

**Citizens for a Fair Ferndale
Library Board Candidates Forum
Saturday, October 26, 2013
3:45 p.m. (arrive by 3:30)
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 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.

I have served on the library board since February 2011. In that time I have grown to appreciate the dedication of our staff and the desire of my fellow board members to ensure our library remains vibrant. Safeguarding this community gem is my top priority as a board member.

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

As a governmental entity, the library is dependent on tax revenue for the majority of our financing. Given recent decreases in that revenue, it is imperative that we are proactive in our financial planning. Our goal is to continue to provide high quality service and to maintain and build our collections and programming. Decreased funding makes this goal more challenging, requiring the board and staff to explore alternative ways to stabilize funding.

Our library's mission is to strengthen the community through our efforts and offerings. Careful planning for the future is vital to that mission. Libraries are quickly evolving from their traditional role as a repository for books into community hubs where people can come together to connect with each other and access information in a variety of forms. Staying mindful to the needs of the community and seeking out partnerships and collaborations with other parts of the community are important to the library's future viability.

3. 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.

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

This year 235,000 people have entered the library and over 200,000 items have been checked out. Our library is a popular destination but we can always expand the number of people who use the library. I think constant and consistent outreach in a variety of ways to various segments of our community will serve to build on this popularity. The library utilizes social media, print media, and promotional materials in order to make the public aware of all the great programs and books we have to offer.

5. 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?

As mentioned above, libraries are quickly evolving and advances in technology spur much of that evolution. A “digital commons” is a descriptor increasingly used in framing a library’s purpose. Implications for libraries are serious as current struggles with publishers over licensing and purchase of e-books threaten to seriously overburden library budgets. Collaboration with other libraries in addressing this issue is essential to ensure access to learning and literacy in all its forms.

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?

Ongoing outreach needs to occur and is currently occurring with our schools and governmental entities as we are all vested in having a strong public library that has a positive impact on Ferndale. Communication and collaboration is a part of the library’s strategic plan and outreach has been much more intentional. An example of this is in the events and communications with city schools promoted by our children’s librarian, Jillean McCommons, and her staff. As a result, teachers are submitting requests for reading lists that align with their curriculum and middle school student will soon visit the library for instruction on how to do research for their science fair projects.

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

My experience as a current board member and passion for the library are a major part of what makes me one of the best candidates for the library board, but my board governance is a part of my job as well.

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 ten 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.