



## City of Homer

[www.cityofhomer-ak.gov](http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov)

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# Memorandum

## Agenda Changes/Supplemental Packet

TO: LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD  
FROM: RENEE KRAUSE, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II  
DATE: SEPTEMBER 19, 2023  
SUBJECT: SUPPLEMENTAL PACKET

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### STAFF & COUNCIL REPORTS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. LIBRARY DIRECTORS REPORT  
Library Director's Report for August 2023

Memorandum LAB 23-013 Library Director's Report Supplemental  
Monthly Statistics 2023

### INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- C. New Mat-Su Citizens Library Committee to Review Dozens pf Challenged Books  
by Tim Rockey, Alaska Public Media, Anchorage, September 13, 2023



## City of Homer

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Homer Public Library

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### Memorandum LAB 23-013

TO: Library Advisory Board  
FROM: David Berry, Library Director  
DATE: September 19, 2023  
SUBJECT: Updates on Library Business

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There have been significant events since the Director's Report was written on August 31, so I figured I would provide updates.

- Bids for upgrading the western lot trail to ADA standards came in significantly higher than expected, and the funds allocated by council will not suffice. That part of the western lot project will be pushed into next spring, when Public Works will have to come back with a new ordinance.
- The book and plant sale on Sept. 8-9 was successful!
- A resolution to adopt the Capital Improvement Plan, including three library projects, was adopted at the city council meeting on Sept. 11. Council moved all three projects from the "tentative" section into the final document in the "midrange" section.
- The library hosted a candidate forum for borough assembly and mayoral candidates on Sept. 14 and another for Homer city council candidates on Sept. 18. Both events were organized in conjunction with KDLL, KBBI, the League of Women Voters and the *Peninsula Clarion*.
- The creation of a library department (and other departments) will be the topic of a council worksession on Sept. 25.
- I expect to be at a conference in Anchorage Oct. 3-6.

#### RECOMMENDATION

For information.

## Homer Public Library Statistical Summary for 2023

Date: 19-Sep-23

CIRCULATION	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Y.T.D.
TOTAL (*Included)	11,912	11,843	12,613	11,546	11,646	12,422	13,492	15,594	0	0	0	0	101,068
*Physical Print/Audio/Video	9,322	9,289	9,449	8,728	8,933	9,900	10,782	12,842					79,245
*Other Physical items (n. 2)	91	108	116	90	109	111	128	121					874
*Alaska Digital Library	2,443	2,408	2,984	2,655	2,507	2,327	2,408	2,465					20,197
*Flipster e-magazines	28	22	36	26	27	32	51	30					252
*Kanopy streaming video	28	16	28	47	70	52	123	136					500
INTERLIBRARY LOANS													
Incoming (Borrowed)	24	14	17	24	13	7	20	21					140
Outgoing (Lent)	18	6	22	14	26	11	20	23					140
BUILDING USE													
Gate Count	10,232	11,500	12,884	12,022	13,253	12,711	10,327	9,676					92605
Study Rooms (# of group sessions)	200	219	244	236	237	224	188	256					1804
Study Rooms (# of people)	336	361	434	426	397	371	283	441					3049
Meeting Room (# of group sessions)	40	28	36	25	16	34	20	18					217
Meeting Room (# of people)	282	205	238	229	162	383	220	161					1880
INTERNET USE													
TOTAL (*Included)	1,701	1,840	2,510	2,224	2,427	2,851	2,695	1,226	0	0	0	0	17,474
*Wireless Internet sessions	1,006	1,055	1,401	1,372	1,533	1,763	1,588						9718
*Hardwired Internet sessions	695	785	1,109	852	894	1,088	1,107	1,226					7756
Website visits (sessions)	4,720	3,966	5,143	4,332	5,041	5,442							28,644
PROGRAM ATTENDANCE (n. 1)													
TOTAL (*Included)	947	933	1,101	915	1,206	1,342	471	450	0	0	0	0	7365
*Programs for Age 0-5	670	597	725	662	910	854	161	234					4813
*Programs for Age 6-11	176	160	143	63	150	217	170	67					1146
*Programs for Age 12-18	14	26	72	44	34	69	57	36					352
*Programs for Age 19+	63	44	161	58	85	80	49	76					616
*Programs for All Ages	24	106	0	88	27	122	34	37					438
OUTREACH													
# Events	2	2	4	2	2	2	1	3					18
# People	12	8	14	17	18	11	3	4					87
NEW CARDS ISSUED													
City	41	33	27	26	28	38	31	32					256
Borough	30	32	25	26	17	30	30	32					222
Temporary	0	1	0	0	1	5	3	4					14
Reciprocal	0	0	0	0	4	3	2	4					13
VOLUNTEER HOURS													
# of people	73	67	55	65	39	58	57	60					474
# of hours	312	227	150	233	198	173	157	196					1646
MATERIALS ADDED													
Books	324	180	143	311	265	190	125	303					1841
Audio	7	7	23	11	19	8	6	7					88
Video	56	31	26	46	74	20	32	18					303
Serials	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0					2
Electronic Resources	31	61	32	52	16	0	13	0					205
MATERIALS REMOVED													
Books	523	216	326	95	359	412	88	98					2117
Audio	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	7					8
Video	0	0	3	15	0	78	33	23					152
Serials	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1					1
Electronic Resources	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					0
REVENUES DEPOSITED													
Fines/Fees/Copies	865.00	1037.00	0.00	1101.00	971.00	915.00	1020.00	1709.00					7,618.00
Building Fund (151-)													0.00
Library Gifts (803-)													0.00
Endowment													0.00
Grants													0.00
TOTALS	865.00	1,037.00	0.00	1,101.00	971.00	915.00	1,020.00	1,709.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	\$7,618.00

Data not available yet or incomplete

Note 1: Program attendance includes all programs sponsored by the library or the Friends of the Library. It does not include meetings of community groups. Programs are sorted by the age of the target audience, but totals include all attendees (i.e. parents as well as toddlers, etc.)

Note 2: Other physical items includes electronic devices, kits, toys, board games, sports equipment and videogames.

Note 3: Gate count for July may be low due to equipment failure.

# New Mat-Su citizens library committee to review dozens of challenged books

By Tim Rockey, Alaska Public Media - Anchorage -  
September 13, 2023



*Members of the Mat-Su citizens library advisory committee at a meeting on Aug. 10, 2023 (Screenshot of Radio Free Palmer YouTube)*

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District's **library citizens advisory committee** will have its second meeting Thursday night in Palmer. The committee was formed after outcry last spring over books displayed in school libraries and at a school book fair in the district.

The group is tasked with reading **56 books** that were challenged by members of the community and judging them against **Alaska statute**, which says it's a class C felony to distribute indecent material to minors. The district's lawyer, Saul Friedman, explained the statute and previous cases that questioned school library books to the 12-member committee at a meeting in August.

"That's your purpose to give advice to the board after considering those books in whole, their content, and the legal test that is set forward in the statute," Friedman said.

Friedman noted that states with similar statutes concerning distribution of indecent materials often have a special section related to librarians and school materials, while Alaska does not.

The district's previous **process for reconsidering** library books required people questioning books to meet with the librarian and principal of

the school. If that meeting did not resolve the issue, the district had a six-person review committee take up the concern. Associate Superintendent of Instruction Justin Ainsworth led the committee's first meeting and said that the volume of book challenges in the spring overwhelmed the previous process.

"Have there been books that have gotten to the library that shouldn't have been in the library? Absolutely, there are librarians that would agree with you that there needs to be an evaluation process," Ainsworth said.

Previously, the district kept books in circulation until a final decision was made, but this spring the 56 challenged books were pulled from shelves.

The Mat-Su school board hand-picked seven district representatives to serve on the new books committee. At the first meeting in August, members chose four books to discuss at Thursday's meeting; "It's Perfectly Normal" by Robbie Harris, "The Lovely Bones" by Alice Sebold, "Drama" by Raina Telgemeier, and "The Bluest Eye" by Toni Morrison, which is one of the most challenged books in the country.

Members of the library citizen's advisory committee will not have the final say on whether books are permanently removed from Mat-Su school libraries, but will give a recommendation to the school board, which will then make that determination. Ainsworth envisioned that the committee would recommend either retaining individual books, removing them, or restricting them to students 16 years or older.

Katie Clark is a librarian at Mat-Su Central school and won **School Librarian of the Year** in 2019. Clark is one of five district staff on the committee, and suggested that people who challenged the books provide their own justification to the committee.

"Knowing who had the concern would be helpful to know what was their concern, so that we can address it," Clark said.

Book challenges across the nation doubled from 2021 to 2022 according to the American Library Association, and have also increased in Alaska. The list of 56 books challenged in the Mat-Su feature five of the 13 most challenged books of 2022. In 2020, the Mat-Su school board came under scrutiny for removing a list of “controversial” books from the curriculum without public input. The board did not remove the Bible, which district staff at the time noted was the most controversial book taught in Mat-Su schools.

Kali Ponder, a member of the committee who has kids in the district, said the previous process wasn’t working.

“We have a community effort and that’s, there’s a very specific reason for that,” Ponder said at the council’s first meeting. “So we definitely don’t want to say just ‘Oh, we’ve got to take the librarians’ word for it,’ with all due respect, because — we’re here because that didn’t work.”

Ponder is a founding member of Alaska’s first chapter of Moms for Liberty, a parental rights advocacy group which was named an extremist group by a civil rights watchdog earlier this year.

The library citizen’s advisory committee will meet monthly. Ainsworth noted that the committee may not be able to review each book that has been challenged before the committee is set to expire next summer.