

President's Annual Report
Friends of the Winona Public Library, Annual Meeting
April 28, 2022

Good evening and Welcome. My name is Vernon Leighton, and I am the President of the Friends of the Winona Public Library. It is wonderful to have a live and in person annual meeting of the Friends, after two years when it was only online.

Before we get started tonight, I would like to extend a special thank you to the staff of the Winona Public Library. They have been dealing with extraordinary circumstances, not only with the end of the pandemic restrictions, but also with the building demolition next door and its consequences for the library building.

We very much appreciate the work they do. And I would like to offer a special thank you to Sam Berhow, who works with the Friends. Without Sam's hard work, the Friends would not function.

Introductions

I would like to begin by introducing the officers and members of the board of the Friends. Besides myself, we have Dick Dahl, our Vice President, Mackenzie Morning, our Treasurer, Mary Farrell, our Secretary, Gayle Garrity, our Membership coordinator, and board members Blandine Berthelot, and Emily Tipton.

To outline this evening, I will give a brief annual report on the activities of the Friends. Mackenzie will give the annual treasurer's report. We will have Lezlea Dahlke, the Director of the Winona Public Library, give a brief Year in Review about the library, and then Emily Tipton will say a few words about the Dolly Parton Imagination Library project, which she manages for Winona County through our organization. We will then discuss the candidates for the open seats on the Friends board and conduct a vote. Finally, we will have a talk by children's book author Jenny Baertsch.

Although by many measures the past year was not as challenging as the year before, it was still very challenging for everyone, including the Friends of the Winona Public Library. We held two book sales this past year, one in July and one in October, both out of doors. Steamboat Days and its attendant Concert in the Park once again did not occur. Once again, the Winona National Bank donated approximately as much money for the summer reading program as we would have received for staffing the food booth at the Concert in the Park.

Last year, we agreed to fund the construction of a new desk for the library's Youth Services Department, and this year we paid for it. This year, we agreed to fund the construction of a new desk for the Reference Department on the second floor. The work has been nearly completed, but we are waiting for final adjustments before issuing our payment.

Many years ago, when we were planning the publication of *Laird's Legacy*, the book on the history of the Winona Public Library, one of our sources of funding was a grant from the Winona Foundation. As a condition for that grant, we agreed to have both a first and second printing of the text. Supplies of the first printing were finally low enough this past year that we undertook a second printing of the book.

Our organization continued our traditional funding efforts, such as the donation for the children's summer reading program. We also funded the purchase of copies of last year's community read book, mugs for Hot Reads Cold Nights program, and a thousand dollars for books for the Adult Services department.

Beginning in 2020, we added to the mission of our organization by becoming the local charity that partners with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. As you probably know, for all children in Winona County who are between the ages of birth and five years old, they can be registered to receive a free book in the mail each month from the Dolly Parton Foundation. Our task is to manage the registrations and pay the postage. Emily Tipton began this partnership, and she will be giving us more details about how the program is going after Lezlea speaks. Briefly, thanks to Emily we have received Donna Helble grants, BK5K grants, and donations from

the Slaggie Family Foundation and the John and Margaret Cross Memorial Fund. The program currently has over 850 children in Winona County.

This is my final evening as the outgoing President of the Friends of the Winona Public Library, so I would like to thank everyone who has been part of our time together. I look forward to seeing the new administration carry our mission in the future, which is to support the Winona Public Library. Take it away, Mackenzie.