Dear Friends,

We need your email so that subsequent newsletters and communications can be sent by email. Please email us at willimanticlibfriends@gmail.com.

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We have been working on the annual goals set out at our First Membership Meeting in November.

**Membership**

We now have 48 members of the Friends and have raised over $900 through our membership drive. $200 in donations were made to the Book Fund and the library will receive a check for that amount. $170 has been donated for the Program Fund and we encourage anyone who has an idea for a program, or who would like to host a program, to contact one of the board members. By the end of February a mailing of 500 letters to Willimantic residents and businesses will be sent out to continue our membership drive. We are enclosing your membership card in case you did not receive one yet.

**Reception for Librarian**

In December, we hosted a reception for our new director, Dan Paquette, which was attended by about 75 people. Free books were given to those who became members of the Friends and a book raffle was held. At that reception, Tom Devivo announced that David Foster would be giving the library a check for $10,000 to help make up for the money cut from the budget. That check has been received

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**Becoming a Tax-exempt non-profit organization.**

One of the annual goals was to register as a non-profit corporation in the state, file papers to get permission to raise funds, and to become a tax-exempt organization through filing federal forms. We have just received our 501(c)3 federal tax exempt status! Hurrah!

**Advocacy- How You Can Help**

1. Write a card or email to Jim Rivers, Town Manager urging him to recommend increased funding for the library.
2. Attend a Town Council meeting and speak during the Public Comment Period to request increased funding for the library.

We need your help with one other annual goal. We agreed that it is important for The Friends to advocate for increased funding for the library in the 2020-21 town budget. Our book budget has been flat at $30,000 a year for the last 10 years after being cut from $50,000. $30,000 is less than $1.50 per resident per year for the library to purchase books and materials. Last year, the town council authorized an additional $11,000 for books but cut that increase after the budget was voted down twice.
### Book Storage and Sales

Stock N Lock Self Storage in South Windham has provided us with a free storage unit so that we can store books needed to hold a book sale twice a year. Contact us if you have books ready to donate.

### Advocacy, cont’d.

The library had a Children’s Librarian up until 2 years ago. In November, $26,000 was cut from the personnel line after the town budget was voted down a 2nd time. In addition, staff received well-deserved, overdue, raises last year. As a result, there is no longer funding for a Children’s Librarian. We are asking the library’s budget be raised to fund that position.

Hearing from residents of Windham is the way Jim Rivers and the Town Council learn of priorities of town residents and voters. You can let Jim Rivers and the Town Council know that funding for the library is a priority for you if you send a card, letter, or email to Jim Rivers. We are in the process of collecting signatures of Windham residents on petitions to request this increase in funding for the library. So far, we have over 50 signatures but hearing in person from individual residents is even more impactful. Please consider writing to Jim Rivers this week.

Dan Paquette will be presenting his proposed budget to the Town Council soon. It would be helpful for Jim Rivers to hear from you before that presentation and before Jim Rivers presents his suggested budget. There will be budget meetings held during the next 8 weeks. If you can attend any of these meetings and speak during the public comment period to voice your request that the funding for the library be increased, please do so.

**Jim Rivers, Town Manager**  
Windham Town Hall  
979 Main Street  
Willimantic, Ct. 06226  
townmanager@windhamct.com

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#### Stay Informed

1. **Visit us on Facebook**  

2. **Visit our page on the library website.**  
   [https://www.willimanticlibrary.org/about-library/friends.shtml](https://www.willimanticlibrary.org/about-library/friends.shtml)  
   If you know someone who wants to become a Friend of the Library, our membership form can be found on this page. In addition, payment of membership fees and donations can be made using a debit or credit card or Paypal from this page.

3. **Visit the library on Facebook**  
   [https://www.facebook.com/willimanticpubliclibrary/](https://www.facebook.com/willimanticpubliclibrary/)

4. **Visit the library website**  
   [https://www.willimanticlibrary.org/index.shtml](https://www.willimanticlibrary.org/index.shtml)  
   See the list of new books, search the catalogue, getEbooks, and find upcoming events.

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