

**Library Advisory Committee  
Special Meeting  
Thursday, January 8, 2026 @ 2:15 PM  
Appeal of the Request for Reconsideration of the Book “Rick” by Alex Gino  
Bay County Public Library  
Meeting Room**

Members in Attendance:

Gerry Wilson: Bay County Commissioner Raffield, District 1  
Kendall Middlemas Henley: Bay County Commission, District 2  
Jean Campbell: Bay County Commissioner Crosby, District 3  
Crystal Grey-Hewett: Bay County Commissioner Moore, District 4  
Jeff DiBenedictis: Bay County Commissioner Pease, District 5  
Fran Davis: Liberty County Commission

Members Absent:

Mary Gibson: Gulf County Commission

Library Staff in Attendance:

Robin Shader: Library Director  
Ashley Burlon: Community Relations & Marketing Coordinator  
Logan Clampitt: Administrative and Financial Manager  
Tania Watts: Head of Youth Services  
Ann Howard: Manager, Panama City Beach Library  
Khelsea Rantanen: Head of Adult Services  
Kayla Yanez: Children’s Librarian

- I. Call to Order: Chair Jeff DiBenedictis called the meeting to order at 2:15 pm. A quorum was present.
- II. Chairman Introduction & Hearing Purpose: Jeff explained that the initial review process had been completed. After the discussion today the LAC can decide to: (1) remove the book; (2) relocate the book; (3) keep the book in its current location; or (4) another plan.
- III. Applicant Comments: Megan Alley requested that the book be moved to the young adults section. She read aloud portions of the text she felt were sexually explicit or otherwise justified why children on a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading level should not have access to this book. She questioned whether librarians would recommend this book to a child that age if they had questions about sexuality.
- IV. Library Director Comments: Robin Shader spoke in favor of retaining the book in its current location. She explained that public libraries serve the entire community, and not all books will please every reader. Parents are responsible to guide their own children’s reading, but not the reading choices of other people’s children. Robin mentioned that the review committee members all agreed that the book follows policy guidelines and is shelved in the correct location. The book received many positive reviews and met library

criteria for purchase. Robin added that the young adult section would not be an appropriate location due to the reading level of the book.

- V. Public Comment: Ann Howard, Manager of the Panama City Beach Library, addressed a comment by Ms. Alley about how a librarian would guide a child who had questions about their sexuality. Ann stated that a librarian would direct children to their parents if they had such questions.
- VI. Applicant Closing Comments: Ms. Alley pointed out that the book is one of the top 5 most banned books, as are other books by the author. She stated she has submitted reconsideration requests for other books by the author, and will continue to request reviews in order to protect her child.
- VII. Library Director Closing Comments: Robin said she is aware the book has been banned and not everyone supports it but that everyone deserves to have their culture and experiences represented in books. The book has been an appropriate choice for some families.
- VIII. LAC Member Discussion: The chairman opened discussion at 2:40 pm. Kendall stated that we should consider we have professional librarians making collection decisions, and also that it is not one parent's job to protect other parents' children. Jeff feels the content and reading level do not align. Parents have the responsibility to provide guidance but he is concerned about what happens when parents are not present. Jean states that the quotes taken out of context do not provide an adequate picture of the story, which was about a child dealing with a bully and not just a focus on sexuality. Crystal agreed that the lesson to be learned in the story is more than just focusing on sexuality. Fran believes it is appropriate for its age group. Gerry feels the book meets policy guidelines. Crystal added that kids that age act and talk like how the book describes them. The open discussion was closed at 2:51 pm.
- IX. LAC Vote: **Kendall Middlemas Henley moved to retain the book in the Youth Services Department. Crystal Grey-Hewett seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-1.** Fran Davis abstained from the vote since she participated in the original reconsideration process.

Gerry Wilson – Yay  
Kendall Middlemas Henley – Yay  
Jean Campbell – Yay

Crystal Grey-Hewett - Yay  
Jeff DiBenedictis – Nay  
Fran Davis - Abstained

- X. Adjournment: 2:52 pm