

I would like to express our apologies to our library patrons for the closing of the library during the unplanned replacement of our boiler, especially during the severe cold weather events when many people look to the library as a warm retreat. The boiler is fixed and we have received a check from the boiler insurance company.

I know you would prefer that I review our extensive, balanced budget line item by line item, but I choose to spend my time at the mic to highlight our volunteers. This past year, we recorded over **1,600 hours of volunteer time in the library** by the Friends of the Eastern Shore Public Library. This does not include volunteer time at the other three libraries. They help staff with preparing books for circulation, processing donations, holding book sales, ensuring books are shelved properly and many other tasks. The Friends help keep personnel expenses low by performing routine tasks, and estimated \$20,000. Much of what we do requires significant expertise and training, but what tasks we can delegate to volunteers, we do. The Friends groups at Accomac, Nassawadox, and Cape Charles and the volunteers at Chincoteague supplement our budget with donations they raise through memberships, book donations, fundraisers, and contributions. If you are not a Friends member, I ask you to join.

These hours I cited also do not include volunteer hours spent by my Trustees and the Library Foundation Directors and volunteers. Over 200 people have volunteered during the capital campaign to date. During this capital campaign, volunteer time has been most demanding and financially beneficial, already saving taxpayers over a million dollars by what they have accomplished. I have worked with numerous boards in my career and none can compare to the dedication and hours spent by my Trustees and Foundation volunteers. **They are truly dedicated.**

I applaud you, Supervisors, because you appointed my Trustees. **You chose wisely.** They took on **a lot of responsibility** when they responded to your request to volunteer, particularly during a capital campaign. I do not need to tell you how public service can be rewarding, but also exposes you by being in the public view. They have made sacrifices in many ways to live up to their appointed duties.

You selected a group that works cohesively to fulfill your charge to:

- support the Regional Library Agreement,
- meet the agreements with Chincoteague and Cape Charles libraries,
- provide quality customer service for county residents,
- ensure the safety of our visitors,
- work within a balanced budget and seek diverse sources of income,
- help the county become more resilient by improving the quality of life and education,
- help create a high-performing workforce with services that improve the skills needed in today's workplace,
- maintain the county's investment in our facilities and work to invest in a more efficient and usable community space with the planned location in Parksley.

My Board loves working together to meet the challenges of our beloved library system, so much so that they created another committee: **A Budget Committee**. The Trustees on this Committee, namely Barbara Coady and Tim Valentine, work with me to ensure I present a comprehensive, understandable budget to my board, which they approved and which we convey to you to support.

Thank you for your consideration and for working with your appointed library board of trustees.