

Message to be sent in email

Dear Friend of the Library:

Two critically important events are coming up soon and we need your support! We'd love for you to attend both of these hearings, so we have a visible show of support, and second, if you can't attend (or even if you can) it would make a huge impact if you could send an email to the Commissioners (whose addresses are included) to let them know you support library funding.

- 1) **Monday, February 12th, 11:30 am: Hearing on County Operating support for all Jefferson County Libraries:** (County Commission Room, 200 E Washington St, Charles Town, WV 25414, in the basement of the Charles Town Library)
- 2) **Friday, February 16th, 6:00 pm Hearing on capital funding for the new Shepherdstown-North Jefferson Library Resource Center** (County Commission Room, 200 E Washington St, Charles Town, WV 25414, in the basement of the Charles Town Library)

Below you will find

- 1) The commissioners email addresses
- 2) Some facts about library funding
- 3) Draft email messages that you can personalize

I. EMAIL ADDRESSES

President Peter Onoszko: ponoszko@aol.com (Harpers Ferry)

Vice President Jane Tabb: Vinemont.farm@gmail.com (Middleway)

Commissioner Patsy Nolan: commissionerpnoland@gmail.com (Kabletown)

Commissioner Caleb Hudson: calebhudsonforjeffersonwv@gmail.com (Shepherdstown)

Commissioner Josh Compton: compton4commissioner@gmail.com (Charles Town)

II. **FACTS:**

Literacy: Youth with low literacy skills not only are more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system, but also have a higher likelihood of negative outcomes after being released. In 2014 **taxpayers in Jefferson County spent more than \$91 each on juvenile offenders, for a total of \$250,000, and but only \$4 per capita on libraries.** It makes more sense to support our libraries and encourage early literacy than to be required to spend more on building prisons and housing offenders.

1. **National, state and local funding per capita:**

	<u>Total funding</u>	<u>Local tax-based funding (Co. Comm, Board of Ed, Municipalities)</u>
National average:	\$37.90	\$32.49
West Virginia average:	\$21.89	\$14.68
Jefferson County average:	\$13.85	\$7.94
Kanawha County average:	\$47.32	\$40.24
McDowell County average:	\$16.24	\$2.55

*According to the latest data available, the national average per capita funding for libraries is \$37.90. Of that, \$32.49 is from local funding. In Jefferson County, local funding was \$7.94 - a **difference of more than \$24.00.** In West Virginia, the average local per capita funding for libraries is \$14.68 - **we lag behind the State average by \$6.74.***

*Kanawha County, with a median household income more than \$20,000 lower than ours, provides its libraries with over \$32.00 per capita in local government tax-based funding. Even McDowell County is spending more on its libraries than Jefferson County - almost \$2.00 more per capita. **Jefferson County ranks among the lowest per capita spending on libraries in the State.***

Jefferson County has the most diverse school district, and the highest ESOL population, in the State of West Virginia.

III. DRAFT EMAIL FOR MAINTAINING LEVEL OPERATING FUNDING

Dear Commissioner:

Thank you for all you do for the residents of Jefferson County in your position as a County Commissioner. Your job is both time consuming and challenging, but critically important. So I want to first and foremost thank you for your service.

I am writing because I am a strong supporter of the Jefferson County libraries, which are essential resources for our community, and particularly for our children. As you know, our County libraries are woefully underfunded on the local level – Jefferson County tax based funding is a little less than \$8 per capita, compared to the State average of almost \$15 per capita. As you work to finalize the FY19 budget, I hope you will, at a minimum, provide the current (FY18) level of funding. While I would love to see an increase in your support, to bring Jefferson County closer to the State average for library funding, I know the dollars are tight.

Every day the library sees patrons who visit for various reasons: to check email, surf the internet, search for jobs, take practice tests online, and check out the varied collection of CDs, DVDs, books and kindles. The children's department stays busy with story times for all ages, and hands-on projects such as robot-building with the STEAM program, Lego[®] Club and more. The libraries also work closely with the schools.

Money is scarce, and we all recognize that. But we have to prioritize. For our students, parents, residents, and businesses, as well as those considering moving to Jefferson County, the libraries are a critical component of our infrastructure. Let's treat them as we would any asset, and adequately invest in them. All our residents, particularly our kids, deserve it.

I look forward to your support and your response.

Sincerely,

IV: DRAFT EMAIL FOR CAPITAL SUPPORT FOR NEW LIBRARY

Dear Commissioner:

As you work to develop the FY19 budget, I urge you to support a one-time capital contribution Center.

As you know, the current facility, located in the center of Shepherdstown is totally inadequate in terms of size and accessibility to serve the 18,000 Jefferson County residents it is required by law to serve.

Over the course of many years, supporters secured a parcel of land for a new building - the location of the former town dump – cleaned the site up, and raised more than **\$2.5 million** for the new building. This shows a deep commitment by many people, and an unusually high level of broad-based private support. With less than \$400,000 needed to reach the goal of \$2.95 million, I urge you to invest in this desperately needed facility, just as the County invested in the South Jefferson and Bolivar-Harpers Ferry buildings.

We all know the library is an integral part of the education continuum, particularly for young children, and an economic driver in the community. Public libraries are anchor institutions providing vital resources and services, including, among other things, access to information and technology, instruction for all learners, and programs designed to develop important digital literacy skills.

I urge you to include this capital investment in the people of Jefferson County as you finalize the FY19 budget.

Sincerely