

NHLTA Library Trustee

The Newsletter of the New Hampshire Library Trustees Association

www.NHLTA.org

NHLTA Spring Conference May 1, 2025 Trustees Unleashed: The Must-Have Info!

Book bans and book challenges are growing at an alarming rate – and they’re not going away. The practice of censoring books has been around for almost as long as there have been books. Our keynote speaker and two workshops will address these issues. Since libraries are so much more than books – and since trustees are involved in every aspect of their library, we’ve included workshops on building maintenance, disaster planning, human resource issues and that very timely topic: AI (Artificial Intelligence). This year, the conference will be held at the DoubleTree Downtown Hotel in Manchester.

The keynote speech **The Courage to Put on the Cape: How Library Trustees Can Harness Their Power for Good** discusses the book ban crisis and will show what trustees can do to support their libraries. Kelly Jensen, an editor at Book Riot (bookriot.com), has been writing about book censorship for nearly a decade. She was named a Library Journal Mover & Shaker for 2024, as well as named a Person of the Year from *Publishers Weekly* and a Chicagoan of the Year from the *Chicago Tribune* in 2022 for her anti-censorship work. Following the keynote and a short break so attendees can visit our exhibitors, there will be five concurrent workshops to choose from.

Our keynote speaker Kelly Jensen will continue discussing censorship in **Book Censorship ... Beyond What You Might be Familiar With**. In **Disaster Planning: Preparing Your Library for the Unexpected!**, Hooksett Library Director Heather Ranier and Assistant Library Director Mark Glisson will describe their first-hand experi-

ences with a recent flooding event along with the lessons they learned about being prepared for disaster. Hannah Devoe, an attorney in Drummond Woodsum’s Employer and Labor practice group, will present **Effective Employee Handbooks: Best Policies and Practices**.

Brodie Deshaies, a Legislative Advocate for the NH Municipal Association, will discuss how to keep track of state legislation and, even more importantly, how to advocate for or against proposed bills in **Legislative Tracking & Policy Advocacy**. Jessi Dustin, an Energy Efficiency Consultant at Eversource, and Nancy Ladd, Library Director at the Pillsbury Free Library in Warner, will present **Reducing Operating Costs through Energy Savings with NHSaves Grants**, and will discuss how the NHSaves program can help libraries cut energy costs.

During the lunch break, be sure to tour the Manchester Library’s Bookmobile which will be parked on Pleasant Street outside the hotel entrance from 11:15 am to 1:15 pm. Also new this year is the NHLTA Conference Passport. As you visit our many exhibitors, ask them to initial your passport card. Once you’ve collected all the initials, drop your card in the designated box at the conference. You’ll be entered into a drawing for a chance to win one of four \$25 checks for your library!

There will be two groups of workshops after lunch. The first includes a session on **Book and**



Keynote Speaker
Kelly Jensen

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Marcia McLaughlin
NHLTA President

Spring 2025

We welcome Spring after a long and snow-filled winter. Whether you have experienced what I call "snow out" or not, the warming breezes of April are sure to bring smiles, and the promise of outdoor activities not centered around snow!

Spring also portends our annual conference, this year to be held on May 1st at the DoubleTree Downtown in Manchester. Registration is open and I am hoping that newly elected trustees have been encouraged to attend. This year's conference has as its focus the basics of trusteeship – whether a long-term or newly-elected trustee, you can be assured that there will be something to be learned by everyone. You can read more about the conference in this newsletter.

The State Legislature is currently in session and there are a number of bills which will or may have

a direct impact on libraries. A list of the bills may be found below and also on the NHLTA website. Part of your job as a trustee is to advocate for your library and libraries throughout New Hampshire. Contact your representative or senator and make your feelings known on these bills. Our voices are important!

While the NHLTA board strives to educate and empower all New Hampshire trustees we want to hear from you to better understand and address your needs. Do not hesitate to contact me, other board members, or via the listserv: nhlta-l@mail-list2.nh.gov, the electronic forum for networking and sharing.

I look forward to seeing you at the conference!

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

Marcia
m.mclaughlin@nhlta.org

Tracking NH Legislation

After many years of relative quiet regarding library issues, the NH Legislature is considering quite a few bills that will affect libraries. Here's a quick guide – thanks to NHMA Legislative Advocates Sarah Burke Cohen and Brodie Deshaies for compiling this list. We've also indicated the bills NHLTA opposes and the ones NHLTA supports. To keep up-to-date on all the legislation being considered, go to www.nhmunicipal.org/nhma-bill-tracker-fastdemocracy. NHMA's weekly legislative bulletins can be found at www.nhmunicipal.org/legislative-bulletins. Want to let your legislators know what you think? Visit csni.org/contact-your-legislator to find out who your representatives and state senators are and how to contact them.

Library-specific legislation:

SB 208 – requiring local school boards and public libraries to adopt curation policies. **NHLTA opposes.** Unnecessary as public libraries already have curation policies. It removes local control and is an unfunded mandate.

HB 273 – parental access to their minor child's library records, might be the most public library-specific bill this year. **NHLTA opposes.**

HB 376 – specifying that library user information exempted from disclosure in the right-to-know law includes information regarding library cards and library membership status. **NHLTA is in favor of this bill.**

HB 666 – adding restitution payment for violations of the confidentiality of the library use records and adding library cards and membership status to the list of confidential matters.

Other legislation that could affect libraries and trustees:

HB 66 – relative to material subject to disclosure under the right-to-know law.

HB 80 – allowing a public body member's presence at a meeting by electronic or other means of communication only if physical presence is unavoidable [sic].

HB 114 – removing fees and charges for governmental records under the right-to-know law and reinstating potential liability for disclosure of information exempt from disclosure.

HB 143 – relative to the issuance of no trespass orders on municipal or school district property. **NHLTA opposes.**

HB 195 – relative to the expectation of privacy in the collection and use of personal information. **NHLTA opposes.**

HB 562 – relative to the filling of vacant positions on elected municipal boards and school boards.

Funding the NH State Library

With talk of federal funding cuts and freezes on cuts so often in the news lately, it seems to be a good moment for a refresher on how federal funding works at the New Hampshire State Library (NHSL). NHSL receives a grant annually from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), usually around April. The amount of the grant depends on both the total amount awarded to IMLS and the population in New Hampshire. Awards over the past five years have fluctuated between \$1.3 and \$1.5 million. The State Library has two federal fiscal years to spend the funds.

To be eligible to receive funds, the State Library must write a five-year plan that outlines the programs that will support the goals of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and the mission of the State Library. This plan must be approved by IMLS. The current five-year plan states:

“By engaging in activities that support its mission, the New Hampshire State Library enriches the lives of the people of New Hampshire by preserving and sharing the literary, cultural and historic heritage of the state; by providing leadership to the state’s libraries; by ensuring equal access to information for all; by supporting the

development of public policy; and by promoting the joy of reading and lifelong learning.”

The state library serves as a leader for all libraries in the state, as a knowledgeable source of information and as a broker for coordinated services. This leadership role enables the expansion of basic library services, provides a testing ground for new services, and ultimately enhances the quality of life for citizens of the Granite State.”

Each year, the State Library is required to file an annual report that accounts for each and every federal dollar and cent expended in the prior federal fiscal year. The report must also detail how the required matching state funds were allocated and expended. This report is subject to review and approval by IMLS.

As many of you are aware, the NHSL Inter-Library Loan (ILL) service operates almost entirely on federal funds. Not only are the hardworking van drivers paid with federal funding, but federal funds also provide for the state-wide union catalog and ILL software. Van maintenance and fuel are covered by the IMLS grant (about once a year), as well as vehicle replacement, as needed.

Half of the staff at Talking Books services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped staff are federally-funded employees, as is the Technology Library position. Payments for services like the New Hampshire Downloadable Books platform fee, the government digital document depository and membership to OCLC, Inc. round out the bulk of the federal funds expended by NHSL. State Library staff all work very hard to maximize both federal and state funding for the betterment of our New Hampshire public libraries. If you have any further questions, please feel free to reach out to me directly at mindy.atwood@dncr.nh.gov.



Mindy Atwood

EDITOR'S NOTE: On March 14, President Trump signed an executive order aimed at gutting seven agencies including the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The IMLS is an independent agency of the federal government established in 1996. It is the main source of federal support for libraries and museums within the United States.

The heads of the agencies have a week to submit their plans for complying with the order and outline which of their functions are statutorily required. Congress was clear in the 2018 Museum and Library Services Act that IMLS is statutorily required by Sec 9133 to send federal funding to state libraries under the Grants to States program (Sec. 9141).

Congress created this federal block grant program to support and extend library services in all the states through the state libraries. While other grant programs within IMLS are discretionary, the Grants to States program is written as a “shall”.

HB 775 – directing the department of health and human services to issue a request for proposals for supervised visitation centers.

Potential changes to Right to Know laws that library trustees should know about:

SB 259 – creating an exception to physical attendance and quorum requirements under the right-to-know law for individuals with disabilities.

HB 265 – requiring that a public body’s meeting minutes include start and end times of the meeting and the printed name and signature of the recording secretary.

HB 313 – relative to non-public sessions at public meetings where discussion in public would likely affect a person’s reputation.

Trustees Unleashed

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Curriculum Challenges in 2025, led by Chris Erchull, a lawyer with GLAD Law, and Henry Klementowicz, the Deputy Legal Director of the ACLU of New Hampshire. Tom Betteridge, President of Turning Building Science & Design, and Bethany Durgin, Moultonborough Public Library Director, will offer practical advice in **How to Maintain the Building HVAC System through Preventative Maintenance and Capital Planning**. Brodie Deshaies will repeat his morning workshop **Legislative Tracking & Policy Advocacy**. Mindy Atwood, the Assistant State Librarian for the New Hampshire State Library, and Director of the Durham Public Library Sheryl Bass, will discuss **Policies and Procedures that Support and Promote Safety in the Library**. Ron Lamarre, an architect with the firm of Finegold Alexander, and Megan Brown, who is the firm's Energy Manager, will discuss the The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) in **The Facts about Accessibility: What You Need to Know**.

Following a cookie break, the workshops resume with Bobbi Lee Slosser, Technician Librarian at the NH State Library and her presentation on Artificial Intelligence (AI) **AI in Libraries: Policy Considerations for Trustees**. Melinda Gehris and Greg Eaton, conflict agility consultants and mediators with PRISM Conflict Solutions, will help library boards to operate more effectively in **Getting Grounded: Conflict Management Styles**. Amy Nichols, Mary Ann Dempsey and Jared Davis from the NH Charitable Trust Unit will present **Library Trustee Laws, Responsibilities and Donor Gifts**. Attorney Cordell Johnson will discuss **Meetings and Nonpublic Sessions Under the Right-to-Know Law**. Rounding out our workshop offerings will be **Successful Succession Planning for Libraries**. Lara Berry, Director of the Langdon Public Library in Newington, will discuss the tools and strategies needed for trustees to prepare for staff changes and transitions.

The registration deadline is April 17. For more information be sure to visit the NHLTA website www.nhlta.org.

NHLTA 2025 Annual Conference & Annual Meeting

Trustee Essentials: Trustees Unleashed: The Must-Have Info!

May 1, 2025

DoubleTree Downtown, Manchester

7:30–8:30 am: Registration & Breakfast

8:30–8:45 am: Annual Meeting

9:00–10:00 am: Keynote Address:

The Courage to Put on the Cape

10:00–10:30 am: Break

10:30–11:45 am: WORKSHOPS 1–5

- Book Censorship ... Beyond What You Might be Familiar With
- Disaster Planning: Preparing Your Library for the Unexpected!
- Effective Employee Handbooks: Best Policies and Practices
- Legislative Tracking & Policy Advocacy
- Reducing Operating Costs with Energy Savings with NHSaves Grants

11:45 am–12:45 pm: Plated Lunch

12:45–2:00 pm: WORKSHOPS 6–10

- Book and Curriculum Challenges in 2025
- How to Maintain the Building HVAC System Through Preventative Maintenance and Capital Planning
- Legislative Tracking & Policy Advocacy
- Policies & Procedures That Promote Safety in the Library
- The Facts About Accessibility

2:00–2:30 pm: Cookie Break!

2:30–3:45 pm: WORKSHOPS 11–15

- AI in Libraries: Policy Considerations for Trustees
- Getting Grounded: Conflict Management Styles
- Library Trustee Laws, Responsibilities and Donor Gifts
- Meetings & Nonpublic Sessions Under the Right-to-Know Law
- Successful Succession Planning for Libraries

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New NHLTA Board Members

A graduate of Pinkerton Academy and UNH, **Cliff Blake** spent 25 years working in radio, at stations from Manchester, Worcester, Birmingham, Milwaukee, Kansas City, Miami, Washington, DC, to Boston and Dover. In 1996 he began a 23-year career in country music promotion, working with over 70 country acts promoting music from such stars as Faith Hill, Blake Shelton, Miranda Lambert, Tim McGraw, Luke Combs and Kenny Chesney. For the last 33 years Cliff has also been the voice you hear on New Hampshire PBS as well as a frequent emcee and on-air host. Additionally, he spent two years at NHPBS managing special events and fundraising. Since “retiring”, Cliff keeps busy as the Vice-Chair of the Dover Arts Commission, as a Dover Public Library Trustee and as a member of the Cochecho Waterfront Development Advisory Committee. He also sits on the Dover Community Trail, Graffiti, and Cochecho Arts Festival committees. Cliff and his wife Pauline live in Dover.



Sue Neiman lives in Bristol where she serves as secretary of the Minot-Sleeper Library Board of Trustees. Since retiring and moving to New Hampshire, she has become involved in different facets of the library and in serving the community. Previously, she had a career in education, teaching in elementary and middle schools, and another in Museum Visitor Services and Marketing at the Hancock Shaker Village in Pittsfield, MA. As a library trustee, she always turned to NHLTA for workshops and conferences, the website, and this newsletter, for information that would help her



to be a more competent trustee. Sue is looking forward to working with NHLTA to help other NH trustees.

Sue Whitbeck grew up in New Jersey and moved to Potter Place, NH in 1971, before moving again to Pembroke when she became principal of the town’s elementary schools. In 1999, she was named New Hampshire’s Elementary School Principal of the Year. Sue has served as a trustee of the Pembroke Town Library for more than 15 years and was its chair for many years. Currently, she is the vice chair of the board and also serves on the town’s Municipal Budget Committee. In addition to her library-centered activities, Sue enjoys quilting, traveling with her grandson and cheering on the Boston Red Sox. She joined the NHLTA board to help promote and support public libraries as they play a vital role in maintaining our democracy.



A native of Queens, New York, **Ann Xavier** studied at the Rhode Island School of Design, going on to a career teaching art in public schools for 30 years before retiring to Center Harbor, NH. After her husband passed, she became involved in volunteering for the town, becoming a member of the Center Harbor Heritage Commission. Then a friend asked her to join the James E. Nichols Memorial Library board of trustees as an alternate. She was later elected to the board and served as chair for three years. Ann currently serves as secretary of the board of trustees.



2025 NHLTA Annual Awards submission deadline is **July 11, 2025.** Visit nhlta.org for instructions, all criteria and a description of the awards.



By Jonathan Cowal,
Municipal Services
Counsel, NH Municipal
Association (NHMA)

Managing Library Funds

There are many different ways in which libraries can receive funding throughout the year. Unlike other town departments or entities, the library trustees are given special and sometimes separate authority to manage funds under RSA 202-A, where many other town departments must defer to the Select Board. To start, let us examine the most basic ways in which libraries receive and manage funds.

RSA 202-A:11, II grants library trustees the authority to prepare an annual budget indicating what support and maintenance of the free public library will be required out of public funds to operate. This budget is prepared by the trustees and submitted to the Select Board or official budget committee for consideration. While the Select Board or budget committee does have the authority to alter that budget request, RSA 202-A:4 says that towns have an obligation to raise sufficient funds to “provide and maintain adequate public library service”. While not the clearest of mandates, this language does provide some affirmative duty on the town to provide the library with adequate funding. Once the budget is approved, RSA 202-A:11 gives library trustees the authority to expend those funds without further involvement from the Select Board or town. However, it must be remembered that like any other department, library operating budgets that are not fully expended during the fiscal year lapse at the end of the year and must be returned to the general fund.

RSA 202-A:11-a also creates a special fund just for libraries where all money received from a library’s income-generating equipment shall be retained and held for the purpose of upgrading, general repairs and the purchase of books, supplies and other equipment. The money in this fund is non-lapsing meaning it can be left to accrue from year to year. In order for the library to have this non-lapsing fund, the town must vote by means of a warrant article to establish it under RSA 202-A:11-b. It is important that only funds obtained from the library’s income-generating equipment go into this account and the money is

not co-mingled with any other funds. Funds from fines and lost books should also be kept in the non-lapsing account.

So, the library receives operating funds through the budgetary process and can accumulate funds through the library’s own income-generating equipment, fines and lost book fees. But what about donations, gifts, grants, fundraisers, etc.? There are essentially three ways in which libraries can receive funds through the methods listed above, depending on what authority has been granted by the town.

The most direct way the library can receive gifts, grants, donations, etc. is through RSA 202-A:4-c and 202-A:4-d. These two statutes allow the library trustees to directly accept money and gifts, or to apply for grants, state or federal funds. Funds accepted under these statutes are accepted by the library trustees, after a public meeting or hearing depending on the amount. Funds accepted as gifts or donations are accepted by the library trustees and placed into a trust fund for the specific purpose for which they were donated. You must always remember that these funds are held in separate trust funds, and they are never co-mingled with public money from the budget or placed into the 202-A:11-a account. There does not need to be a pre-existing trust fund, as the trust fund can be created by the trustees at the time of acceptance and the trustees can name themselves as agents to expend, thus allowing the trustees to authorize expenditures from these trust funds throughout the year. It is important to always name agents to expend, because if none are named, then only the town meeting can authorize these funds to be spent. It is also important to clarify if the library trustees are allowed to spend the principal and interest on these accounts, or just the interest.

These trust funds are held by the trustees of trust funds until the library trustees authorize them to be expended. Unless, under RSA 202-A:23 the donor specifically states that the library trustees can manage the funds. Then, under this exception, the library trustees manage the accounts. Similarly, if the library trustees accept state, federal or grant funds, those funds are also held in a separate account held by the town treasurer

There are essentially three ways in which libraries can accept gifts, donations and grants, depending on what authority has been granted by the town.

until the trustees authorize expenditures. Remember, in order for the library trustees to have the power to accept funds on their own, the governing body or legislative body must have voted to grant the trustees this power. Make sure all warrants state that the “board of trustees has the authority to accept and expend.” This permission only has to be given once and remains in effect unless specifically rescinded in the future.

If the legislative body has not granted the trustees the power to accept funds, the second way they can be accepted is if the town granted the Select Board power to accept funds under RSA 31:95-b and 31:19. This process operates almost exactly the same as described above, except that it is the Select Board that must hold a public meeting or hearing to accept the funds. The Select Board creates the account where the money is held and the Select Board can choose to name themselves or the library trustees as the agents to expend. If the library trustees are named as agents to expend, everything remains largely the same as above. However, if the Select Board names themselves as agents to expend, the library trustees would need to seek Select Board approval before being able to use the money.

The third and final way in which funds

can be accepted throughout the year if the governing or legislative body has not granted the library trustees or the Select Board the necessary authority, is by a separate warrant article. Again, the process remains largely the same, except that instead of holding a public hearing to accept the money, the town would need to draft a warrant article seeking to accept the donation, create a trust fund, and name agents to expend. Obviously, this is the most burdensome option and so it is a good idea to consider adopting one or more of the statutes described above if your town has not done so already.

Finally, many towns are lucky enough to have a non-profit organization, such as the Friends of the Library or a foundation, which will occasionally seek to donate property, money or other items to the local library. The process for accepting these donations depends on which entity has the authority to accept gifts, the library trustees, the Select Board or the town meeting. Depending on the answer to that question, the Friends or the foundation would present their donation to the appropriate public body and that body would accept the funds. These trust funds are non-lapsing, held separate from all other public funds, and are allowed to accrue from year to year.

The Manchester Library's Bookmobile will be available for tours during the Spring Conference from 11:15 am to 1:15 pm. It will be parked on Pleasant Street outside the hotel entrance.



Library Trustee

The Newsletter of the
New Hampshire Library Trustees
Association

EDITOR

Katrinka Pellecchia

DESIGN & PAGE LAYOUT

Jill Shaffer Hammond

CONTRIBUTORS

Mindy Atwood

Carol Boynton

Sarah Burke Cohen

Brodie Deshaies

Susan Frankel

Lee Joyce

Marcia McLaughlin

Email submissions and
inquiries to the Editor

k.pellecchia@nhlta.org

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Summerville, SC •
m.mclaughlin@nhlta.org

Cathy Harvey, *Vice President*

Spofford • c.harvey@nhlta.org

Kathryn Parenti, *Secretary*

Milford • k.parenti@nhlta.org

Jeanne Palleiko, *Treasurer*

Newbury • j.palleiko@nhlta.org

Tammy Hooker, *Assistant Treasurer*

Hooksett • t.hooker@nhlta.org

Conrad Moses, *Past President*

East Kingston • c.moses@nhlta.org

Cliff Blake

Dover • c.blake@nhlta.org

Mark Branoff

Windham • m.branoff@nhlta.org

Connie Kirwin

Antrim • c.kirwin@nhlta.org

Renee Mallett

Windham • r.mallett@nhlta.org

Sue Nieman

Bristol • s.neiman@nhlta.org

Sue Whitbeck

Pembroke • s.whitbeck@nhlta.org

Ann B. Xavier

Center Harbor • a.xavier@nhlta.org

LIAISON TO THE BOARD

Mindy Atwood,

Assistant State Librarian

NH State Library

Denise van Zanten,

Director, Manchester City Library

NH Library Association

MISSION

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

Calendar 2025

**April 9 10:00 am–12 pm
NHLTA Regional Gathering**

Chesterfield Public Library,
524 Rt. 63, Chesterfield

**May 1 9:00 am
2025 Spring Conference &
Annual Meeting**

Breakfast and Registration
open at 7:30 am
DoubleTree Downtown,
700 Elm Street, Manchester

**May 12 10:00 am–12 pm
NHLTA Regional Gathering**

Hosted by the Newbury Public
Library and Pillsbury Free Library,
Newbury Public Library,
933 Route 103, Newbury

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