the Collection Development Policy further states that:

ImagineIF Libraries holds censorship to be a purely individual matter and declares that while anyone is free to personally reject materials of which he or she does not approve, he or she may not exercise censorship to restrict the freedom of others.

Responsibility for materials selected and read by children and adolescents rests with their parent or legal guardians. Selection decisions are not influenced by the possibility that materials may be accessible to minors. Materials are not labeled to show approval or disapproval or to indicate certain philosophies. No items are sequestered except to protect them from damage or theft.

[...]

The Library Board of Trustees acknowledges that occasional objections to resources will be made despite the care taken and the procedures followed in their selection. The Library Board and library staff are prepared to defend the principles of freedom to read and access information. Objections to particular language or point of view of material cannot be used as justification for the exclusion of materials.

Therefore, based on a review of completed Citizen Comment of Library Materials forms, a review of the work as a whole, and the application of the Library's Collection Development Policy, the review committee unanimously recommends that Gender Queer by Maia Kobabe remain available to interested users of Flathead County. The committee also reiterates that professional staff assistance is available to help any library user navigate the library's collection and find materials that suit their interests.