

Northwood Libraries
Board of Trustees meeting 4/11/25
Minutes APPROVED

In attendance: Betty Smith, Chair; Pat Vaillancourt, Treasurer; David R Coursin, Secretary, Dana Hochgraf, Alternate; Donna Bunker, Library Director.

The monthly board meeting was called to order by the Chair at 9:06am.
The minutes from 3/28/25 were reviewed and a motion to accept was carried 3-0.

Monthly Reports

Treasurer's Report

Q1 Reports for the Library Trustee's Fund and The Grano Gift Fund were reviewed and discussed. The Trustee's Fund line item "Donation from Master Gardeners" was changed to \$250, reflecting the most recent total donation. No other changes were necessary.

We reviewed the status of the Trustee's Fund as a non-lapsing checking account belonging solely to the CML Board of Trustees. The Board is responsible for all decisions about the use of the funds. The funds are separate from funds provided through the town operating budget, and the Board is charged with using the Trustee's Fund in the best interests of CML to ensure its continued ability to provide services to the community.

The town is facing significant budget challenges in the coming year, consistent with those arising throughout the state. The attendees discussed this situation and the need to be prepared for possible requests to reduce library expenditures. The attendees unanimously agreed to place this topic of preparedness on the agenda for the 5/9/25 meeting, to be reviewed in the context of the relevant RSAs.

As a result of the cuts to the NH State Library (NHSL), CML may lose the ability to support downloadable audio books. Interlibrary loan services may be severely impacted. CML may have to rely increasingly on book purchases to offer new publications. The Trustees recognize the challenge of balancing emerging issues like this with funding issues the town may face.

Director's report

The most recent tallies for community usage of the library were reviewed and were as follows:

March computer tally: 37 patrons

March downloadable audiobooks: 821 items

March circulation: 1,033 items

March new patrons: 17

Total number of registered library card holders as of 3/31/25: 1,129

The schedule for 18 upcoming events in April was reviewed. An inquiry about children and adolescent attendance revealed that the last paint program for children had 11 participants ~~17 signups to date~~ and the sock hop draws 19-21 participants. These numbers reflect the usual attendance levels.

Expenditure Report

The Town report of General Library Fund expenditures and co-encumbrances for Q1 was reviewed. An inquiry was made about the figures reported in “% Exp” column. This figure is the YTD percent of the total budgeted for the year that has been expended, not the percent of the total that is remaining. The director reported that a small additional amount may be added to the Library total budget since the town voted for COLA increases in specified salaries for the year.

Co-encumbrances arising from books purchase in 2024 that have not been received yet will be paid out of the 2024 budget.

Trustee Business

Budget Report

The town budget figures were reviewed. The director reported that further cuts to the default budget could arise from the upcoming townwide reappraisal. A reappraisal of town property values is required by law every five years. The town had contracted for it, but the funds for this contract were voted down by the town. The town is awaiting a report from the Dept of Revenue Administration (DRA). Can the town use unassigned funds to pay appraisers? If not, further cuts to the current budget will be needed to meet this obligation.

Old Business

Bryant Building

The condition of the Bryant building was reviewed with continued concerns about cracks in walls, the mini split not working properly and roof repairs. The condition of the CML chimney was reviewed. The town Building Inspector and a Dept of Public Works representative will be involved in resolving these problems.

The Lift

The director received three bids for installing a new lift. The secretary reviewed the bids and was able to meet with Brian Lake from Accessibility NE. Mr. Lake was visiting the library to finalize measurements and confirmed his would be an estimate for a turn-key installation, except for installation of an overhead light and an operating phone in the lift. All the bids were forwarded to the town administrator with the opinion of the director and secretary that the Accessibility NH estimate was the closest to the turnkey proposal requested by the town-

New Business

CDSR Grant

The NH Clean Energy Circuit Rider grant was submitted on time. This pursues funding through Congressionally Directed Spending Requests (CDSR) for 2026. The future of all grant funding is unclear, but it was very important to complete the submission, and the Board expressed its appreciation for the director’s efforts to accomplish this. In the best of outcomes, CML will succeed in obtaining grant funding. At the very least, it is now prepared to evaluate future opportunities for energy infrastructure improvements.

The director presented a Clean Energy NH bulletin about the Randolph, NH, town library. The town raised the funds needed to fix issues identified in their energy audit and to convert to solar panels to supply electricity for the library. The librarian and active community members gained support from their selectboard and ultimately from town citizens who voted to establish a capital

reserve fund for energy efficiency. Melissa Elander, from NH Clean Energy, helped with the grant submissions. She is the consultant who helped CML with its submission. Resolving the issues with their energy audit led to a 40% savings on the library's energy bill, before breaking ground in their solar installation.

Despite the many budget cuts to be faced in the coming year, CML and Northwood may be able to learn from their experience about how to gain more energy efficiency.

IMLS Funding

The future of IMLS funding was reviewed and discussed. 14 positions at the NHSL are supported by IMLS funds and all may be affected. The NHSL may be funded through 4/2026, but funds already distributed to several libraries around the country have been frozen, and others are holding back on using distributed funds with concerns that they may also be frozen.

Public printer

The public printer needs to be replaced.

Motion was carried 3-0 for the director to spend up to \$400 for a Brother printer/scanner and toner, the amount to be paid from the Trustee's Fund.

Honoring Recent Board Members

Both Janet Clark and Karen Riley have cycled off the board, and the attendees discussed a brunch at the library to honor their work. The secretary offered to contact both and confirm a date, hopefully after the next board meeting, at 11:30a on 5/9/25.

Information Bulletins

The impact of IMLS defunding, mentioned above, is unfolding and is summarized in updated reports from the NHSL. The electronic downloadable eBook system may be halted. It has been an efficient and effective way to expand access the publications. The Interlibrary loan system may be defunded. This has been an essential service, converting each individual library into the equivalent of a statewide library, so citizens have vastly improved access to publications and information. Some communities are discussing the feasibility of creating local consortiums for lending materials community. The Suncook Interlibrary Cooperative is currently exploring this, but it's currently unclear how CML might be a part of these efforts.

The attendees discussed the value of publishing further Information Bulletins, and all agreed with this approach. The secretary agreed to draft a follow up bulletin.

Election of New Board Officers

A motion to elect officers of the board carried 3-0 and the following were elected unanimously:

Betty Smith – Chair

Pat Vaillancourt – Treasurer

David Coursin – Secretary

Other Business

NHLTA Conference

Attendance at the NHLTA conference in May was reviewed and discussed. Attendees coordinated their attendance at the individual sessions so, collectively, they could attend as many sessions as possible.

A motion to adjourn was carried 3-0 and the meeting adjourned at 11am.

The next meeting is 5/9/25 at 9:00am.

David R Coursin
Secretary