

11 May 2020

To: Selectmen and Budget Committee Members

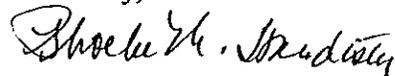
I am writing to voice my support of funding for the two librarian positions. I suggest that you reconsider your intent to eliminate one position in order to balance the town budget. Recognizing the difficult times in which we live, I continue to believe there are other areas where savings can be made in the town budget which will not be as detrimental to our citizens.

In support of the library and our librarians, I offer the following arguments:

- The library serves, and has for over 100 years, all citizens of New Gloucester equally; to those who are home-bound the librarians will deliver books, movies, and other printed materials. This is especially important during times of hardship or ill health.
- The library provides programs for all ages throughout the year. It is a meeting place for book groups and town committees.
- Patrons have access to a large collection of materials, and the library provides computer access for those without the technology in their own homes.
- We have two fine employees of differing skills who have dedicated years of their lives to providing assistance to town citizens. Please don't overlook the value of such ability and dedication.
- One person cannot adequately maintain the collection nor provide needed services.
- Safety and well-being of the librarians must be considered, and it is imperative that two qualified personnel be available for the majority of open hours.

It may well be necessary to reduce open hours for the next year or two, and cut back on hours that the librarians work – perhaps to 36 hours for each employee. But you must support the institution in good faith and spirit, as has been done – with pride – for a very long time.

Sincerely,



Phoebe M. Hardesty

Former library trustee, current member of
Friends of New Gloucester Public Library

Sharlene Myers

From: Town Manager
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 6:42 PM
To: Cecilia Keddy
Cc: Sharlene Myers
Subject: Re: Letter addressing proposed library budget

Thank you Cecilia!

From: Cecilia Keddy <ckeddy@sad15.org>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 3:42:54 PM
To: Town Manager
Cc: Sharlene Myers; prbragdon@gmail.com
Subject: Letter addressing proposed library budget

Good afternoon,

I have attached a letter in which I have put deep thought into, as a way to share my views with all involved parties on the most recent library budget proposal.

I appreciate all considerations you can make in acknowledging New Gloucester citizens needs, during this stressful and unprecedented time.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to speaking up at the public budget committee hearing tomorrow evening.

Best Regards,
Cecilia Keddy

Assistant Librarian (AL) Duties

She is responsible for **Interlibrary Loans (ILLs)**. Nearly daily requests are made for items that NGPL does not have in its collection. These must be requested firstly through Portland Public Library; if not available at PPL, then statewide through MaineCat; if not available in state, then worldwide through WorldShare. These all take different pathways. Once the item is received it needs a brief cataloging, needs to be kept track of in the ILL database, then the patron is contacted to pick up the item. After return the item is sent back to the loaning library. WorldShare items come through the US mail, PPL and Maine items through our van courier service. The AL also loans books we have to other libraries requesting them. ILLs take several hours a week to keep up to date, to track items that are in the queue. Some patrons give the AL lists of items they want and those are used to keep the patron's requests flowing.

The AL plans and hosts the yearly **Pet Show** which has been a part of NGPL's summer programs for over 14 years. Pet owners (some children) sign up to show their pet. The AL finds an entertainer to follow the showing of pets. We have had dog agility groups, search and rescue dogs, law enforcement dogs and their handlers and others as entertainers, usually at no or a very small fee. The AL puts together small packages which include a certificate for being a part of the Pet Show along with small gifts like pet food, pet toys, pet themed pencils and bookmarks and the like for each Pet and Pet owner who take part.

The AL provides **Readers' Advisory** on an ongoing basis. A patron might want a book or a series set in a certain era, in a particular genre, a mystery with little violence (A Cozy mystery), with a certain type of protagonist, etc. The AL is familiar with the collection and with authors and websites to use to help patrons find what they want. The AL also knows what books certain patrons like and will often hold aside a book for someone just knowing he or she would enjoy it.

The AL **catalogs** new items to the collection and proofs the cataloging the Library Director does. New items come in all the time and they need to be properly cataloged for shelving and for purposes of locating in our card catalog. The AL is also responsible for readying the items for shelving which means a due date sticker, markings and coverings placed on hardcover books.

The AL is also called upon to help patrons with **computer questions** from how do you turn this thing on to how do I find the forms I need to do my taxes, to why can't I make this page print out. Patrons ask with help with a multitude of tasks from signing up for a deer permit to enlarging a picture so that it will be the right size for their project.

The AL helps the library director with ongoing **weeding** of items in order to clear room for new items. The AL also helps greatly with a once yearly inventory of the collection.

The AL is responsible for facilitating the **First Thursday Book Club**, a book group that has been in existence since 2002. A schedule is made up each year so that a different member chooses the book each month, then the AL procures from other libraries enough copies of the book for each member. At the meeting the AL hands out discussion questions particular to the book being discussed and bios of the author. There is a poetry session at the beginning of the meeting, snacks are enjoyed, and socializing

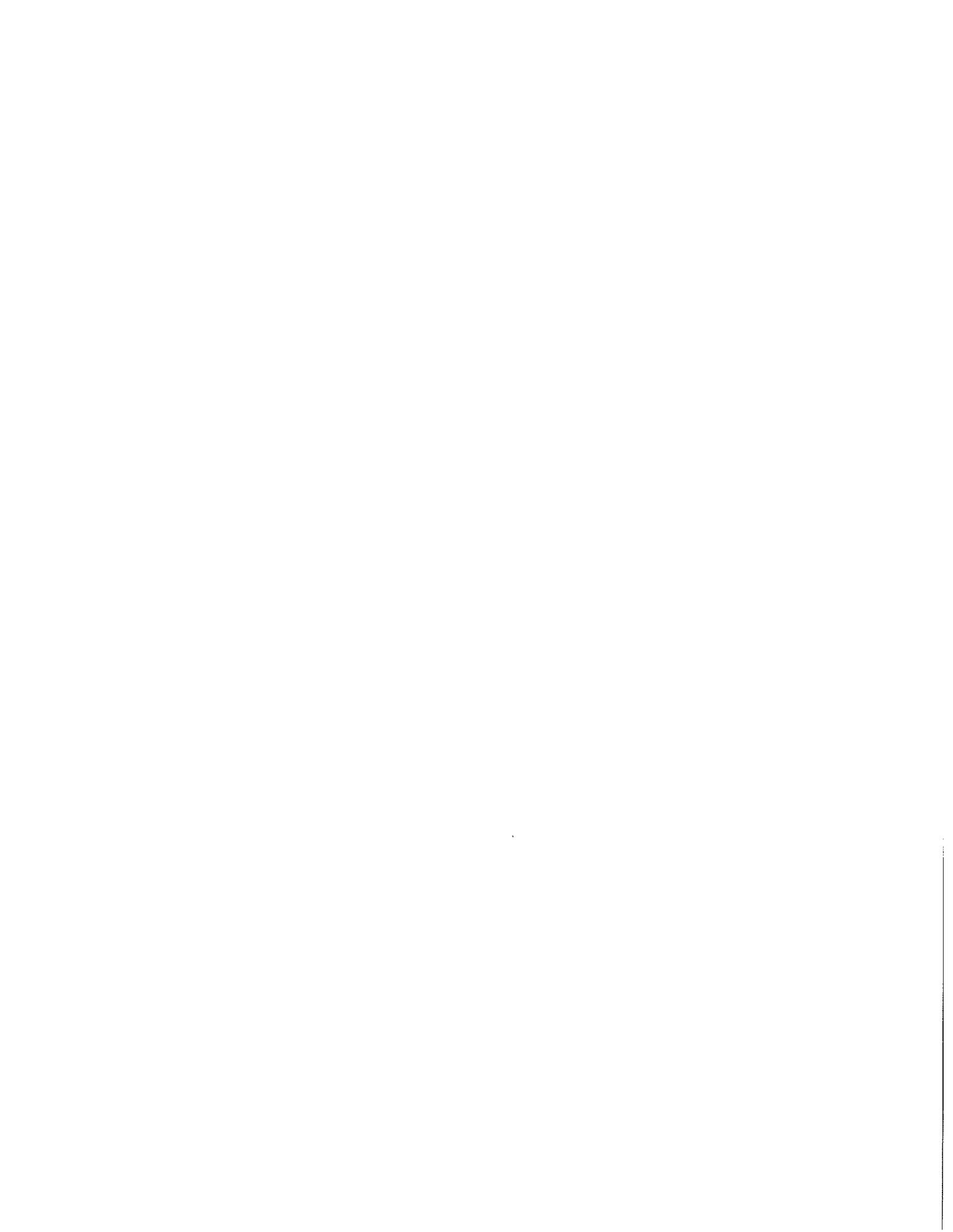
is a big part of this group. Each member rates the book and the AL makes certain that each member has the chance to speak about his or her experience of reading the chosen book. There is also a second adult book group called The Ladies of the Evening which the AL obtains books for.

The AL takes care of transactions at the **Circulation Desk**. These include items being checked in and out, renewals of items, reserves for items within our collection, requests for ILLs, taking in fines, taking fees for lost items, signing up new patrons, making copies, placing outgoing Faxes, giving out passes supplied by the Friends of the Library (Maine Wildlife Park and several others) and the loaning out of canoes and kayaks, and pickleball equipment. Also patrons will often ask us to find the next title in a series they are reading to see if we own it or can get it for them. Serving the patrons in this way is number one for librarians everywhere.

How does one quantify the value of a librarian finding just the right book, author, topic or genre to tempt a reluctant reader and turn him into a lifelong learner and lover of the written word? What is the dollar value of a new parent attending a Storytime where not only their child but they themselves can find a new local social group dealing with the same issues as they? What value is there to the comfort of the littlest visitors knowing they can wriggle on their bellies underneath the heavy batwing doors near the circulation desk and be welcomed to visit Miss Sue and Miss Carla in their work areas? How does one tabulate the social value of visiting a library where, much like Norm entering Cheers, everybody knows your name and often your library card number? What merit is there to a patron being asked; How is your Mom doing? How are you faring since your surgery? How was your trip? Have you got some new pictures of the grandchildren? How are you today? How does one attach a dollar value to friends, familiarity, comfort, acceptance and welcome? All of this at no cost to anyone who enters. I don't know the answer to these questions but I believe that, though one cannot neatly tabulate their worth in a column, they are invaluable. I hope that the Budget Committee and Selectboard will take into consideration what I have said.

Lastly, I have calculated the cost for the position of the Assistant Librarian, both benefits and wages. Each one of the 5800 citizens of New Gloucester would pay \$8.12 per year to cover this position.

Carla McAllister



Sharlene Myers

From: Town Manager
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 7:04 PM
To: Sharlene Myers
Subject: Fw: Letter addressing proposed library budget
Attachments: 2nd letter of support NGPL.pdf; ATT00001.htm

From: Cecilia Keddy <ckeddy@sad15.org>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 3:42:54 PM
To: Town Manager
Cc: Sharlene Myers; prbragdon@gmail.com
Subject: Letter addressing proposed library budget

Good afternoon,
I have attached a letter in which I have put deep thought into, as a way to share my views with all involved parties on the most recent library budget proposal.
I appreciate all considerations you can make in acknowledging New Gloucester citizens needs, during this stressful and unprecedented time.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to speaking up at the public budget committee hearing tomorrow evening.

Best Regards,
Cecilia Keddy

Dear Town manager and Budget committee-

I am deeply concerned about the committee's newest decision to revert to a budget similar to that proposed by the selectmen. My concern pertains essentially to the New Gloucester Public Library. The great majority of all services, resources and programs offered through the library are done in conjunction from the teamwork of the two librarians. The essence of the public space and services the library provides has become engraved in the town's culture, and a commodity relied on by most townspeople.

The action of eliminating the assistant librarian position places many characteristics of the library at stake. The work required to uphold the library, is that of at least two employees. Even now, with two employees, volunteers are called on to supplement assistance measures. The assistant library position is essential in many regards, and I stress that the library will not be the same if this position is cut. It is a professional position in which cannot be replaced or fulfilled by unpaid citizens.

This town needs the services of the library! The relationships patrons have with each of our librarians are incomparable to any other. Some patrons have a relationship with the library as a whole, and embody every single aspect of such. Reducing the staff with consequently reduce so much of which the library offers. The impact the library has on the town has clearly been underestimated, and it is now that the immensely important services in which it and its employees provide need to be recognized.

The stress put on a singular employee will prove to be unsafe in many regards. The library is an advanced establishment that requires lots of duties to be performed by its employees, it would be putting the town and the library at an extreme disadvantage to have but one employee.

For the reasons expressed in this letter, among many more, I respectfully ask you to please reconsider your decision, and make the citizens of New Gloucester your priority in selecting which cuts are made.

Sincerely,

Cecilia Keddy (17)

New Gloucester Library Youth Trustee and Volunteer of Five Years

May 11, 2020

Dear members of the Budget Committee,

Thank you all for your hard work in putting together this year's budget. It is not an enviable task.

I know you have already heard from many citizens, including me, about the importance of the library to our community. The proposed budget for the Library will seriously undercut the role that the library will be able to play.

When the library is allowed to reopen it will remain a place where internet access is available for anyone who doesn't have it or who can no longer afford it. It will continue to serve as a community center, open to everyone. But here is what will be lost by the proposed elimination of the assistant librarian's position:

- Loss of programs
- Decreased tech support for computer and printer users
- Decreased safety for the librarian, who will more frequently be alone in the library.
- Loss of predictable hours, since the library will need to close whenever the librarian is out sick, at meetings, or on vacation. Please note that volunteers will not be able to fill the gap.

I understand that these are difficult times and that there is serious pressure on the budget. Please consider an alternative approach that will keep both the librarian and the assistant librarian on staff, with reduced library hours if necessary. Please also consider expanding the assistant librarian's duties to support Parks and Recreation in order to minimize the total reduction of hours.

Thank you,

Carol Gillis
45A Sunset Shores Rd.

Sharlene Myers

From: Beth Sutherland <bethpsutherland@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 8:50 PM
To: Sharlene Myers
Subject: Letter to the Budget Committee and Board of Selectmen

To the New Gloucester Budget Committee and Board of Selectmen:

I fully understand that we are in unprecedented times and facing an unknown decrease in town revenue as well as an existing budget deficit. Individual finances are up in the air as well, causing you to be forced to make tough decisions.

However, I caution you against cutting too much from the budget which may lead to potential public safety issues (such as less personnel to plow the roads), or lose valuable resources (such as cutting library and programming personnel). Rather than listing the reasons behind my personal choices for items to be retained in the budget, I implore you to let the people of New Gloucester decide what they want their taxes to pay for.

All warrant articles that relate to the budget should not only include the total budgetary cost but also the estimated impact on the town's mil rate. Let the voters know what the household cost per item is so they can make an informed decision regarding their tax dollars.

There has been some talk that we will not be voting on separate warrant articles for the budget but instead be asked to vote the entire budget up or down. This has never happened in the nearly thirty years I have lived (and voted) in this town, including after the Great Recession in 2008. Doing this will , I fear, cause further division in our community.

In tough times such as these, we need to try to bring people together. Let the townspeople decide what they can afford and what priorities are most important. Once a majority has voted, people will accept the decision as long as they feel that they had a chance to weigh in. Otherwise, you will be creating more dissension and ill feeling.

We are fortunate that the school budget, the largest share of our tax burden, has come in much lower than anticipated. I hope that the towns economic situation improves more rapidly than originally thought.

Finally, I thank you all for the time and effort you have put in to deal with this very tough budget situation in these very difficult times.

Sincerely,
Beth Sutherland

Sent from my iPad

Sharlene Myers

From: Town Manager
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 8:26 AM
To: Sharlene Myers
Subject: FW: New Gloucester Library

From: jcookson1@maine.rr.com [mailto:jcookson1@maine.rr.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 7:28 AM
To: Town Manager <townmanager@newgloucester.com>
Subject: New Gloucester Library

I just wanted to say how much I support the two librarians that we have at the New Gloucester Public Library.

When my husband and I moved to New Gloucester 20 years ago we had no family in the area and the library was the most helpful department in the town. We received a lot of information about what was available in town and who to talk to about different things. The library was where we could find any information and still do because of the wonderful librarians and the knowledge that they have.

Once we had children the library became even more important. Both librarians are always kind and helpful and want to interact with the kids. The library has a play that they put on each year and my kids have participated for many years. This has been an outlet that they would not have done in the schools, but the library is always supportive about anyone can participate and be part of the group. This has been a location that is used for 4-H and my children were active in that group for years as well.

Our town library is such a great community location and it requires both librarians to be there. One librarian cannot do all that our community needs them to do. I really hope that this is considered tonight at the budget meeting. It would be a great loss to our community to not have both of our librarians available to us in the town.

Thank you,
Jennifer Cookson

Sharlene Myers

From: Joanne McKee <joandymckee@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 8:40 AM
To: Sharlene Myers
Subject: Budget committee plus request for zoom code

Good morning Sharlene,
Please pass this email on to the budget committee and send me the zoom code.
Thank you.
Joanne McKee

The Congress is working on funding for states and towns. If money from this comes to New Gloucester, could the positions eliminated for the library, recreation director, town planner and public works person be funded from this ?

Is the \$200,000 from the delayed work on the Steven's Brook project available for funding these positions. If so, then any federal grant money used for the Steven's Brook project when it goes forward.

If these positions are funded, how much would the mil rate increase?

Recreation programs are funded but even if volunteers are found to run them, who will do the administrative work, distribute information, be sure social distancing guidelines are followed, ensure equipment to be utilized is available and in good condition and areas to be used are available and in good condition? If scheduled programs can not go forward, the recreation director would be able to plan and implement new appropriate programs that would meet he guidelines and provide support for the community.

The Environmental Resource Committee was put under the Parks and Recreation Department last year. There is no line in the present proposed budget for funding this committee. The Committee had already developed some programs for this year that had to be cancelled and hope to implement when possible. Please continue to fund this community as a separate entity.

Joanne McKee

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Joanne McKee