

**Citizens for a Fair Ferndale
Library Board Candidates Forum
Sunday, October 30, 2016**

**1:00 – 2:30 pm (please arrive by 12:45)
Ferndale City Hall**

Library Board Candidates Questionnaire

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1. Why, of all Boards and Commissions, have you chosen to run for the Library Board?

I love the Ferndale Area District Library (FADL)! When an opening for the Library Board occurred early in 2016, I applied for and was appointed by the Ferndale City Council to fill the opening in February 2016.

Libraries have always been important to me. As a young child, my family moved many times and weekly visits to our local library wherever we lived played an important part of my childhood. As a teenager and young adult, libraries were a safe and free destination for me. I have been a patron of the Ferndale library since moving to the city in 1997. I continued the library tradition with my family, taking my toddlers to story hour then watching them spend many a fun summer taking part in the summer reading program.

I was co-chair and treasurer of Citizens for a Fair Ferndale, the committee that in 2007 campaigned for the millage which raised funds to renovate the library, hire more staff and add to the library's collections. I served on the Friends of the Ferndale Library board for many years, most recently as treasurer and president.

During my tenure on the board my respect for the staff and my admiration for this important public institution has deepened and I want to continue to be a part of keeping the Ferndale library the welcoming, vital and community-engaging library that it is.

2. What are the two most pressing issues for the Ferndale Library at this time?

The two most pressing issues for the Ferndale Library are 1) to hire a new Director and 2) to implement improvements and changes that were made possible by the millage increase.

3. Ferndale voters recently approved a significant increase in library funding. In order (from highest to lowest), what do you think are the highest priorities for using the increased funding? Why that order? How will you ensure that the funds are well spent?

The results of the 2015 survey conducted by the library indicated that the public wanted more hours, more programs, more of the best-selling books, more movies and more downloadable audiobooks. I would use the survey results to help prioritize the order of spending.

I think that the highest priority is for the library to be open more hours to increase the public's access to the library. The FADL has already restored Friday hours and will be working to open on Sunday as well. Having the library open more hours and offering more programs means hiring more staff. Retaining our exceptional and professional staff and attracting new staff would mean salaries that are competitive with other staff salaries for comparable-sized libraries in our region.

The next highest priority would be to expand the library's collections. The staff has already begun researching the most cost-effective way to increase library users' access to online offerings and to expand subscriptions to services that would benefit patrons' online experiences.

A final high priority for using the increased spending would be to upgrade the library's technology. Work has started on a technology plan which would include replacing computer workstations for patrons (children and adults) as well as for the staff. The computer upgrades are based on recommendations from The Library Network (TLN), of which FADL is a member. TLN is a public library cooperative serving 75 libraries in southeast Michigan. Other technology improvements would include: dedicated devices to facilitate MobileCirc, which allows FADL to create library cards and check out books while out of the building at Ferndale Public Schools events or at senior living facilities; wireless printing, which would allow patrons to print from home or from mobile devices while in the library; and upgrading the library's website.

I will ensure the funds are well spent by continuing to maintain a close and collaborative relationship between the board and the library director, continuing to perform due diligence in reviewing all financial reports and audits, attending meetings and being proactive in seeking cost-saving measures, and maintaining the financial stability of the library by ensuring a stable fund balance.

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

Fortunately, Ferndale citizens already use our library in high numbers. Since 2005, usage has increased over 400%. By offering programs that appeal to all members of our community, from early childhood reading programs, to programs for school aged children and teenagers, to music concerts, art shows, civic and educational programs in the community meeting rooms, to the traditional online and in-person checking out of books, music, and movies, I believe that

usage will steadily increase. Continuing the library's outreach into the schools will also increase usage. Using social media has become an important tool in reaching the public and advertising what the library has to offer.

5. The nature of information and information distribution is changing at a frantic pace. What do you see as the biggest opportunities for the library in this changing environment? What are the biggest threats? How should the library respond to both opportunities and threats?

Libraries will always be a source for information and they have done a good job in keeping up with the changes in information distribution. Libraries will always have books, but libraries also need to keep up with library users' needs for online access to information. Increasing online access to materials means the library must work to secure against viral attacks. Upgrading our library's technology will help protect against security breaches.

Libraries have a historical place in maintaining the freedom to access information while at the same time maintaining library patrons' right to privacy. FADL adheres to the Michigan Library Privacy Act of 1982 which guarantees the privacy of patron library records. FADL uses established industry standards to protect minors who access online information at the library from obscene or explicit material, which is also mandated by the Library Privacy Act.

6. Do you think libraries can play a role in helping to reduce social inequality? If so, what are the best practical steps for a library to achieve that? If not, how do you see the library's role in society as a whole?

I believe that libraries play a large role in reducing social inequality. Libraries remain one of the few places in every community that are free and open to everyone. It should be recognized that not everyone in our community has access to computers or the internet. At the Ferndale library, the practical need to provide access to computer usage has been recognized for many years. Recently, the library conducted a pilot program that allowed users to check out Hot Spots, which provide internet access. This pilot program was very successful and will be considered for implementation.

Early childhood intervention has been shown as a practical way to reduce social inequality. FADL has early literacy programs, youth book clubs and summer reading programs. Regular trips to the library for children are a practical approach in reducing social inequality.

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

Our library staff already does a great job of outreach to the schools and senior communities. As a district library, FADL will continue and grow its outreach with the Ferndale Public Schools. With concerts, lectures, art shows and community meetings, the library has

proven to be an anchor for the downtown and more collaboration would be welcome between the library, the DDA, the Ferndale Area Chamber of Commerce and the business community in Ferndale. Now that FADL is its own taxing authority, it is also very important to keep the lines of communication open between the library and the City of Ferndale and facilitate an effective working relationship.

8. What makes you a good candidate for the Library Board?

I am very passionate about the Ferndale Area District Library and the place it holds in our community. I work for People's Community Services of Metropolitan Detroit, one of the oldest neighborhood-centered community organizations in Detroit. I have held board positions on many community organizations (Ferndale PTA, Drayton Avenue Cooperative Preschool, Citizens for a Fair Ferndale, Friends of the Ferndale Library). I have experience in budgeting and financial accountability, human resources, community outreach and facilitating successful working relationships between boards, staff and volunteers. I recognize the need for transparency, openness and approachability when serving on a board. I understand the library's history and fully support its mission to "strengthen the community by providing access to materials and services that inform, enrich, entertain and empower."

I love our library and feel Ferndale's library is one of the best small libraries in the country. I would be honored to serve the Ferndale community as a Ferndale Area District Library Board Member.