

**HART AREA PUBLIC LIBRARY
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
August 11, 2025**

Minutes taken by Susie Gray, Assistant Director

CALL TO ORDER: 6:02pm

ROLL CALL: Nancy Sterk, Todd Metzler, Penny Burillo, Amanda Klotz, Mary Sloan, Juan Cortes, Director Kathleen Rash, Assistant Director Susie Gray.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion by Metzler to approve the agenda as presented. Support by Sloan. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Jim Cunningham of Hart spoke opposing the banning of books. He affirmed that every parent has the right to determine what their child will read. Parents do not have the right to make that decision for other parents and their children.
- Paul Betts of Pentwater spoke opposing the banning of books. He presented a list of facts supporting his position.
- Anne Pawli of Hart thanked the library board for standing against the banning of books. She spoke to some of the specific objections addressed in the appeal.
- Amanda Jones of Ferry Township spoke in support of the library and did not want to see any book banned.
- Tammy Longcore of Golden Township spoke about the lack of services for Golden Township and the Library's finances.
- Jill VanAntwerp of Golden Township spoke as an English literature teacher in support of LGBTQ books in the library. She specifically spoke about the personal issues that the author of Gender Queer went through.
- Mary Barker of Pentwater spoke in support of freedom to read. She addressed the board and told them to follow the library policy. She stated that the board's responsibility is to show courage and stand by the right to read.
- John Wemlinger of Onkema, Michigan, spoke against book banning. He stated that book banning puts the community, the state, and the nation on a slippery slope. He said it isn't the library who should be controlling what your children read. It is the parent's job to censor their children—not the library's or the government's job.
- Valerie Church-McHugh of Pentwater, president of the Pentwater library board, spoke in support of libraries. She said that "sanitizing" our collections creates a false reflection of our world. Personal discomfort is not a reason for removal.

- Fran Kyncl of Hart spoke as a parent and grandmother. She said it is her job to take responsibility for what her children and grandchildren read. She appealed to the board to vote for the future of our children.
- Carol Feltes of Pentwater, president of the Friends group for the Pentwater library, spoke in support of the library and librarians.
- Margot Haynes of Montague, member of the Friends group from the Montague library, spoke in support of providing diverse materials. She said nobody has the right to say that because they don't like something, no one in the community has the right to read it. She said that the issue is not the specific book, but the issue that no one has the right to deny materials to the entire community.
- Amanda Mazur of Shelby, Shelby Library board trustee, said that a board's job is to uphold everyone's access to materials. She said that the collection should reflect the community, and that every parent should decide what their family should read.
- Patricia Renna of Hart said, "Don't ban our books. As a mother, grandmother, great grandmother, we do this for our children."
- Kittie Tuinstra of Elbridge Township, a Hart Library user, spoke as a supporter of the library. She praised the library as a space for anyone to come no matter their religion, orientation, socio-economic status. She said, "Who are you to tell me what I can read...What authority do you have that supersedes mine?"
- Dave Spittler of Pentwater Township spoke about his grandmother's donation of land for the school. He quoted his grandmother as saying, "Read, read, read." He said, "Please don't ban the books."
- Charles Muller of Elbridge Township spoke. As a former member of the Peace Corp, he talked about the destruction of a library in Mali by religious radicals. He thanked the patriotic staff of the library for keeping America great by preserving the freedom to read.
- Catalina Burillo of Hart spoke opposing the banning of books saying that if someone doesn't like a book then they simply shouldn't read it. She stated that banning books leads to erasing histories and that the freedom to read is a fundamental right. She urged the library board to protect our freedom.
- Megan Carnes of Shelby stated that American teens who are non-binary are more likely to commit suicide.
- Mary Jane Fedder of Pentwater is retired from the Pentwater library. She spoke specifically to the book *Gender Queer* which she was glad to find available on Hoopla. She read the book and felt empathy for the author and the process she went through trying to figure out her sexuality. She pointed out that this is an adult book, not a teen book.

- Jamie Hill of Newaygo said that any attempts to ban books from a public library reeks of authoritarianism. Jamie wished that this book had been available to them as a twenty year-old.
- Haley Felt of Shelby said thank-you to the speakers. She pointed out that the book is a memoir. She said that by alienating this book you are alienating the people this book represents.
- Jeremy Gage of Weare Township spoke against the depiction of oral sex in the Gender Queer. He maintained that the book is porn and he wants it off the shelf. He observed that in the board meeting, he is the only one not represented.
- Chris VanAntwerp of Golden Township said he had spoken to the Golden Township board last June. He is sorry that the Golden Township residents don't have access to the Hart Library. He blames the Golden Township board and the Hart Library board. He says there is a breakdown of communication.
- Vaughn Thurston-Cox of Pentwater, pastor at Centenary United Methodist church in Pentwater, said that fear of a book is fear of another person's story. He said that book banning is erasure—trying to erase the community that the book represents. He said he had sat by a young queer girl's bedside after she tried to commit suicide. He reported that the people who are depicted are twice as likely to commit suicide if they are a member of a religious community.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Burillo to approve the minutes of July 14, 2025. Support by Klotz. Motion carried.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: No report.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Nothing other than the Director's printed materials.

Motion by Burillo to approve bills and payments for July 2025. Support by Cortes. Motion carried.

Motion by Metzler to accept financial reports for July 2025. Support by Sloan. Motion carried.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Written report.

CITY REPORT: Nothing to report.

TOWNSHIP REPORT: No report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

- Reconsideration Request Appeal: Sterk addressed the board and indicated the role of the board according to policy in this matter is to determine if the Collection Development Policy was followed. Discussion. Motion by Klotz to adopt the resolution to deny appeal of reconsideration request of Gender Queer. Support by Burillo. Roll call vote: Metzler-yes, Sloan-yes, Klotz-yes, Cortes-yes, Burillo-yes, Sterk-yes. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: September 8, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

Approved at meeting on: _____

Secretary

President