

Dear Council President Stewart and Council Members,

My name is Grace Manubay and I have resided in Silver Spring (District 6) for more than 20 years. I currently serve as vice chair of the Montgomery County Library Board.

Now, more than ever, I believe in the importance of preserving community spaces and providing residents with resources that lift up, support, and enrich the lives of our families and neighbors. All branches of Montgomery County Public Libraries serve this role across the county.

I frequently access articles in the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, and I especially appreciate access to recipes in the NYT Cooking app. I am giddy whenever a weeks-long electronic book on hold becomes available in Libby. I still check out DVDs for movie nights at home, too. In the last year, I enthusiastically participated in the summer and winter reading challenges for adults. I attended the summer trivia night and completed the winter reading challenge “marathon” by logging 26.2 hours of reading over four weeks. I still talk about the library program I attended with Elizabeth Hargrave, the creator of the popular board game Wingspan, who spoke at the Brigadier General Charles E. McGee library. To put it simply, library resources and programs bring me joy.

For many residents, the library is a lifeline of services that teach literacy skills to people of all ages and levels, provide access to job skills and search services, and encourage exchange of information and ideas. It is imperative that County Council support MCPL’s budget request in full to maintain the current level of service residents receive. I also strongly encourage County Council to protect funding dedicated to library capital projects that have been planned for years, especially with state funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Studies in jeopardy.

I also ask that the Council support the following enhancement requests in the FY 2026 operating budget for Montgomery County Public Libraries:

- An additional \$121,000 for the collection acquisitions budget, which will assist the MCPL in meeting the rising demand for digital materials (e.g., such as Hoopla and Libby), online job skills programs (e.g., Udemy and LinkedIn Learning), and newspapers (e.g., the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*).
- An additional \$153,000 to increase the world languages collection. This enhancement request has not been filled in the past, while the number of residents that speak many different languages in Montgomery County continues to grow.

As part of the Library Board, I look forward to continuing to work with Director Graham and the board’s Library Advisory Committees on behalf of Montgomery County residents. Please fully support the County Executive’s proposed operating budget for Montgomery County Public Libraries.

In service,

Grace Manubay