

From: Brian Horst, Former Gladstone City Manager

Subject: Financial Support for the Gladstone Library

To: Gladstone City Commissioners

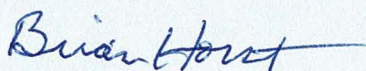
On October 21<sup>st</sup> last year I attended a Halloween Story Hour at the Gladstone Library having been invited there by the adoptive parents of my Great Granddaughter, who are from Marquette. We had fostered her (Jordyn) for about a year before adoption. I was surprised to see about thirty folks there including a family from Escanaba. It made me wonder how it was that our Library was drawing folks from the townships, and other cities (even as far away as Marquette) for the presentation.

Our Host was Lori Wells, the Library Director. I've known Lori since my time as City Manager, and I had attended the Library Advisory Board meetings (as does Eric Buckman) then. Lori is an articulate, intelligent leader who guides the library to provide a wide variety of specialized services to the Community. To name a few: Covid home test kits are available, provision of State and Federal forms for citizens, E-Books, Talking Books and books for the visually impaired, rental of fishing equipment for visitors, rental of a telescope for those who want a closer look at the Northern Lights, links to a wide variety of networks to obtain information and services including Secretary of State (SOS) data links. In short, just about every kind of Library service you can imagine and then some. The Library has been a Community/School Library for nearly 100 years!

I was surprised to learn that a few years after I left the position of City Manager, the City's contribution went from \$25,000 in 2009-10 to \$2,000 in 2011-12. Funding went back up to \$10,000 the following two years and then down to the current amount of \$6,100 for the past 10 years.

I've indicated that Lori is an excellent manager, but even excellent managers can't ignore cost increases due to inflation. Good services cost money! Lori has a keen focus on getting the most out of every dollar. I believe that support for the Library, Lori Wells and her staff is an investment in superior community services. The Townships support the Library financially to a limited degree, and I believe the City should increase support since the Library is located in the heart of the City and makes up the largest percentage of patrons (53% of current card holders).

Oh, and I eat my own cooking. We support the Library by buying new books and donating them at the rate of about 2 books a month. All in all that comes to between \$500 and \$600 a year. Please consider enhanced support for this unique and important community asset.



Brian Horst

Gladstone City Manager, March 1996 to March 2005