

**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

Name: Amanda Hanlin

Address: 275 Vester

Phone: 313-516-9633

E-mail address: achanlin1@gmail.com

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

In the fourteen years that I've lived in Ferndale, the library has proven to be an incredible educational asset and source of community engagement for me and my family. Given how much the library has advantaged us, I felt it was important to lend my time and experience to supporting the library's ongoing development.

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

As with most public entities, sustainable funding will always be a top issue for FADL. Despite Ferndale voters' generous approval of the library's 2016 millage proposal, we will always need to work with an eye toward perpetuating a diverse funding base. The more funding we can secure, the more we can expand our collection, improve technology, etc. Additionally, I would love to see FADL expand its patronage even further into the community. We have an excellent patron base that can grow even further.

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?

It's challenging to rank the library's current priorities since they all are so important. Current priority funding areas include: restoration of full library hours, improved staff compensation, collection expansion/mode of delivery expansion (downloadables, wifi access, etc.), technology improvement, and extension of programming. I prioritized our work in this order after reflecting upon what we learned from the taxpayers who completed our patron

survey. In the survey, there was a clear desire for the library to resume Friday hours and add Sunday hours, which the Board and the staff have already taken steps to accomplish. Patrons also expressed a high level of interaction with staff and a very high appreciation of their expertise in answering questions. The spirit and service of our library is embodied by the dedication of our excellent staff. Patrons also highlighted the importance of collection expansion and access to downloadable formats. We see also a high reliance on our technological resources among patrons – students, job-seekers, etc. Finally, extending our programming is key to extending our reach within the community. Our staff provide excellent in-library programming as well as outreach in our schools, senior centers and through mobile library card registration efforts. I would love to see these efforts expanded.

I'll work to ensure funds are well spent by joining with my fellow board members and staff in strategic planning processes that employ our funds meaningfully and efficiently with adherence to sound accounting practices. As a member of our Board's Building and Finance Committee, I've been very fortunate to gain experience in budget analysis and planning that I believe will help me lend insight to our ongoing work.

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

Implementing the strategies I've outlined above is a means of attracting new patrons. By offering even more accessible hours, a diverse collection, astute staff assistance and access to technology, we offer something for everyone. I think we also can reach many new potential patrons through our programming and mobile registration efforts. Also, aiming resources at a broader library communications plan certainly would help.

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?

This environment offers FADL an incredible opportunity for fast and efficient information distribution that is affordable and accessible by a very broad swath of our community. However, I think the greatest challenge is ensuring that we don't take for granted that all members of our community access information digitally. Although Twitter, Instagram and Facebook offer incredibly effective means of engagement, we must chart communications strategies that include members of our community who may not have access to online resources as readily as many of us do. We risk alienating current and potential patrons if we fail to keep this in mind. Also, in an age of potential "information overload," I think ensuring that our communications are clear, timely and purposeful is critical.

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 absolutely think libraries can and do play a role in reducing social inequality. I see libraries as a hallmark of our country's promise of an equal education for all of our citizens – a promise that I feel is threatened by many factors today. We know that our patrons use the library as an extension of their educational resources. The best practical steps toward preserving and expanding this use is to ensure that access to the library's resources is guaranteed for all regardless of race, gender, age, level of income, etc. The library is a space for everyone to come to learn, grow and expand their potential. From the early literacy benefits to children to the broad learning base afforded patrons of all ages, the library expands horizons.

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?

I think FADL can expand on its ongoing collaboration with City Council, the School Board, Downtown Development Authority, and Citizens for a Fair Ferndale. Of course, we always can expand our communication with the schools, senior centers, business community and community groups. I'm particularly interested in expanding our communication with citizens who do not currently use the library in an effort to learn how we might invite them to be library patrons.

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

On the practical side, I think I can offer the Library Board skills and experience that will help the library achieve its objectives and continue its tradition of excellence. As Chief of Staff at Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC), I have gained a great deal of experience in management, strategy and planning. In fact, over the last fifteen years, I have based my career in non-profit planning and research posts that have provided me with a core understanding of organizational management. On a more personal note, being a Ferndale citizen for fourteen years has given me a deep appreciation and understanding of our community – one that I hope to continue to foster as a Library Board member. As a parent, I have been so grateful for how the library has enriched my children's lives by offering them access to books, music and programming that creates a broader window of the world for them. I'm also grateful for the opportunity to teach them library ethics around borrowing, sharing, learning and appreciating. Being firmly rooted in this appreciation will motivate me to be a strong Board Member committed to ensuring this valuable community resource continues to benefit our community.