

# Thetford Library Federation

## Request to the Thetford Selectboard, December 2022

Presented by Phebe McCosker, Federation Treasurer  
and Holly Lague, Library Director

The Thetford Library Federation is requesting a Town appropriation of \$130,000 in 2023 for support of public library services. The intent of this document is to provide context for this request.

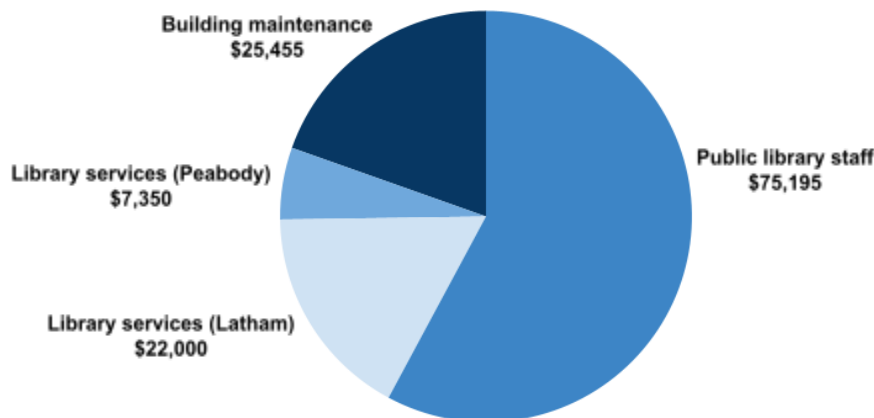
### Background on the Thetford Library Federation

The Thetford Library Federation is a private non-profit that has been serving Thetford for 50 years. It is made up of five member organizations: George Peabody Library, Thetford Academy Library, Thetford Elementary School Library, Thetford Historical Society and Latham Memorial Library.

The Federation is governed by a board of trustees, including representatives from the five member organizations and three community members. Primary purposes for the organization include:

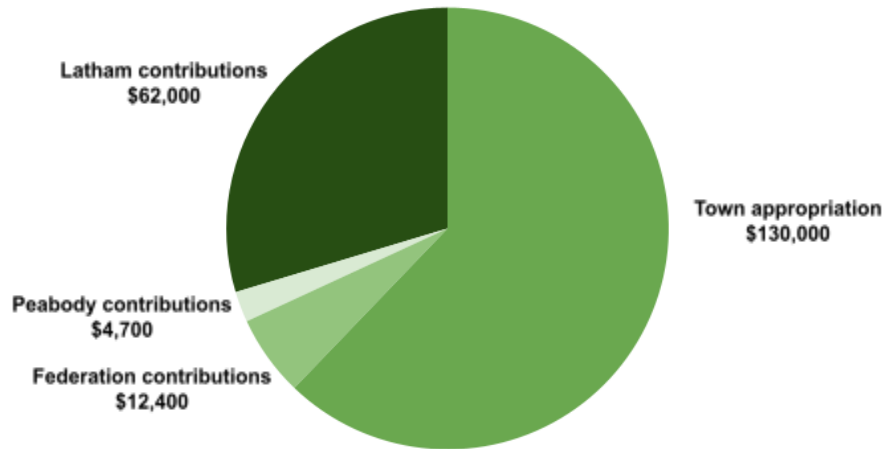
- Bicentennial Building ownership and maintenance, providing rent- and utility-free space to the Latham Library and the Historical Society
- Promoting collaboration among members, including providing a unified online catalog that brings together the public library and school collections
- Direct financial support to the public libraries, which is the primary driver of this request for Town funding.

### Town Funds to Federation: \$130,000



The Federation redistributes town funds to Latham and Peabody for staffing as well as circulation and operational costs. Town funds are also used by the Federation to support the maintenance of the Bicentennial Building.

## Total Public Library Operations: \$209,000



In addition to the Town's support, public library operations are supported by fundraising activities and other sources contributed by the Latham, Peabody and Federation Boards.

## Public Library Capital Investments in 2022-2023: \$180,000

The Bicentennial Building is owned and maintained by the Federation, with special projects by the Latham Library Board. The Peabody Board owns and funds the maintenance of the Peabody building. Thus, in addition to contributing 38% of operating expenses, these three organizations provide 100% of capital investments for library buildings.

In 2022-2023, these three organizations have committed to raising \$180,000 to improve and upgrade facilities. Of this total, approximately \$120,000 has already been identified through fundraising efforts.

## Community Resources

We offer modern library services at both Latham and Peabody, which include physical collections, digital streaming services, internet and computer access, public spaces, community events and more.

Particularly in rural areas like ours, libraries function as community centers. Libraries are often one of the first places a new resident will visit, a regular destination for families, and an important social touchpoint for seniors. Our friendly librarians help residents and visitors feel welcome and connected to the community.

Current areas of focus for our libraries include accessibility, safety and widening our impact:

- **WiFi and computer access and assistance.** The internet is increasingly essential for many jobs and social services, but home access is still challenging or even out of reach for many. The library helps close this gap by providing fast, reliable internet and public computers and spaces.

- **Hybrid meetings.** We are equipped with technology to support hybrid events and meetings, offering both in-person and online options for library events as well as other community organizations.
- **Safe and accessible spaces.** Renovations at Latham have provided space with modern HVAC and meeting technology, and soon a lift elevator will make the space accessible to more members of the community. At Peabody, we are discussing ways to increase the usability of the beautiful spaces and historic collections.
- **Relevant and impactful collections and programs.** Our afterschool, summer and evening programs are highly attended and valued by area families. In the coming year we will look to expand our offerings for adult programs. This past year, our grant-funded materials focusing on diversity, equity and inclusion topics were on display and circulating well.
- **Budget-friendly services.** In addition to our in-house materials, our patrons can access millions of additional materials throughout the state via our Interlibrary Loan service. Our streaming services for movies, ebooks and audiobooks are highly used, saving Thetford residents the cost of subscriptions.

## Record of Success

The most recent data provided by the Vermont Department of Libraries Public Library Services Report (2021) show that the Thetford community values and uses its libraries, both Latham and Peabody:

- Thetford offered **238% more programs** with **230% higher attendance** than the average library for a town of our size.
- Thetford citizens are in the **Top 25% Statewide** for per-capita collection use, demonstrating how heavily our collection is used by our residents.
- We benefit from **30% more volunteer hours** than the average Vermont library. In fact, we consistently come in above state average for hours open, annual visits, and circulation despite having fewer than the state average staff hours, thanks in large part to our volunteers providing additional access. This volunteerism demonstrates Thetford citizens' commitment to library success.

Our tallies for this year are on track to be one of the highest in 10 years for collection use and program attendance.

## Conclusion

The librarians and trustees are very grateful to the Thetford community for the support we receive and the investment year over year in the library's success. Having a vibrant public library is a marker of a town's engagement with its citizens, and a great enhancement to their quality of life. We can all be proud of our united efforts to make Thetford a great place to live.