

NEW HAMPSHIRE LIBRARY TRUSTEES ASSOCIATION

2025 Spring Conference & Annual Meeting

Thursday, May 1, 2025

Trustees Unleashed: The Must-Have Info!

Welcome to the 2025 Annual Conference! Every year we aim to present fresh ideas for both new and experienced trustees, inviting a mix of former and new presenters.

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 centuries. Our keynote speaker and two workshops will address these issues. Libraries are so much more than books – and since trustees are involved in every aspect of the library, we've included workshops on maintenance, disaster planning, human resource issues and that very timely topic: AI (Artificial Intelligence).

Based on your feedback, we've moved to a larger venue, simplified payment, included parking in the registration cost and as always have tried to include topics that will resonate with attendees. New this year: the Manchester Library Bookmobile will be available for viewing, and we've added longer breaks for networking and visiting our more than 14 exhibitors. Participate in our passport card activity for a chance to win cash prizes for your library.

We look forward to seeing you in Manchester on May 1 – capes will be optional but sweaters are encouraged!

REGISTER ONLINE at
nhlta.wildapricot.org/event-6026279

Registration deadline: Thursday, April 17, 2025

\$65 NHLTA members; \$85 non-members.

One submission per person

Payment is due at the time of registration. If you have questions, please contact Ashley Methot at: nhlibrarytrustees@nhmunicipal.org

CANCELLATION POLICY: No refunds will be issued for conference cancellations made after April 17, 2025. If you are unable to attend and need to transfer your registration, please notify Ashley Methot as soon as possible at nhlibrarytrustees@nhmunicipal.org.

PARKING: A parking garage is located adjacent to the Doubletree Downtown Hotel. With ticket validation, parking is paid for by the Conference. Attendees staying overnight at the hotel may park overnight. **To validate your parking ticket, you must bring your parking ticket with you into the hotel to be validated at the conference registration area located in the assembly area.**

NHLTA 2025 Spring Conference & Annual Meeting

Thursday, May 1, 2025
Doubletree Downtown
700 Elm Street
Manchester, NH

PREMIER SPONSOR

DrummondWoodsum
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

7:30–8:30 am

Registration & Breakfast

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8:30–8:45 am

Welcome & NHLTA
Business Meeting

8:45–10 am

Keynote: The Courage to
Put on the Cape

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10:00–10:30 am

Break/Visit Exhibitors

10:30–11:45 am

Workshops 1–5

11:15–1:15 pm

Visit the Manchester
Bookmobile parked
on Pleasant Street

11:45–12:45 pm

Plated Lunch

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12:45–2 pm

Workshops 6–10

2– 2:30 pm

Cookie Break! Visit Exhibitors

SPONSOR



2:30–3:45 pm

Workshops 11–15

Thursday, May 1, 8:45–10:00 am

Keynote: The Courage to Put on the Cape: How Library Trustees Can Harness Their Power for Good

Over the last several years, book censorship has grown at an astronomical rate across the country.



This is happening both in school and public libraries, but even more than titles being pulled from shelves, these incredible institutions of democracy have themselves been subject to attack. A not-insignificant part of the attack is coming from those

who have been entrusted by the public to protect and support these institutions: library trustees

themselves. This keynote will explore where and how public libraries and school libraries have seen trustees attempt to destabilize the very organizations for which they've been appointed or elected to serve. But this will not be a talk that leaves you feeling discouraged or defeated, it will highlight the incredible work already being done by trustees and librarians to support and bolster their libraries, as well as inspire us to put on a cape and do the most good we can for our community.

Kelly Jensen is an editor at Book Riot (bookriot.com), where she 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. Prior to Book Riot, she worked in several public libraries in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. She is also the author and editor of three critically acclaimed and award-winning anthologies for young adults, including *(Don't) Call Me Crazy: 33 Voices Start the Conversation about Mental Health*. She lives in Chicago.

10:30–11:45 am

1 Book Censorship ... Beyond What You Might be Familiar With

Since 2020, book censorship has been on an astronomical rise nationwide. While the freedom to read has been enshrined by law in some states, in other states – including New Hampshire – that freedom isn't necessarily guaranteed. This session will give an overview of how book censorship goes beyond what you might be familiar with, as well as where and how libraries, library workers, and library advocates have stepped up to protect and support one of the most popular and beloved public goods in America.

Kelly Jensen. See Keynote above.

2 Disaster Planning: Preparing Your Library for the Unexpected!

Disasters can strike at any time, leaving your library vulnerable to damage, disruption, and chaos. In this presentation, the Hooksett Library directors share firsthand experiences from a recent flooding event,

and the lessons learned. Discover practical strategies to safeguard your disaster preparedness, streamline your response, and ensure a speedy recovery. Whether you're dealing with natural disasters, building emergencies, or unexpected challenges, this session will empower you with the tools to safeguard your library and its valuable resources. At the end of their presentation, the speakers invite participation from participants who can share their own first-hand experiences with disaster.

Mark Glisson, the Assistant Director of the Hooksett Library, has worked in the library field for more than 20 years, providing technology support and training for both librarians and patrons. He also serves as the Co-Chair of the NHLA-ITS Section. His passion is to keep abreast of emerging technologies, promote and facilitate positive user experiences with relevant technologies, including cybersecurity and artificial intelligence.

Heather Rainier has been the Director of the Hooksett Library since 2005. Heather earned her undergraduate degree from New England College while working at the Danforth Library. After graduation, Heather worked at the Tracy Memorial Library in New London while earning her Masters in Library Science from Simmons College.

3 Effective Employee Handbooks: Best Policies and Practices

Employee handbooks are a valuable tool for both employers and employees; they communicate expectations, promote fairness in employee management and reduce employer risk. This presentation will provide an easy-to-follow roadmap to help you review your current handbook and develop one that is clear, concise and meets the needs of both employees and the library. We will discuss the topics every handbook should include; formatting and drafting tips; and how best to separate employee policies from the procedures the board or director needs to implement the handbook. The presentation will include hot topics such as drug-testing policies, social media and dress codes.

Hannah Devoe is an attorney in Drummond Woodsum's Employer and Labor practice group. She works with public and private employers throughout New Hampshire, counseling clients in all aspects of employment law and workplace issues. She reviews and drafts employee handbooks, and employer policies and procedures to ensure compliance with state and federal laws, as well as best practices.

4 Legislative Tracking & Policy Advocacy

This presentation will cover keeping track of state legislation and how to advocate for or against it. The best advocacy strategies at different points during the process will also be highlighted.

Brodie Deshaies works as a Legislative Advocate for the NH Municipal Association, providing advocacy services to NH cities and towns before the state legislature and other state policymakers. Brodie's previous experience includes working as the Communications & Policy Manager for NH Hunger Solutions; being a political consultant; and serving as a NH State Representative.

5 Reducing Operating Costs through Energy Savings with NHSaves Grants

The presenter will explain the ways in which the NHSaves program can help reduce energy usage in your library, and outline how to apply for a free assessment, adapt the project plan to meet local funding ability, and matching funds. Only projects with a short payback period will be approved, so local funding will always pay for itself in a few years through savings.

Jessi Dustin is an Energy Efficiency Consultant at Ever-source, supporting municipalities and small businesses in NH.

Her background experience includes managing MassCEC's Internship program and working with climate-tech startups at Greentown Labs to develop academic and industrial partnerships. She holds a Master's degree in Sustainability and Environmental Management from Harvard University.

Nancy Ladd, the Library Director at the Pillsbury Free Library in Warner since 1985, has been involved in a major building addition, and managed several energy efficiency projects including four with help from NHSaves.

12:45–2:00 pm

6 Book and Curriculum Challenges in 2025

This session will discuss the 'state of play' in NH with respect to book challenges, focusing broadly on issues related to book censorship with a special emphasis on LGBTQ+ related materials, as well as the need for solid policies to protect libraries when a challenge is submitted. The session will also include discussion of written advocacy that GLAD Law and the ACLU-NH have engaged in concerning book bans in recent years.

Chris Erchull joined GLAD Law in 2019. He is actively engaged with policy work and litigation across New England, with a particular focus on advocating for transgender rights in New Hampshire. Chris also works with New England families and schools to ensure that LGBTQ+ students are afforded equal educational opportunities.

Henry Klementowicz is the Deputy Legal Director of the ACLU of New Hampshire, focusing on advancing civil rights and civil liberties at the State House, and in state and federal courts in New Hampshire. He received his JD from Georgetown University Law Center, and his BS from Columbia University.

7 How to Maintain the Building HVAC System through Preventative Maintenance and Capital Planning

This will be a presentation on building maintenance and how to apply a sustainability lens when planning. Topics include: How to maintain the library building's heating, cooling, and ventilation (HVAC) system through preventative maintenance and capital planning; how to identify areas where energy can be saved through building enhancements and HVAC system modifications; how to plan for future improvements; and book and occupant health and wellness, protecting the building assets and its patrons.

Brittany Durgin has served as a librarian in New Hampshire for 10 years. She currently is the director of the Moultonborough Public Library and is a member of the NHLA Legislative Committee and Sustainability Committee.

Tom Betteridge is the President of Turning Building Science & Design and a member of ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers) which is an organization with a vision for “A healthy and sustainable built environment for all.” He has served on the Bow Building and Facilities Committee where he focused on setting up capital improvement plans for the town buildings.

8 Legislative Tracking & Policy Advocacy

See the description and speaker bio above.

9 Policies and Procedures that Support and Promote Safety in the Library

Though it may be hard to believe, over the past 12-18 months, a number of New Hampshire libraries have reported instances of physical and/or verbal assault in the library and some of these instances have been perpetrated against library staff. These incidents are not limited to our larger, more urban libraries. One episode took place in a town with a population of about 2,000 residents. This workshop will review key legal terms and offer edits, changes or additions for trustee boards to consider as they engage in their periodic review of library policies.

Mindy Atwood is the Assistant State Librarian for the New Hampshire State Library. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from Middlebury College and a Master’s degree in Library Science from Clarion University. She is an NHLA Past-President and in 2024, received the Impact Award from the New Hampshire School Library Media Association for her work in that role.

Sheryl Bass is the Director of the Durham Public Library. She holds a Master’s degree in Library and Information Science from Wayne State University and is a dedicated advocate for the transformative role of libraries in building informed and connected communities. In addition to her work at the library, she serves as Treasurer of NHLA and as Chair of the Urban Library Administrators Consortium.

10 The Facts about Accessibility: What you Need to Know

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) initially published in 1992, has become a federal requirement for all public buildings, including public libraries. Accessi-

bility is more than a ramp or an elevator. Accessibility enables ALL your patrons to feel a sense of safety, a sense of belonging, and the freedom to enjoy your library on their terms. This presentation will review the facts about the ADA and NH accessible code requirements, and how simple strategies can transform your library into your desired, accessible environment.

Ron Lamarre, AIA, ALEP, ALA, LEED-WELL AP enjoys planning and designing inspiring environments that encourage life-long learning. His success is attributed to listening to clients, colleagues, and community members. He considers it an honor to lead the design process that creates memorable libraries and conducts continuous research to understand and implement evolving technologies, enabling long-lasting value.

Megan Brown, AIA, CPHD, LEED AP BD+C As Finegold Alexander’s Energy Manager, Megan’s work centers on holistic carbon reduction in the construction and use of buildings. She has a particular interest in breaking down the challenges associated with existing buildings, blending design-thinking with building science to help owners capture energy savings and create healthier environments.

2:30–3:45 pm

11 AI in Libraries: Policy Considerations for Trustees

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping how we work and make decisions. For public libraries, AI can save time, enhance services, and uncover trends. However, these benefits come with important policy and ethical considerations. This session will explore the positive and negative impacts of AI. Live demonstrations will show how AI can assist with tasks like generating publicity materials, streamlining analysis, and boosting productivity. We will also discuss AI policies for responsible use, privacy protection, and keeping decision-making human-centered. Attendees will gain a clearer understanding of AI’s capabilities, risks, and practical policy insights for thoughtful integration into library operations. Attendees are encouraged to ask questions and share perspectives at the end of the session.

Bobbi Lee Slossar has served as the Technology Librarian at the New Hampshire State Library since 2005. She works to bring emerging technologies – from digitization to MakerPlay to 3D printing – to all NH public libraries, regardless of their size, staffing, or budget.

12 Getting Grounded: Conflict Management Styles

Conflicts come in all sizes and shapes and we all deal with conflicts in different ways. Knowing your default conflict management style, as well as how other trustees deal with conflict, is a critical foundational element to managing conflict effectively on your board. With this awareness comes choice and the opportunity to respond, rather than simply react, when faced with conflict. Greater awareness leads to better working relationships and board efficiency. This workshop explores different styles of conflict management and how they impact boards, which conflict styles are most difficult for individuals to address and manage, and the implications of conflict management styles for trustees. The format includes several interactive learning activities.

Melinda Gehris and **Greg Eaton** are conflict agility consultants and mediators with PRISM Conflict Solutions. PRISM provides coaching, training, consulting and facilitated conversations for individuals, teams and organizations dealing with conflict. Melinda has been a library trustee for more than 10 years; Greg was also a library trustee for more than 20 years.

13 Library Trustees Law, Responsibilities and Donor Gifts

This is an overview of the Attorney General's Office of Charitable Trusts Unit oversight related to public Libraries and Friends of the Libraries (non-profit organizations) and the laws pertaining to public libraries and the trustees' responsibilities, regulations and roles. Topics include donor restricted gifts (funds) and the proper tracking, management and modification of those funds; how funds in the custody of the library trustees differ from the funds held by the town and the trustees of the trust funds; how funds are reported; and how library trustees should properly manage any funds they have. There will be an interactive portion in the presentation where the trustees can participate in typical scenarios related to donor restricted gifts, as well as time for FAQs.

Amy Nichols, CPA serves as the Financial Investigator for the Charitable Trust Unit (CTU) of New Hampshire Department of Justice. Amy earned her Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Franklin Pierce University and a Master's Certificate from Southern NH University. Amy has worked in senior management as Finance Director for non-profit organizations and has volunteered and served on the boards of directors of several charitable organizations in New Hampshire.

Mary Ann Dempsey is the Director of the NH Charitable Trust Unit of the NH Attorney General's Office in Concord, NH. She earned her JD from Boston College Law School. Mary Ann has previously served as Civil Bureau Chief for the AG's Office, legal counsel to former Governor Margaret Wood Hassan, and general counsel to the New Hampshire Judicial Branch. Mary Ann is a member of the NHBA's Public Sector Law Section.

Jared Davis is the Charitable Trusts Unit's Assistant Director. He is a graduate of the University of Connecticut and Vanderbilt University Law School. Before joining the Charitable Trusts Unit, Jared served as a judicial law clerk with the U.S. Court of Appeals and the District of New Hampshire.

14 Meetings and Nonpublic Sessions Under the Right-to-Know Law

This session will discuss the legal requirements for library trustee meetings under the Right-to-Know Law, with a particular focus on nonpublic sessions. The law on nonpublic sessions is frequently misunderstood and abused; this session will help trustees to comply with the law and avoid common errors.

Cordell Johnston has practiced law in New Hampshire for more than 40 years. Formerly Government Affairs Counsel at the New Hampshire Municipal Association, he now practices on his own, representing towns and cities. He writes and speaks frequently on municipal law topics, especially land use and the Right-to-Know Law.

15 Successful Succession Planning for Libraries

Library management and staff are staying in positions for shorter terms and taking longer to replace, leading to stress in library workplaces that often becomes a vicious cycle causing further attrition. This session adapts Ray Gordon's 2023 NHMA article "Ten Steps to Succession Planning" for libraries, giving tools and strategies to prepare for change before it happens to maximize organizational integrity, improve morale and sustain service during and after significant transitions.

Lara Berry is the Director of the Langdon Public Library in Newington and a former trustee and chair of the Harvey-Mitchell Memorial Library in Epping. Lara holds a Masters in Education from Plymouth State University, a BA in English from UNH, and an MLIS from San Jose State University. She currently serves on the NHLA EDI Committee, and as Seacoast Library Co-op Chair.

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