



2021
TOWN
ELECTION



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LIBRARY TRUSTEE

FAHAD ALDEN

INITIAL STATEMENT

Today I announce my campaign for library trustee. My experiences volunteering in the kids and adult sections of the library last year drove my decision to run for the position of Library Trustee. One memory that comes to my head vividly was putting kids' books away in the right section when I saw two kids playing puppets with each other. Seeing kids as young as 4 reading books about Chinese new year made me so proud to be part of the Bedford library, and I knew in that split second that I needed to step up to the plate and run for the kids because these scenes warmed my heart. I believe strongly that the library in many ways demonstrates the definition of growth. Every time a child went to the art and crafts activities, they were growing as a person and developing critical play skills. Work and study areas have been an indispensable resource to older kids and adults, used to power their ambitions and careers. The library provides so much fun and education to the people of Bedford but also resources like the basic idea of housing. Anyone can come in and use the bathroom. Anyone can come in and have the whole world of technology opened up to them within seconds. People without air conditioning or heating are encouraged to seek shelter in the library when the temperatures are extreme. Anyone can visit and see the Bedford flag, and fully realize what our town stands for.

As someone who spent many hours at the library studying and volunteering I understand the usefulness and importance that the library holds. I promise I will fight every day to ensure that the values of the library remain upheld. I also wanted to take this time to show my platform and plans for achievement during my term.

1. **Push for printing services to be allowed through pickup.** Many children can perform better with simple paper and pen. With many people lacking access to printers during the pandemic, access to printing materials has become a real problem that demands a forceful response from our leadership. As library trustee I would push for implementing a curbside pickup, which other libraries (including Billerica) have been doing successfully. This service would fit in with our existing pick-up system.
2. **Explore ways to reopen work areas and study rooms with a reservation-based system.** The working spaces throughout the library have been excellent resources for members of our community in years past, offering a quiet alternative to their usual home working environment. During the pandemic this hasn't been an option, so many people have expectedly had trouble working at home for a variety of reasons. To address the matter, I would work towards finding reopening options for these areas. Using workspaces at limited capacity and in adherence to existing health guidelines would be a safe way to give people more options. Giving people space to work on a semi-regular basis while also keeping them

safely apart from library staff would be a low-risk policy that benefits everyone involved. Reservations could be made through an online forum and I would explore mechanisms to ensure equal opportunity for all members in securing reservations. I will prioritize clear messaging on our safety and sanitation practices to maintain confidence in our system.

3. **Support existing Bedford Library Programs.** I would push for maintaining our existing programs in a virtual format. For example, Chinese new year programs and history lectures have been a great event for the town of Bedford in years past, educating and inspiring people of all ages. These are capable of being continued virtually, and will bring joy and engagement to the community when it's needed the most. I will strive to protect all programs of this nature because they are part of the fabric of the library, and this matter will be a priority under my leadership.

I also have a record of service to the Bedford library and community at large, and as Library Trustee I would apply these values to the duties of my position.

My service and accomplishments:

- I volunteered at the library for 15+ hours
- I have written a book called Teen's Guide to Level Up
- I currently serve as Founder and President of Bedford High School Book Club
- I'm an Intern and anchor at Bedford TV
- I'm a Member and Volunteer of the French Cultural Center
- I'm part of Peer Leadership at Bedford High School, a selected group of students which spearheads school community initiatives of all stripes.
- I am a member of Principal's Advisory, a student forum which engages with the Principal on student experiences and well-being.
- Contributor on "BHS Now," the broadcasted BHS news program.

QUESTIONS ~ LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

How do you foresee the Trustees might tap into the experience of the past year to enhance services and outreach to the community? Do you envision greater services to different segments of the population?

Working from home has shown that maintaining a clear and quiet workspace is a formidable task, and securing a change of scenery can be invaluable. Providing patrons with space to work in the library (while keeping them safely apart from staff) is a helpful and low-risk policy if done correctly. Reservations can be made through an online portal, with mechanisms that ensure equal opportunities for securing time slots. I will prioritize clear messaging on our safety and sanitation practices to maintain confidence in our system, and ensure that the registration process is visible and accessible.

As a community hub, the Library has no equal but there are features that could make it an even more welcoming place. What "dream big" ideas would you suggest, even if they are not achievable at the moment?

My biggest dream would be to roll out printing services, and make them available through pickup. We already have curbside pickup for book circulation; adding printed materials to this program would provide a useful service that existed pre-pandemic. This would be compatible with our existing pickup system. Access to printers has dipped during this

pandemic, and this difficulty obtaining printed materials is a problem that demands a forceful response from our leadership. Children learn better using paper and pen, and we should do our part to help them succeed.