

Sponsored by: Matt Swanson, Joe Brazil,
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Resolution 23-04

A RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE ST.
CHARLES CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM,
AND MAKING CERTAIN RECOMMENDATIONS,
INCLUDING THE ADOPTION OF A NEUTRAL
POLITICAL POLICY ON ALL CULTURAL ISSUES

WHEREAS, the St. Charles County Council recognizes that, excluding the limited approval or disapproval process relating to the appointment of board members as outlined in Charter Section 2.503, it has no authority to control or regulate the library system, that authority being reserved by state statute to the library board; and

WHEREAS, recently it was brought to the Council's attention that actions that may constitute political activism have crept into our library system; and

WHEREAS, Jason Kuhl, the Chief Executive Officer ("CEO") of the St. Charles City County Library (the "Library"), has publicly reposted what could be considered as a divisive, inflammatory and politically charged post to his LinkedIn webpage; and

WHEREAS, we don't believe that what was described in the post is occurring in our libraries; and

WHEREAS, the post reads: "By targeting public libraries, Republicans and other far-right groups have not only launched an attack on the principles of free speech, diversity, inclusion, and access to knowledge, they've also taken direct aim at library workers themselves. Whether they're pushing for increasingly draconian

book bans on queer and trans authors and authors of color, violently protesting drag queen story hours, or directly threatening library workers, far-right activists are creating a hostile work environment for the nation’s librarians, administrators, and other workers...”; and

WHEREAS, we ask that the CEO remove the above repost from his LinkedIn webpage which is publicly connected with his current position and refrain from making such reposts in the future; and

WHEREAS, further, in the Library’s 2023 Budget, we see the Library system paying over \$10,000 a year in membership fees to the Urban Library Council, an organization headquartered in Washington, DC, which advocates for, and promotes a progressive, left political agenda; and

WHEREAS, we do not believe any of the above to be appropriate for the Library system, and recommend that the Library Board immediately rescind its subscription to the Urban Library Council; and

WHEREAS we ask the library board to stop spending tax dollars supporting any political agenda or ideology, either left or right; and

WHEREAS, the Library should continue to promote and provide a respectful, safe, inviting, and comfortable library experience for all in our community, without advancing or supporting any political agenda; and

WHEREAS, the Library should adhere to and enforce its current dress code; and

WHEREAS, given that the Library has previously missed the mark in its mission to serve the community in several ways, including the extended closures during the COVID-19 pandemic emergency, and the Library's failure to consider voluntarily rolling back its tax rate so as not to recoup the windfall occasioned by abnormally higher personal property taxes, the Library should take affirmative measures to increase access to the community, for example by extending the opening hours of the Library to include Sunday; and

WHEREAS, we suggest that the Board of Trustees instruct the CEO on remaining politically neutral and that the Library Board take disciplinary action if he fails to comply.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MISSOURI, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The St. Charles County Council hereby strongly recommends the adoption of a neutral political policy in the St. Charles City-County Library system.

DATE PASSED

CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL