

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

**1:00 – 2:30 pm  
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 have served on the library board since 2011 and have lived in Ferndale since 2001. I love the sense of community and involvement that are pervasive throughout our city. My desire to continue to serve on the library board stems from this feeling and also my own personal passion for libraries, and our library in particular.*

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

*The most pressing issue for the library at this time is the hiring of a new director. We are in the process of vetting recruitment consultants, and expect to start the search in January 2017.*

*Our library's mission is to strengthen the community through our efforts and offerings. Careful planning for the future is vital to that mission. I believe always at the forefront of our efforts should be to actively seek out new ways to serve our patrons, and stay mindful of the rapid changes that continue to challenge our definition of library.*

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?

*I think it's important to keep in mind that the millage increase approved in August of 2016 will not be assessed until the summer of 2017. We did not get an immediate increase in funding. That being said, the board and the library leadership have*

*implemented some of our priorities in anticipation of the tax revenue we will receive in the future. We heard from the community that a high priority was to increase the hours the library was open and we have reinstated Friday hours to that end. We project that we will be able to add Sunday hours as well in early 2017.*

*An important board priority has been to review compensation for our staff and implement some increases. Staff retention is important to us and many library employees had not received a salary increase in over five years. We recognize that these people are what make our library a success.*

*The community also indicated the importance of more on-demand digital resources such as e-books, audio books, online learning tools and streaming video. We have taken incremental steps to increase availability and variety of offers in this area and will continue to do so in 2017.*

*Other planned future endeavors that may not be implemented until revenues are received are technology upgrades and increases in literacy programs for preK-12<sup>th</sup> grade students, and additional outreach to the schools.*

*Ensuring that the funds are well-spent is a collective responsibility of the board and library leadership. We are all very aware of our fiduciary role in managing the money taxpayers have entrusted to us. Strategic planning and budgeting with an eye toward not only short-term needs but future sustainability drives our decision making.*

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

*Our library is a popular destination but we can always expand the number of people who utilize it. Increased accessibility through expanded hours is one way we are achieving that goal. The library serves an average of 650-700 people every day and lends more than 11,000 items each month. I think the creative outreach efforts of our staff have contributed to the library's popularity. Social media also plays a role in public awareness of what our 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?

*One of the biggest opportunities for our library is the continued move to integrate technology with delivery of services. Many patrons 'use' the library without ever passing through its doors. Online checkout and membership in the TLN (The Library Network) allow us to expand our reach. Another great opportunity that you will hear*

*me mention often is the ability to provide support and services to the students and teachers in our schools. Decreased state aid has forced them to make difficult decisions regarding media services within the schools. We see an opportunity to share the expertise of our staff to work with teachers in promoting literacy efforts and access to students.*

*One of the biggest threats to all libraries and municipalities in Michigan is the potential for sudden decreases in tax revenue when home values go down. With the ability for property taxes to decrease drastically but to increase only at the rate of inflation, revenues can take years to rebound.*

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?

*Yes! There are very few places left that serve the function that our libraries do. All people who come through our doors are equal and have the same opportunities for enjoyment, education and enrichment. The outreach we do to our schools and seniors provide materials and resources that serve to lessen the economic and access inequalities that may hinder their usage of the library.*

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 do not see it as needing more communication but rather continued communication with city officials, school district, chamber of commerce, the DDA, and senior groups, to name just a few. I believe our dialog has been positive and productive. I also believe that a major focus of the library moving forward will be to strengthen our collaboration with the schools. We have so much to offer each other and I am confident that the future will bring many opportunities to build on this relationship.*

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

*My experience as a current board member since 2011 makes me a good candidate for continuing on the board. During my tenure, I have served as secretary, vice-president, and my current position, president. I believe my leadership and passion are qualities that serve me well along with my ability to collaborate and coordinate various initiatives such as the transition from a city library to a district library, and our successful millage campaign. I am very excited to be a part of the library's next chapter of service to the community.*