

**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?

Libraries have always been important to me, from my youth through today. A few years ago, a committed and energetic group of citizens helped make our library independent and set in motion a series of changes that resulted in the beautiful building and wonderful staff that we enjoy today in Ferndale. I am privileged to be involved in continuing that work on the Library Board, thanks to my appointment in January 2010, and am running to build on the successes of my predecessors and colleagues on the library board.

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

First, we have an impressive new Library Director, Kate Pohjola. She will bring additional vitality to the already exciting array of programs, services, and collections at the library.

Second, the community is using the building exactly as intended. We see a variety of community groups using the meeting rooms, students using the study rooms, patrons engaging in a wide variety of programs, including live music in the library, residents checking out books, reading in the library, using the free internet connections, people engaging our knowledgeable librarians with questions, kids using the children's library in all sorts of ways; the list goes on and on.

Third, the staff has chosen a tremendous variety of music, movies and television DVDs, books and magazines to engage patrons' range of interests. If our library doesn't have what you're looking for, Ferndale librarians can help you get it fast from our partner libraries.

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

First, we need to engage in serious strategic planning so that the library can meet the needs of residents in this time of economic trouble and beyond.

Second, while that planning is happening, we need to build on the positive momentum from the work of our new director, our staff and the excitement from our new building. Public

libraries are educational institutions, cultural access points and community gathering spots. We will continue to add materials to the book and media collection, develop quality programs, and engage in fun cultural events such as First Stop Friday music, all in a time of shrinking revenue. We can do this by combining fundraising with a continuous look at expenses to ensure that we provide quality library services at a reasonable cost.

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?

As revenues have declined, we have saved enough money on various items in the budget that we have not had any reductions in services or in the collections budget. However, at present, the library will need to carefully examine services and collections purchases, in the event that fundraising cannot replace further revenue reductions. We may also need to reconfigure the hours that we are open each week, to maximize the public's ability to use the library while keeping staffing costs in check. Any reductions will be carefully planned, with input sought not only from the staff, but also the public, the Friends of the Ferndale Library, and other community organizations.

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

First, we need to ensure that the hours the library is open meet the needs of the public. If working parents can't get to the library, then we may be losing more than one generation of library patrons. Second, we need to continue to provide first class library services, including cultural and educational programs. Third, we need to provide high quality, high demand books, music, movies, and magazines to draw people into the library. Finally, we need to be at the forefront of new technologies as they are deployed in public libraries.

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?

The library board recently adopted a new technology initiative that enables the staff to learn how best to deploy new technologies in our library, including e-readers and tablet computers, such as the Kindle, Nook, iPad and various Android tablets. We look forward to discussing their recommendations within the next six months, and I expect that we will see some exciting uses of new technology in our library within the next few years.

Another aspect of technology is the proliferation of information available on the internet. Some people feel that libraries are obsolete in the age of Google. In fact, librarians are information retrieval experts, and libraries are some of the most efficient places from which to seek information. One example is the vast number of database resources that every citizen can access through the library's website, via the Michigan e-Library. This source of information is much richer and more relevant than search engine results, and is provided at no additional cost to our library patrons. Ferndale Public Library users can also check out e-books to read on their own e-readers, smartphones and tablet computers, also at no additional cost. Of course, those who prefer actual paper and ink will continue to have a wide variety of choice at the library, as well.

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?

We should continue to build relationships with city government, the school districts who serve Ferndale, neighboring libraries, and our library cooperative (TLN). Some of these relationships are quite strong, and others need more attention from both sides of the fence.

Community organizations (such as CFF, Ferndale Community Foundation, Ferncare, and Affirmations) are also important collaborators with the library. The library can be a tremendous resource to the incredible volunteer and non-profit spirit that we have in Ferndale, in terms of meeting space, information resources, and other facets of cooperation that are only limited by imagination.

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

I strongly advocate for the role of the Ferndale Public Library in our community, I endeavor to bring a strategic mindset to the policy and governance questions that the library board faces, and I bring my professional background in not-for-profit budgeting, financial planning, analysis and strategic management. These things, in combination with the excellent strengths of the other five trustees, make our library board effective in working through its responsibilities to the citizens of Ferndale.