

# NH Library Trustee

The Newsletter of the New Hampshire Library Trustees Association

[www.NHLTA.org](http://www.NHLTA.org)

## NHLTA 2024 Annual Conference June 5, 2024 *Trustee Essentials: Today's Issues, Tomorrow's Challenges*

**RSA 202-A:2** defines a board of Library Trustees as “the governing body of the library.” Trustees are vested with the entire custody and management of the library. They hire the library director, adopt policies to govern the library’s operation and advocate for adequate financial support of the library. Trustees have the power to expend all funds provided to the library, and to determine how they will be spent. NH public libraries are not town departments, subject to jurisdiction and review by the town manager and/or select board. The NH Supreme Court affirmed in *Town of Littleton v. Kathryn Taylor* (April 1994) that the library is a separate and distinct entity from the town. The court ruled that the board of trustees is the sole governing body of the library and that library employees are not town employees. A copy of this court decision is available on the NHLTA website.

– *The NHLTA Trustee Manual*, p. 8

Yes, library trustees are in charge of New Hampshire’s libraries, but how many of us actually know what that means or what it entails? Especially, in the smaller libraries, trustees take care of human resource issues, the finances and more and more have to defend the library’s mission to serve its entire community. Being a library trustee can be a rewarding experience, but it can also be overwhelming. Aside from a shared lifelong love of books and reading, none of us were trained to be a library trustee – it’s all been on-the-job training!

This year’s Annual Conference brings us back to

the basics. All trustees – whether seasoned veterans or new electees will find information to help them become part of an effective governing board – from human resource issues to fund-raising and everyone’s favorite: the NH Library RSAs.

The keynote speech – **New Landscapes: How Libraries will Find Their Way in the Age of AI** – presents one of the newest challenges facing us today: Artificial Intelligence. Nick Tanzi, the Assistant Director of the South Huntington Public Library in New York, is an internationally recognized library technology consultant and author. He will discuss how artificial intelligence is reshaping our information landscape, and make it clear that there is no doubt that libraries will continue to be essential in the age of AI.

After the keynote, there will be five concurrent workshops to choose from. Natch Greyes, who writes the Legal Q&A column for this newsletter, will once again be speaking about **RSAs & Hot Legal Topics**. Marcia McLaughlin and Michelle Elbert, who present the NHLTA Orientation Workshops in the spring and fall, will discuss **Trustee Basics** – an introduction to the role and responsibilities of library trustees as outlined in Trustee 101. (This workshop will be repeated after lunch.) Our keynote speaker Nick Tanzi will talk about **Communicating Library Value in a Digital Era** where he’ll discuss ways to help us advocate for our libraries to our communities. Mindy Atwood, the Assistant State Librarian for the NH State Library, along with Jen McCormack, director of the Nashua Public Library, and Lea

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Keynote Speaker  
Nick Tanzi

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Marcia McLaughlin  
NHLTA President

## Spring 2024

The Mission Statement of NHLTA states: “The New Hampshire Library Trustees Association (NHLTA) assists trustees to be knowledgeable and effective in order to serve, improve and promote New Hampshire public libraries.” To that end, the NHLTA board of directors devotes a good measure of its time and energy to providing opportunities for trustees to fulfill the job to which they have been elected which is *“The board of library trustees shall have the entire custody and management of the public library and all the property of the town relating thereto except trust funds held by the town. (RSA 202-A:6)”*

When many of us were elected to our trustee board, myself included, we had no idea of the breadth of the job nor an understanding what it would take to do the job. It is important to be oriented to your own library but there are many things which are general in nature to a trustee’s job. The board of directors has recognized this need, and has committed to an annual schedule of educational opportunities for trustees occurring throughout the year.

NHLTA’s annual conference is highlighted in this edition of the newsletter and is certainly the premier educational activity of the year -- not to be missed. Beyond the conference there will be trustee orientations held in Concord, workshops on a variety of topics, as well as regional gatherings which provide opportunities to get to know trustees in your specific area and share ideas, questions and concerns. As other needs are identified they will be addressed. We value your input and would welcome suggestions.

Email blasts announcing the events will go out to all trustees and be posted on the LISTSERVE® and our website well in advance. I hope that you will take the opportunity to attend the conference and other events which will make you a more knowledgeable and effective trustee for your library.

Now, sit back and read on.

My best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marcia".

[m.mclaughlin@nhlta.org](mailto:m.mclaughlin@nhlta.org)

## 2024 NHLTA Annual Awards

submission  
deadline is

July 12, 2024.

Visit [nhlta.org](http://nhlta.org)  
for instructions,  
all criteria and  
a description of  
the awards.

## McKay Scholarship Awards: Summer and Fall 2024 Deadlines

NHLTA is pleased to announce that two \$1,000 graduate course scholarships were awarded in February 2024 for the spring 2024 semester, to Amy Swanson of Rochester Public Library and to Alyssa Jobin of Merrimack Public Library. Scholarships are awarded for graduate courses (e.g., MLS and MLIS courses, etc.), library conferences (including NHLTA’s 2024 Annual Conference on June 5, 2024) and library workshops.

Applications for summer 2024 graduate courses must be received by May 1, 2024, and it is expected that one \$1,000 graduate course scholarship will be awarded. Applications for fall 2024 semester graduate courses must be received by July 1, 2024; again, two \$1,000 graduate

course scholarships will be awarded. Applications for library conferences and workshops should be submitted approximately one month before the event. Virtual courses, conferences and workshops are eligible for scholarship awards.

Criteria for scholarship eligibility and a scholarship application can be found on NHLTA’s website, [www.nhlta.org](http://www.nhlta.org). Past McKay scholarship recipients and past no-award applicants may apply again for a scholarship on that next course, conference or workshop.

Mildred P. McKay was New Hampshire State Librarian, 1942-1964. NHLTA established the Mildred P. McKay Library Scholarship Fund in 1965 with the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation.

# Libraries: The Community “Middle Ground”

As I sit down to write this, it’s an unseasonably warm day and the sun is shining. The New Hampshire legislature is not in session, so downtown Concord is quiet. It’s tempting to tell myself that everything is just fine.

In a recent study published by EveryLibrary Institute, the statement was made, “Groups like Moms for Liberty and MoveOn both use book bans as a way to identify and cultivate new supporters for their broader social and political issues.”\* It’s important to understand that right now, non-library organizations from all sides are trying to leverage public libraries to their advantage.

Around August of 2022, when I was still working at the Abbott Library, the librarian responsible for the adult collection came to me and said, “I think we need to do an audit of our collection to make sure we are evenly balanced in terms of political party representation.” So, she handled every single book that related to politicians and party politics in the United States, evaluated the collection, made a few purchases and by the end of October, pronounced the collection “as balanced as she knew how to make it.” And I believe it was.

Recently another librarian said to me, in an almost offhand manner, “And if someone walked into the library and wanted to know how to get rid of the public library in town, we would answer the

question. We would point to the RSAs that govern public libraries in New Hampshire. We might point to the New Hampshire Municipal Association as a resource. We would provide reference help because that’s what we do.”

As trustees of the 234 public libraries in New Hampshire, you have custody of and are managing an entity that, by virtue of its professional ethics, is dedicated to being non-partisan by providing equal access to all viewpoints. It’s hard to advocate for a moderate position. It’s hard to advocate for nuance. The tools of shock and awe are not available to those trying to hold the middle. But we must hold the middle, if we are to preserve one of the last places for the sharing of different ideas that is so necessary to our democratic way of life.

The outliers are just that, outliers. They are loud but they are still the minority. There is a silent majority that still values moderation and nuance. How do we tap into this population? That may be the next and most important work for all library advocates, especially our trustees: to articulate the nature of libraries and this idea of a community “middle ground” and then to employ the silent majority to defend the middle ground with us.

\* September 27, 2023. (n.d.). *Parent perceptions of public libraries and book bans survey - report released*. EveryLibrary Institute. [https://www.everylibraryinstitute.org/parent\\_perceptions\\_pl\\_bans\\_survey\\_2023](https://www.everylibraryinstitute.org/parent_perceptions_pl_bans_survey_2023)



Mindy Atwood

## New NHLTA Board Member: Jeanne Palleiko



Jeanne Palleiko purchased her home in Newbury in 2001 and has lived there full-time since 2013.

Prior to her retirement, she worked in the Control division at Jordan Marsh in Boston, taught Organizational Behavior at William & Mary in Williamsburg, VA, and managed the Compensation and Benefits Departments at Circuit City in Richmond, VA, and at PC Connection in Merrimack, NH.

Jeanne recently received the 2023 Special Library Service Contribution Award in recognition of her efforts as Chair of the Newbury Public Library Foundation, which to date has raised nearly \$700,000 to support the cost of expanding and renovating the library. The warrant article passed a year ago (on the third try) with a 73% YES vote at

Town Meeting. She has been a trustee (serving as treasurer), an alternate trustee and bookkeeper for the Newbury Public Library.

Her love of music led to 19 years singing baritone in Sweet Adelines choruses and quartets. She plays clavichord one Sunday a month at a small local church. Genealogy and travel are interests that get squeezed in when possible.

Jeanne graduated from Wellesley College (BA), Harvard Business School (MBA), and MIT’s Sloan School of Management (PhD). She is a widow with two married sons and five exceptional grandchildren! She looks forward to using her volunteer experience as treasurer of two condo boards, plus her leadership roles in other organizations, to support NHLTA.



## NHLTA 2024 Annual Conference & Annual Meeting

### Trustee Essentials: Today's Issues, Tomorrow's Challenges

June 5, 2024

**8:00–8:30 am:** Registration/Continental Breakfast

**8:30–9:00 am:** Annual Meeting

#### **9:00–10:00 am: Keynote Address**

New Landscapes: How Libraries Will Find Their Way in The Age of AI (Artificial Intelligence)

#### **10:15–11:30 am: Workshops 1–5:**

- RSAs & Hot Legal Topics\*
- Trustee Basics\*
- Communicating Library Value in a Digital Era
- Requests For Reconsideration for Beginners\*
- Managing Your Library Trust Funds in Today's Economic Climate

#### **11:30 am–12:30 pm: Plated Lunch**

#### **12:30–1:45 pm: Workshops 6–10**

- Intellectual Freedom
- Trustee Basics\*
- Fundraising for Library Expansion/ Construction
- Getting Your Legal Ducks in a Row: Best Practices for Trustees' Management of Your Library
- Preparing for Challenging Conversations

#### **2:00–3:15 pm: Workshops 11–15**

- Legislative Tracking & Policy Advocacy
- Technology for Today's Libraries: What Trustees Need to Know
- The Right Stuff: Defining The Role of Your Library Director and Ensuring a Successful Search
- The 22nd Century Library: Embracing Heritage While Planning for The Next Hundred Years
- Meeting Minutes Madness, Non-Public Sessions and Other Thorny Right-To-Know Issues \*

*\*Recommended for New Trustees*

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ATTORNEYS AT LAW

McBain, director of the Newbury Public Library, will discuss the best ways to handle book challenges in **Requests for Reconsideration Basics**. The fifth session – **Managing Your Library Trust Funds in Today's Economic Market** – will be presented by Bryan Sanford and Jason Edgar from Bar Harbor Wealth Management and Bar Harbor Financial Services.

After lunch, the workshops start up again with **Intellectual Freedom 101**. Librarian Mary Danko will present an overview, with emphasis on collections and the book challenges so many of us are facing today. For those who missed the first presentation, **Trustee Basics** will be repeated. Trying to raise money for your library? Then **Fundraising for Library Expansion/Construction** is for you. Jeanne Palleiko, former Newbury Public Library Trustee and Chair of the NPL Foundation, will talk about her success in raising nearly \$700,000 for her library as well as getting voter support for library warrant articles. Jeanne received the 2023 NHLTA Special Library Service Contribution Award last fall for her fundraising and promotion of the library's expansion. **Getting Your Legal Ducks in a Row: Best Practices for Management of Your Library Director** addresses one of the most difficult tasks trustees face: their supervisory role. Labor and employment attorneys Anna Cole and Hannah Devoe will discuss the best practices involved with hiring, firing and employee protections. Rounding out this group of workshops is **Preparing for Challenging Conversations**. Melinda Gehris and Greg Eaton will introduce strategies trustees can use to improve their ability to communicate effectively.

The final group of workshops include **Legislative Tracking and Policy Advocacy**, presented by Brodie Deshaies who will describe how to track NH legislative issues and advocate for those which affect libraries. Bobbi Slosser from the NH State Library will explore the quickly evolving role of technology in public libraries in **Technology for Today's Libraries: What Trustees Need to Know**. Debra Caplan, Rosemary D'Arcy and Brittany Durbin will walk trustees through the sometimes challenging steps of hiring a library director in **THE RIGHT STUFF: Defining the Role of Your Library Director and Ensuring a Successful Search**. Placework architects Joel Lacasse and Liz Nguyen will discuss **The 22nd Century Library: Embracing Heritage While Planning for the Next Hundred Years**. The final workshop will be presented by attorney Cordell Johnston: **Meeting Minutes Madness, Non-Public Sessions, and Other Thorny Right-to-Know Issues** – a discussion of the often-misunderstood Right to Know Law.

There'll also be some time to have fun with the Trustee Crossword – answer the clues and you'll be entered in a special drawing! The winners will be awarded cash prizes for their libraries.

# Helping New Trustees Get Oriented

NHLTA has long helped trustees learn about their role in the community – through Orientation workshops, the Annual Conference and the vast amount of materials on the NHLTA website from the Trustee Manual to forms to help with adopting policies and hiring a director. Recently, a packet of information was provided to trustees via the LISTSERV® – the NH Library Trustee 101 – to help familiarize new trustees with what they need to know to be effective in their new position. The material contained in the NH Library Trustee 101 package includes a description of the role and responsibilities of trustees, a code of ethics, a list of the current RSAs pertaining to public libraries and several other relevant documents.

In addition to the general knowledge NHLTA provides, new trustees need to be educated in the specifics of their library. This can range from an informal session with the chair of the board and the library director to a full meeting with the entire board. At a minimum, new trustees should be given a complete tour of the library, an explanation of its services and an introduction to the staff.

It may be helpful to provide each trustee with a notebook containing information such as:

- Mission statement
- Library goals/objectives and long-range plan; board's annual goals
- List of library trustees, including trustee address, phone, email, term expiration
- The board of trustees' by-laws
- The board's committees, assignments and duties
- The charter/history of your library
- Organizational chart of your library
- List of library staff, positions, date of hire
- Job descriptions of staff

- Your library's policies and procedures; approved annual holidays
- Board approved budget for current year with back-up materials
- Library board meeting agendas, minutes, monthly reports
- Last annual report and current library statistics of use and holdings
- Copy of the Director's Performance Review form
- NH state laws pertaining to libraries

Much of this information should be available on the library's website as well. The chair should make sure that new board members review the NHLTA Trustee Manual, especially the RSAs, duties and responsibilities and other pertinent sections. It is essential that all new trustees be made to feel knowledgeable and welcome in order to find a place within their board to make their contribution to library service. NHLTA holds a variety of workshops, including orientations and regional gatherings, which are beneficial for new trustees. Board chairs should encourage new trustees to participate in continuing education programs whenever possible.

## Essential Responsibilities of the Library Trustee

- Recruits, appoints, supervises and reviews performance of the library director.
- Approves all other employees of the library and determines their duties and wages in consultation with the director.
- Establishes, reviews and revises all policies, including but not limited to personnel, material selection/use and the use of the building.
- Enforces all local, state and federal laws that pertain to the library, library employees and the accessibility of materials to the public.
- Prepares the annual budget in consultation with the director.
- Presents and defends the budget to the municipal budgetary authority.
- Has sole authority to determine budget lines for expenditures and move monies from one budget line to another.
- Reviews budget on a regular basis and approves expenditures for unforeseen circumstances.
- Maintains library revenue in a separate non-lapsing account from the operating budget; approves all expenditures of those funds.
- Provides adequate insurance to cover the building equipment, collection materials and their replacement costs.
- Adopts, reviews and revises bylaws, rules and regulations for the board's own transaction of business and for the governance of the library.
- Develops and approves the mission statement for the library; contributes to and approves the development of short- and long-term goals for the library.
- Actively participates in and contributes to the meetings and work of the board.
- Supports all decisions made by the board.
- Acts as a member of a board and assumes individually only those duties delegated by the board.
- Acquires full knowledge and awareness of local, state and federal laws pertaining to the governance of a public library.
- Seeks training opportunities for enhancing the performance of trustee duties and responsibilities.
- Advocates for the library and library services in the community, state and nation.
- Participates in state and national library organizations.



By Natch Greyes,  
Government Affairs  
Counsel, NH Municipal  
Association (NHMA)

## Speak Up, or Lose Your Voice

What happens in Concord affects you in your municipal role, your job functions, and your (personal) life. This legislative session that fact has rung true for librarians and their trustees more than any prior session. Fortunately, librarians and those who love libraries enough to volunteer to help them are generally familiar with old Latin maxims such as *qui tacet consentire videtur, ubi loqui debuit ac potuit* (“he who is silent, when he ought to have spoken and was able to, is taken to agree.”) And, quite possibly familiar with their origins in Greek. (see, e.g., Plato’s *Apology*.) As a consequence, you spoke up and legislators heard what you had to say.

I work with many groups representing many different sectors of municipal functions: town clerks, health officers, police chiefs, fire chiefs, municipal managers, conservation commissions, town planners, etc., etc. There is no one group that got more involved in legislation that affects their role within the municipality and the relation between their role and the residents they serve this year than librarians and library trustees. But it is not over.

In fact, and I hate to be the bearer of this news, it’s never over. People will *always* have ideas about the role of the library in town. Some of those people will *always* get the ear of the legislator(s) who represent them in Concord. (Some may even be legislators themselves.) And, so, legislation will *always* have the opportunity to be filed. When it is, it is up to you – the librarians, the library trustees, and all their friends – to get involved.

I know that wasn’t in the job description, but it is part of the job. I learned this back when I was a prosecutor for a few small towns in northern Grafton County. I didn’t sign up to testify at the legislature or, even, to call my local legislators. I didn’t think it was my role or, truth be told, appropriate for my position. Boy, was I wrong.

One day, I received a call from the County Attorney asking me if I could go to Concord to answer questions about the bail process for a legislative committee. I talked it over with one of my police chiefs who told me that it would be a good

experience, so I agreed. I drove the hour-and-a-half to Concord and sat in a cramped room and made small talk for a few minutes with a very pleasant, very normal seeming older lady who sat next to me. A few minutes later, she was called on by the chair of the committee, and she proceeded to spend about a minute on the bill before talking about the “aliens” who “came to her in her dreams again last night.”

In retrospect, a more apt description of that experience was “eye opening” for it certainly was not “good.” I had learned my first and most valuable lesson about how public policy is shaped in New Hampshire. Whoever shows up is allowed to speak, no matter what they wish to say. So, I began to understand that my role as a local official included not just what I thought I was supposed to do, but also helping legislators understand what I do.

It’s no secret that libraries have been the subject of legislative considerations across the country. No longer does the hush that pervades the patrons who step through the door extend to the State House. Instead, legislation has been filed and will continue to be filed that will affect libraries.

That makes it harder to provide durable advice to libraries on issues like employee contracts (more on that next issue) and library policies. Libraries have not, at least in this state, been the subject of much legislative focus. (Much of RSA 202-A, for example, was consolidated in 1963 and came from prior acts originally passed in the 1800s. Unlike most other statutes, very little has changed in that time.)

I thank you all for rising to the occasion this year and speaking with legislators about how proposed legislation would affect your role. Without your voice, there would only have been silence. And now that you have firmly found it, I ask you to continue to speak as new legislation crops up each year. I thank you for it and for stepping into a role that isn’t quite what you expected, but one that continues to help your libraries fulfill their potential to serve your municipality’s residents.

It’s no secret that libraries have been the subject of legislative considerations across the country.

Subscribe to the NHMA Legislative Bulletin  
[www.nhmunicipal.org/legislative-bulletins](http://www.nhmunicipal.org/legislative-bulletins).

## Notice to all NHLTA Members

April 1, 2024

Per bylaw Article X, this is notification of proposed amendments to the NHLTA bylaws. The Board of Directors voted to recommend the following changes at the March 6, 2024 board meeting. These changes are recommended in order to improve processes and leadership succession.

Per Article VII: Dues, Section 2, this is notification that the Board voted at the March 6, 2024 board meeting in the affirmative to propose increasing NHLTA memberships to \$35 effective July 1, 2025.

### Key to change:

The previous bylaw is identified by black regular type followed by the recommended change identified by red bold italic type. The complete list of bylaws is on the NHLTA website: [www.NHLTA.org](http://www.NHLTA.org). Please be prepared to discuss and vote on the amendments and the dues increase at the annual meeting on June 5, 2024.

Marcia McLaughlin, President

### ARTICLE III: Officers and Duties

**Section 1:** The Officers shall be President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, and the line of authority shall be in that order.

*Section 1: The officers shall be President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer, and the line of authority shall be in that order.*

**Section 6:** The President shall be a second signature on all accounts.

*Section 6: The President and Assistant Treasurer shall be second signature on all accounts.*

### Add new Section 7 -

*Section 7: The Assistant Treasurer shall maintain a familiarity with the duties and responsibilities of the Treasurer. In the event of the absence or withdrawal of the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer will assume the duties and obligations of the Treasurer. The Assistant Treasurer shall be bonded. The Assistant Treasurer shall perform such duties as assigned by the Treasurer and serve on the Finance Committee.*

### Renumber Previous Section 7 to Section 8 -

**Section 7:** A Past President, recommended by the Governance Committee and approved by the Board, shall serve as a voting member of the Board and the Executive Committee until he or she is replaced by a new Past President.

*Section 8: A Past President, recommended by the Governance Committee and approved by the Board, shall serve as a voting member of the Board and the Executive Committee until he or she is replaced by a new Past President.*

## Calendar 2024

**April 13 10:00 am-12 pm Seacoast Area Regional Gathering**  
Weeks Public Library, 36 Post Rd, Greenland, NH 03840

**June 5 9 am 2024 Spring Conference & Annual Meeting**  
Registration and breakfast open at 8 am  
Grappone Center, 70 Constitution Ave., Concord

# NH Library Trustee

The Newsletter of the  
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Association

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NH State Library

**Rachel Baker, *Vice President***  
NH Library Association

### MISSION

The NHLTA assists Trustees to be knowledgeable and effective in order to serve, improve and promote New Hampshire Public Libraries.

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