

**Citizens for a Fair Ferndale
Library Board Candidates Forum
Sunday, October 23, 2011
3:00 p.m. (arrive by 2:30)
Ferndale Public Library**

Library Board Candidates Questionnaire

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1. Why of all Boards and Commissions, are you so committed to the Library Board?

I was appointed to the board of the Ferndale Public library in February, 2011 to replace board member Ann Warner who stepped down from the board. In my short time on the board, I have grown to appreciate even more what a gem of an institution we have in Ferndale! It has been my pleasure to serve with my fellow board members and work with the library's passionate and professional staff. That is why I wish to serve the citizens of Ferndale by running for election to the two-year term I am currently completing.

I have lived in Ferndale since 2001, and love the sense of community and involvement that are pervasive throughout our city. My desire to serve on the library board stems from this feeling and also my own personal passion for libraries, and our library in particular. Throughout childhood and into my adult life, libraries have remained one of my favorite places to be. I eagerly anticipate free time I can spend at the library, and am committed to passing on this love to my son. Whenever we travel I try to visit the local library of our destination. When comparing our library to all that I have explored, it stands out as one of the finest, with its welcoming ambience and comfortable atmosphere, and best of all, it's right here in Ferndale!

2. What, in your opinion, have been the 3 most exciting new options for library patrons since the opening of our new facility?

First and foremost I would say the expanded children's area. It is an incredible improvement which has really allowed for a much more diverse and creative offering of programs and materials that simply was not possible before.

The new community spaces also lend themselves to a greater variety of offerings both from library staff and community organizations. It is a rare evening where there is not an event taking place.

And one of the most inviting places in the library for me personally is the magazine room. The look and feel of this room makes me want to curl up for an afternoon and just read.

3. What are the next 2 pressing issues for the library?

I believe one of the most pressing issues we have is to establish internal maintenance procedures – a green renovation such as Ferndale’s library underwent requires its own special attention to the unique nuances of our building. With the stops and starts of the last couple years there has not been a good chance to make these things a regular part of the routine. With all the effort put into making our library a green, environmentally sound space, it is important moving forward to make sure these things are maintained.

The library is on sound financial footing at this time but in order to insure this continues, I think exploring alternative revenue streams is important. As economic and political changes continue to affect every business and household, proactive steps now can guarantee a strong public library in the future.

4. Tax revenues are down, and money from all sources is tighter than ever. Are there any services now given or any new services that should be “re-visited” due to needed belt-tightening?

I think that examining what services the library offers is always an ongoing responsibility of the board and library leadership. If we say we are going to re-visit what we offer as a reaction to decreased revenues, then that implies we may not be paying as close attention in good times. Responsible spending requires us to regularly question programs and expenditures and examine their viability and usefulness.

5. How can we get more people to use our library?

In thinking about this question, I would categorize ‘using’ the library in a couple different ways. One way of using the library is to attend a program. The variety of events we currently offer the community is a good example of how we attract people to the library. Having attended many different library and outside group sponsored events, I have noticed that there is minimal overlap between the individuals in attendance. This to me is a good thing. There is not really just one group who supports the library, but many. The families attending toddler story hour are not the same folks who may be attending the foreign film and dinner series. With our diversity of offerings, there is something for everyone, and if we have missed something, the library staff is eager to listen to different ideas.

As far as attracting new visitors, I think a strong social media presence is vital. To that end, our library has an active Facebook presence and uses it to highlight various materials that the public may not first think of the library as the go-to place – a recent example would be the story of the many resources our library can provide for people who are searching for employment.

But ultimately I think we attract people by remaining firmly committed to a public library’s traditional role as providing public access to information and a sense of community for all residents. It is that rare institution that honors cooperation and sharing.

6. Information retrieval, literacy, reading for pleasure are all important and growing more important daily, no matter if you use traditional books, or new technologies such as iPhones/ iPods/ Kindles. What implications does this have for the future of Ferndale Library?

Public libraries are a valuable source of knowledge, no matter the method of delivery. Thus libraries must remain focused on making information available and easily accessible to our patrons. The technological revolution presents a challenge in the way we accomplish this, and our library is tackling

that challenge in a variety of ways – from the usage of social media to exploring various e-readers and digital materials.

7. With whom do you envision the Library collaborating closer? Where do you see the need for more communication between the Library and other groups in our community?

I would venture there are as yet unexplored opportunities to collaborate with businesses and non-profits within our community. In my short time on the board, it seems that these groups have been very receptive to a variety of networking, and I think that we as a board need to work to keep these relationships active while exploring new ways of involving our community as well. I think that ongoing outreach needs to occur with our schools and governmental entities as we are all vested in having a strong public library that has a positive impact on Ferndale. We are all part of what makes a community strong and a desirable place for people to live.

8. What makes you the best candidate for the Library Board?

I hope what I have shared in my answers above has demonstrated my commitment to a strong library in Ferndale. But I believe my experience goes beyond this passion.

As the Assistant Director at Oakland University's Office of Public School Academies, a major part of my job responsibility involves work with the boards of each of our eight academies. I attend monthly board meetings and design and deliver training for new and experienced board members. I am very familiar with how a non-profit board should function and understand the fiscal and governance challenges boards face. In serving on a board, it is vital to understand the difference between governance and management. With this background, I feel I can have a positive presence on the Ferndale library board, and am eager to continue serving.