

Clyde-Savannah agrees to pull contested books

By STEVE BUCHIERE sbuchiere@fltimes.com Aug 17, 2023 Updated Aug 18, 2023



Figure 1 Pastor Jacob Marchitell speaks at the June 14 meeting of the Clyde-Savannah Central School District Board of Education.

CLYDE — In his battle with the Clyde-Savannah Central School District over books he said were inappropriate for a school library, Jacob Marchitell emerged victorious.

Last week, the Board of Education rejected, by a 5-3 vote, a measure supporting the Library Materials Review Committee's decision to retain books in the Junior/Senior High School Library that Marchitell said should be pulled from its shelves.

According to unapproved meeting minutes, board President Pamela Anstee, Second Vice President Nicholas Dapolito, and members John Ellwood, Nicole Malbone and Timothy VanDuyne voted no on the measure to retain the books. Veronica Dapolito, Debbie Large and John Sloan were in favor.

First Vice President Jennifer Sullivan was absent.

“When all is said and done, good will always win,” Marchitell said after the vote.

Marchitell is pastor of Christ Community Church on West Genesee Street in Clyde.

The books in question were “People Kill People,” “It Ends With Us,” “All Boys Aren’t Blue,” “Jesus Land: A Memoir,” and “Red Hood.”

Marchitell began going to school board meetings earlier this year, expressing concerns about books available in the school library. In an interview with the Finger Lakes Times, he called the books pornographic. The books he found range from “a man anal raping a young boy, to a girl describing how semen tastes,” and added that “there are almost two dozen other books that all provide the potential reader with explicit and descriptive scenarios that would be unfit to print in your newspaper, let alone be read by a child.”

Eventually, the books in question were sent off for evaluation to the Library Materials Review Committee, which recommended they remain in the library. Under board policy, residents have the right to appeal committee decisions.

Superintendent Mike Hayden, who defended the inclusion of the books in the library, said the Board of Education holds the power in such matters.

“The role of a school library is to provide a diverse and inclusive range of materials that foster intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and a safe space for exploration of various perspectives,” Hayden said Monday. “I understand that the school board’s decision to remove books from the Junior/Senior High School library collection may be unpopular to some. However, it’s important for us to respect the process and the ultimate decision of the board, who are elected officials.”

Clyde-Savannah is among a number of districts nationally and locally where citizens have objected to books they say are inappropriate for school libraries or, in some cases, the classroom.

District resident René Shimp, who defended the inclusion of some of the books Marchitell characterized as pornographic, is not shocked with the board’s vote to pull the books.

“Well, I knew if it came down to it, they were going to remove them,” she said. “Really, there are no words. The political pendulum will swing back and forth. People will always have opinions, and it just depends on which people are in the seats of power. It was an opportune time for Jacob, and I think he knew that. I am sure it won’t end here for either sides of the pendulum.”

Source: https://www.fltimes.com/news/clyde-savannah-agrees-to-pull-contested-books/article_19a7f224-3ba7-11ee-babf-7366c6e56cd1.html