



December 15, 2022

**Re: South Central Regional Library**

Recently, the Town of Altona Council was approached by a delegation who requested that we stop funding the South Central Regional Library until the library agrees to remove certain content that they find objectionable.

The South Central Regional Library is a public library with five branches, governed by the seven municipal members who participate on the board of directors. We have been proud members of the SCRL since 1988. The board, which we participate in, sets policies to direct its staff in the operations of the libraries. One example of policy is the Collection Development Policy, which provides guidelines for developing the collection and a review process that allows patrons to challenge a book's suitability in the library.

We understand that three books were challenged recently under this policy – the same books that were used as examples by the delegation who presented to us. They were educational books such as "What Makes a Baby", "Sex is a Funny Word", and "It's Perfectly Normal". After the review was complete, all three of these books remain on the shelves of our library. We are confident that the South Central Regional Library Board took these challenges seriously. They engaged legal counsel, who gave the opinion that the materials in question are educational in nature, are legal and not pornographic, and do not violate the criminal code of Canada, as the challenge claimed.

South Central Regional Library's mission is to provide access to resources to meet the educational, cultural, informational, and leisure-time needs of citizens of all ages and backgrounds. The library strives to foster a life long interest in reading.

Public libraries provide free access to many essential services, such as educational resources, computer and internet access, and community. On any given day, our local library hosts families and seniors, local school classes and homeschool groups, book clubs, access to literacy education, lego clubs, author visits, and so many more opportunities for connection for people of all ages and backgrounds. Over the past few years, we've all learned the value and need for connecting with others.

The South Central Regional Library is an essential service in our community, and we support our library board and staff, their knowledge and expertise, and the decision they've made on this request. While we recognize that the library may provide materials that do not appeal to each and every patron, it is important that all legal reading materials remain available so that each patron is free to make their own choice. For these reasons, we do not support the delegation's request to cease funding the library.

Thank you,

Mayor Harv Schroeder