

2026 Ferndale Area District Library - Library Board Candidate Questionnaire
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Paul Beasley Response

1. What experiences have led you to run/rerun for Library Board?

I am a longtime Ferndale resident, educator, and higher education leader with more than 25 years of experience in curriculum design, instruction, strategic planning, organizational leadership, operations, community partnerships, and data-informed decision-making. I have called Ferndale home since 2004 and have witnessed the positive growth of the library, city, and community. I currently serve as an Assistant Dean, Assistant Professor, and Academic Program Director, where I lead academic programs, curriculum development, student success initiatives, and institutional improvement. My career has focused on strengthening organizations, expanding educational opportunities, and building partnerships that serve students and communities. I bring to board service professional leadership, educational expertise, governance experience, and a longstanding commitment to Ferndale.

If elected, I hope to contribute strategic leadership, educational expertise, operational experience, and a strong commitment to inclusive community service. One priority will be strengthening the library as a welcoming space for Ferndale's diverse community by supporting innovative programming and broad access to library resources. I also hope to work collaboratively with the library director, staff, and board to develop transparent, sustainable plans for maintaining and improving the library's physical infrastructure. My experience in strategic planning, fiscal stewardship, partnerships, and data-informed decision-making will support thoughtful, accountable governance.

2. What do you see are the strengths and weaknesses of the Ferndale Area District Library?

The Ferndale Area District Library has many strengths that support its patrons and the broader community. Its extensive physical and digital collections are essential to meeting the diverse needs and interests of patrons. The expanded media collection including vinyl records, DVDs, CDs, streaming movie services, and digital access to periodicals such as The New York Times provides patrons with a wide range of resources. The library's recurring monthly programming and more than 60 annual events also provide opportunities for learning, connection, and engagement throughout the community. In addition, access to tools, e-readers, board games, telescopes, and other items available for checkout provide valuable resources that extend the library's impact beyond traditional books and media. I do not see any definitive weaknesses at FADL; rather, I see opportunities for continued growth and success. With the recent adoption of the revised five-year strategic plan in April 2026, the library director, staff, and board have an opportunity to ensure that each of the three priorities, along with their corresponding goals and actions, are implemented, assessed, and communicated transparently to the community.

3. Ferndale voters recently voted to approve a library millage. How does this affect library operations? How can voters expect to see this millage used?

The millage approved by voters during the 2026 primary election is critical to sustaining current library operations while also supporting expanded programming and improvements to the library's physical infrastructure. Thanks to the community's support, the library will be able to maintain seven-day access, expand its collections and programming, update facilities and technology, and preserve digital access to library resources. The capital fund millage will also allow necessary structural improvements to move forward, including restoration of the geothermal HVAC system, improvements to exterior and interior finishes, updated furnishings, and expanded technology infrastructure.

4. How do you see collaboration between the Ferndale Library and city governments/ other local stakeholders?

FADL has longstanding partnerships with Ferndale Public Schools, city government, and other community stakeholders. The board of directors also has an established committee dedicated to collaboration with local schools. Through this deliberate focus on collaboration and partnership, the board and library staff can identify shared goals, leverage community resources, and provide coordinated support that benefits residents of all ages. Continued communication among the library, schools, city government, and other local organizations will be important to maximizing the library's role as a community resource.

5. What are your thoughts on the way FADL provides accommodations for patrons and others with disabilities (physical/mental/emotional)?

FADL's leadership and board of directors have taken intentional steps to provide accommodations and improve accessibility for patrons and staff. The recently adopted strategic plan, approved in April 2026, identifies expanding accessibility as one of its three priorities. This commitment is intended to provide convenient, community-driven, and equitable access to physical and digital resources for all patrons. Initiatives such as home delivery, improved labeling, and adjustments to physical barriers help the library better meet the diverse needs of its patrons. Quiet spaces, appropriate lighting, digital resources, and accessible reading devices also support a welcoming and inclusive environment. Continued evaluation of accessibility needs and engagement with patrons who use these services will help ensure that FADL remains responsive to the community.

6. What role does AI (artificial intelligence) have in library operations?

Libraries around the world are exploring how artificial intelligence (AI) can be thoughtfully integrated into their operations and services. At FADL, AI could potentially be used to organize and analyze data, providing valuable insights into borrowing trends, collection usage, and patron interests. These insights could help inform future purchasing decisions, programming, and the allocation of library spaces and resources. The rise of AI also presents an opportunity for education. Through adult and youth programming, the library can help community members understand how to use AI responsibly, navigate AI-driven support systems, evaluate information generated by AI, and understand both the potential benefits and limitations of these technologies.

7. In what ways do you see FADL working toward racial equity?

FADL supports racial equity in several ways, including through patron programming, collection development, policies and procedures, staff and leadership recruitment, and the elimination of overdue fines. These efforts help reduce barriers to accessing library resources and services while supporting the library's mission, vision, and strategic priorities. Continued attention to representation, accessibility, and equitable participation will be important as FADL evolves its programs and services to meet the needs of the entire community.

8. How do you see FADL working toward climate sustainability?

Sustainability is one of the goals identified in FADL's strategic plan. With the support of the community through the approved millage, FADL will be able to allocate funding toward repairing the existing geothermal HVAC system and maintaining its current LEED certification.

The library's green roof also contributes to sustainability by helping manage stormwater, reducing roof surface temperatures, and supporting more efficient heating and cooling. Sustainability is incorporated into multiple aspects of FADL's operations and infrastructure, and I am encouraged to see the continued focus on maintaining and improving these initiatives.

9. Are there any additional thoughts you would like to share?

It is critical that members of our community have a voice in the leadership and future direction of the Ferndale Area District Library. The library is an important community institution that provides access to information, education, technology, culture, and opportunities for connection. I encourage you to exercise your right to vote and participate in the future of our community. I would be honored to have your support on the ballot.