



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

FRIENDS OF THE PAMLICO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023

This past year was a milestone year for the Friends. Faced with a Go-Big or Go-Home funding situation, the community and the Friends met the challenge, and the new library is just months away from being a reality and a Pamlico County landmark.

The Friends initially planned a five-year project to complete the new library. We contracted with the Walker Group Architecture in November 2022. We established a Project Oversight Committee to manage the new library initiative. The POC represents the Librarian, Craven County Regional Library and FOL and will shepherd the project to its completion. The first professional cost estimate in April 2023 showed that the project cost of \$4M exceeded what we could afford. After POC analysis and adjustments, the cost estimate for the revised plans was more reasonable. The new design did not change the functionality or square footage of the initial concept, but it did impact the timeline. We factored out nine alternative features that will be bid separately so that we could proceed to a basic construction contract award. We will prioritize that list for execution when we have sufficient funds. The new schedule reflects ground-breaking sometime in the spring of 2024 with a finished building a year later in 2025. In the meantime, the Friends continue in 2024 to pursue the "Next Chapter" by focusing on additional financial support, as well as preparing for the relocation and set up of the new library/community center.

The year was dedicated to reaching our funding goals and began with a major fundraiser event in June at the Stallings House in Oriental which was very successful. We were grateful to Lisa Stallings Durham for waiving the rental fee at the Stallings House, Jim Kellenberger for the purchase and preparation of the evening meal, Kee Fodrey for the donated wine, and Hoff-N-Finch for musical entertainment. The planning, staffing and execution was all thanks to Izzy Keppner, Peggy Vick, Bonnie Capp, Mary Hiatt and dozens of faithful FOL volunteers. And last but certainly not least, we thank the many folks who generously donated to our cause.

The Stallings House fundraiser was followed by an informative book launch event featuring two of our member-authors, Deb Aronson and Mary Scott. It was coupled with a raffle at the Oriental Woman's Club led by Mary Hiatt. In July, Mary organized the combined book and yard sale at the Hardee's building. This was another success and helped reduce the stockage of donated books in the facility. Later, Mary organized and directed a volunteer workforce to relocate books from Hardee's to the library conex. Fundraising continued through the remainder of the year with FOL participation at the Oriental Rotary Classic Car Show, the annual OFPMF with perennial food donations from Yawls, focused support from Jeanne Robertson's Witches Crawl event, another book sale at the conex, and lastly, donations from the local artisans who had Christmas displays at the library.

The intense pace of fundraising remained paramount throughout the year. It required planning, attention to detail, and constant involvement by the leadership. Peggy Vick, the Grant Writing Chairperson, guided us through a score of grant proposals in the Capital Campaign effort. She and Sheila Cantine championed the research and composition, and the results were dramatic: Bate Foundation awarded \$20,000; Perry-Griffin Foundation gave us \$5,000; and Cannon Foundation blessed us with \$150,000 at the end of the year.

The Friends leadership stayed constant throughout this period. Bonnie Cap, continued as the FOL President; Mary Hiatt Vice President; Jessie Aldridge Secretary; and Rich and Carolyn Bartz Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer respectively, and there were no changes to the four Trustees: Dr. Joshua Rose, Dr. Sue Lee, Sheila Cantine and Jim Kellenberger. Jessie has been secretary for over a year and will now be assisted by Eileen Bell who was secretary several years ago. Unfortunately, Kathy Baradyn, our Membership Chair, moved on to another challenging endeavor. FOL will miss her enthusiasm and appreciates her many contributions. Meanwhile, the temporary Pamlico County Branch Librarian, Shannon Callen, has departed and turned over the reins to Sidney Phibbons who is a native of Pamlico County and speaks the language!

Meanwhile, we recognized academic excellence and the financial need of three HS seniors at the May awards ceremony at the high school: William Pritchard, Caleb Toler, and Harrison Bank. Each winner was awarded a \$1,000 Marybelle R. Hollowell scholarship. Additionally, corporate sponsorship grew with a dozen new organizations donating to the building fund.

The Internet Book Sale (IBS) team continued to scan and process donated books on a weekly basis. This task is shared by many, but the stalwarts are Debbie Favinger, Carolyn Stark and Evie Henderson while Carolyn Bartz manages the sale of select books on Amazon. The IBS program began in 2012 and represents over 30% of our annual operating revenue and will become even more important as we return to a normal operating tempo.

The Friends continued to highlight the new library with an information campaign. Izzy Keppner prepared an article providing the history and purpose of the new library/community center. The article was posted on TownDock.net and basically described where project funding originated and how it was spent which answered many of the community's questions.



Our multiyear savings programs, dedicated membership support, and generous donations allowed us to increase our position in Vanguard's Federal Money Market funds to provide the working capital for construction of the new library. The funds in the local First Citizens bank account supports general operations of the library. At the end of the calendar year, the Friends had over \$45,000 in the operating fund and \$495,000 in the building fund as well as \$1,572,000 in NC State grant funds. The Friends reinstated our solicitation license with North Carolina which positioned us for robust grant writing and fundraising during the Capital Campaign. The Friends filed IRS Form 990-N (Long Form) due to our gross receipt and total asset profile. The Friends' overall Budget and Balance Sheet is available on the web site as an adjunct to the Annual Report.

The Friends made significant strides in the past year toward realizing the New Library/Community Center goal and sincerely thank our membership and many supporters. We still have much to do, but the year's achievements motivate us. We could not be where we are without the willing and continuous financial and physical support of our membership and the community at large.