

From: Ketchikan Pride <ketchikanpridealliance@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, April 4, 2023 1:49 PM

To: dellilahw@ktn-ak.us; laceys@ktn-ak.us

Cc: davidkiffer@ktn-ak.us; mitchs@city.ketchikan.ak.us

Subject: Request for Clarification: June LGBTQ+ Pride Programing - Ketchikan Public Library Attachments: LOT-7a1-2.pdf

Hello,

The Ketchikan Pride Alliance's mission is to provides education, support, and aid to the local LGBTQ+ community and their allies. As part of our mission we provide free educational training on LGBTQ+ topics and issues to local organizations and agencies with the goal of reducing conflict and improving the lives of Ketchikan residents. The Ketchikan Pride Alliance also hosts events throughout the year, open to everyone, with the goal of providing safe spaces for people to gather, socialize, connect, and feel comfortable expressing themselves.

We commend the City of Ketchikan and City Council in recognizing that Ketchikan is a diverse community that embraces people of all identities. We are grateful that the City is committed to supporting and protecting the rights of all of its residents, including its LGBTQ+ residents with the passage of the nondiscrimination ordinance on July 22, 2020 that included language protecting residents based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

The Ketchikan Public Library regularly holds children's story time events for children and accompanying adults that sometimes involve guest readers. In 2022, the Library scheduled a story time event with a drag queen as the guest reader to celebrate LGBTQ+ Pride Month during the month of June. Community members expressed their enthusiastic support for this event. The story time event was so well attended that the Library had to add two additional readings to accommodate all the visitors who came.

There was also vocal opposition to the event and an attempt to have it canceled. With the legal advice from City Attorney Mitch Seaver, the Ketchikan City Council rejected the request to cancel the event. According to Seaver, "Canceling the Library's Drag Queen Story Time event risks litigation, administrative enforcement or both being brought against the City for violation of civil rights on constitutional, statutory and ordinance grounds," (see attached memo). Additionally the Library's Advisory Board overwhelmingly supported the event. In 2022, a ballot measure was introduced to remove Borough funding for the Library over LGBTQ+ programming and books with LGBTQ+ themes. This measure ultimately failed.

In a meeting on 3/29/23 with the Ketchikan Public Library it was brought to our attention that the City Manager has verbally directed Ketchikan Public Library staff that;

1. Library programming, only for the month of June, must be submitted to the City Manager for review and approval.
2. Library staff cannot host a Story Hour with a drag queen as the guest, or any programming with a drag queen.

It is also our understanding that this request has only been asked of the Ketchikan Public Library and not applied to other City Departments. As understood this directive is concerning and we would like for clarification on this situation.

Would you be able to

1. Confirm if this request is an official directive of the City Manager.
2. Provide clarification if the City Manager has directed any other City Department to submit their programming for approval.
3. Explain the protocol for determining whether programming is appropriate for a City Department, and
4. Explain why programming ONLY for the month of June, celebrated as Pride Month for the LGBTQ+ community has been requested to be reviewed.

We would greatly appreciate a response at your earliest convenience.

Respectfully,
The Ketchikan Pride Alliance

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The Ketchikan Pride Alliance

Providing education, support, and aid to the Ketchikan and surrounding area lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community (LGBTQIA2S+) and their allies since 2019.

www.ketchikanpridealliance.com



We respectfully acknowledge that we work and reside on the traditional lands of the Tlingit people who have stewarded this land since time immemorial.