



BE AN ADVOCATE FOR OUR LIBRARIES

By Anne Roman

Libraries need community support to thrive, and we need you to be an advocate for our new library and the Manatee County Library System. Being a library supporter means communicating to the county government how crucial free public library services are to you and your family. When you look behind the scenes at successful public libraries across the United States, you inevitably find a strong Friends group that raises funds and advocates to ensure that their library is relevant and well-funded.

Modern public libraries are so much more than a collection of books and they require various resources and talented staff to provide these services adequately. Our public libraries are being used more than ever and are often one of the first places new residents seek out when they move. As we enter the annual county budget process, county commissioners need to hear from community members to what extent we appreciate the beautiful new library opening this fall, and how vital it is to the infrastructure of our rapidly growing county to equip our libraries with materials, books, electronic resources, programs, and services for everyone.

As a Friend and life-long library advocate, I encourage you to contact the commissioners and tell them you want your tax dollars to support the library's budget requests for 2023/2024. Then, take one more step as a library ambassador and encourage your friends and neighbors to do the same.

Ways to express your support include contacting the commissioners via email, letters, and attending the public budget hearings (6:00 pm) on Tuesdays, September 12 and 19 at the county administration building. (1112 Manatee Avenue West, Bradenton, FL 34205 [Map](#)) You can also view county commissioners' meetings online. For more information and to contact the commissioners visit: www.mymanatee.org/government/boardofcountycommissioners.

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