

Annual Report - 2020

Friends of the Pamlico County Public Library January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020

The Year 2020 was not one that will be easily forgotten. Every day offered a challenge and required innovative ways to address old and new issues. Daily operation of the library was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and shared by the “Friends”. The head Librarian, Katherine (‘Kat’) Clowers, continued to function as the Pamlico County Librarian and the acting Director of the CPRL system located in New Bern. Despite these challenges, our library thrived and continued to serve the Pamlico County community. We are proud of Kat and her staff for their dedication, foresight and forbearance.

The Friends experienced extraordinary personnel turnover during the Spring. In December 2019 Roberta Jones turned over the leadership role to Kathy Drap a dedicated and longtime active supporter. The new FOL president was assisted by Bonnie Cap (Vice President), Eileen Bell (Secretary), Vicki Courtney (Assistant Secretary), and Carolyn and Rich Bartz (Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer). Barry Monk joined us as a new member of the Board of Directors along with previous directors Dr. Joshua Rose, Lynn Lewis, and Dawn Fisher-Baldwin. Unfortunately, family and personal considerations caused Ms. Drap and Ms. Bell to relinquish their position in the early Spring. Bonnie Cap stepped up as Acting President and Vicki Courtney took on a more involved role as Secretary. In December 2020, Peggy Vick was elected Vice President after serving as the Grant Writing Chair for most of the year.

Everyday operation of the library was affected by the pandemic and dramatically influenced day-to-day performance and operation of FOL support as well. The Friends held its one and only book sale in February and it was well supported by the community as usual. Later that month the first known case of the corona virus was identified on the west coast and the rest of the year involved lock-downs, social distancing, masking and limited personal/business interaction everywhere. Traditionally, the Friends rely on membership fees, donations, local book sales, internet book sales, and participation in activities such as Croaker Fest and the Old Front Porch Festival to sustain library support operations and plan for future programs. Obviously, this year most activities were cancelled or severely curtailed. During the general lock-down, the community purged their households of reading material and generously donated their treasures to the library and we are grateful.

The Friends entered a “New Chapter” this year as we pursued the establishment of the new library at the old “Hardee’s” location. The old roof was repaired and replaced in January, locks were rekeyed, barriers installed, site survey completed, and grounds maintained throughout the year. To protect the investment, vacant building insurance was obtained for “Hardee’s” as we continued renovations, maintenance, and planning for the new structure. As an additional safeguard, we asked the Sheriff’s office to keep an eye on the property as we continued to work toward our goal. It should be noted that the new library is owned by the Friends, but it will be given to Pamlico County once it becomes fully operational. The Friends requested and received Pamlico County property tax exemption because of our 501(c)(3) charitable non-profit status.

Walter Vick, a retired and renowned architect, spearheaded the architectural design and engineering work associated with the new library as an unpaid volunteer. His cardboard model and initial artist's rendering are displayed at the library to promote community awareness and aid in visualizing the new structure. Mr. Vick's current efforts concern the refinement of site drawings, HVAC evaluation, and the identification of permanent signage for the new facility.

The Friends filed IRS Form 990-N (Long Form) for the first time due to our gross receipts and total assets. Additionally, we have filed for a reimbursement of sales tax (\$2,080) associated with the purchase of new book cases (\$37,652) in 2019; this is a benefit of our tax-exempt status. The book case purchase was made possible through a donation of \$35,000 from James W. Lewis and family "in memory of" Blanche Ballance Lewis. Another altruistic donation of \$20,000 was given anonymously by a FOL member as well as a charitable donation from Rod and Sue Lee for \$10,000. Our multiyear savings programs, dedicated membership support (almost 200), and generous donations allowed us to open Federal Money Market funds through Vanguard; they support general operations of the library and working capital for construction of the new library. The Friends reinstated our solicitation license with North Carolina, reestablished the Non-profit Postal rate agreement with the USPS, positioned ourselves for robust grant writing, and then won a \$7,500 Howard F. Bate grant. Numerous grants were submitted and more are planned. We've asked NC House and Senate representatives to consider providing additional funding for our new library.

The Friends initially planned on a five-year project to complete the new library, but the pandemic will force timeline adjustments. The arrival of corona virus vaccines is welcome and will undoubtedly save lives, reestablish a healthy environment and raise many spirits. Meanwhile, the Friends will continue next year to pursue the "Next Chapter" by focusing on:

- As-built building drawings and artistic rendering of final building design
- Developing HVAC requirements and installation
- Completing design development and developing a cost estimate
- Preparing construction documents
- Pursuing additional governmental financial support
- Evaluating the value and timing of professional fundraiser

\$51,565 remains of the initial \$250,000 NC State grant money and is dedicated to those items above. Please note that the Friends have \$92,717 in total deposits and a mobile infrastructure (bookcases, automated handicap doors, Conex storage facility) worth an estimated \$55,000. The Friends' Balance Sheet is available on the web site as an adjunct to the Annual Report.

The Friends have made great strides in the past year toward realizing the New Library goal and want to sincerely thank our membership and many supporters. We still have a lot to do, but the community's urgent needs motivate our efforts, and we feel the generosity and commitment of Pamlico County residents and businesses are unique and will definitely play a significant role in achieving the dream.

Bonnie Cap
President
Friends of the Pamlico County Public Library