

Northwood Libraries Board of Trustees Meeting
6/13/25
FINAL

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

A motion to call the meeting to order carried unanimously at 9:05 a.m.

Budget Review with Matt Frye

Matt Frye attended the meeting as a representative of the Northwood Selectboard (NSB) to establish ongoing communication with the CML Board and we changed the agenda to speak with him first. The NSB currently faces budget challenges related to the \$116,000 cost of the 2025 property revaluation required by the state. This must come from the general fund at this point, and it is not in the town budget. The NSB hopes to pay for it out of the unexpended fund balance, but this depends on state permission to use those funds to pay for the expense as an emergency. Absent this permission, further cuts will be needed.

CML has already cut \$16,591 from its projected budget for 2025 to meet default budget limits. The Trustees are very concerned about any further cuts because of their impact on basic library services and community programs. Nothing is more basic than the availability of new books and this was compromised by last year's cuts. Historically, we have had the resources to purchase up to \$2000/ month of new books. This expenditure is already reduced to \$713/month in order to meet the default budget. The town is not requesting further cuts from us at this point, but this may yet be a worrisome issue. CML has eliminated "wants" from its budget and we would be hobbling our ability to manage our "needs" with further cuts.

The trustees want to interact with the NSB on a regular basis and not just when emergencies arise. Structuring this will be an agenda item for a future meeting.

Minutes

- The minutes for the May 9, 2025, Trustees Meeting, and the May 29, 2025, Working Group were reviewed and accepted with a unanimous vote.
- "Final" had been the identifier in the past for the final version accepted at the following meeting. We will continue to follow that convention, with early versions identified as Drafts_1, _2, etc. for successive draft versions. We won't use "Approved" as described in the 5/9/25 minutes.

Treasurer's Report

- The report was brief, covering the intervening bank statements with little activity. We discussed our \$30 charge for a non-resident library card and did not think we should increase it further after comparing our charges to similar libraries and larger ones.

Director's Report

- We reviewed and discussed the June 2025 report found in the addendum.
- Trustees unanimously agreed that the library should be closed from June 30-July 6 for the Fourth of July week.
- Summer reading program theme: "Level Up at Your Library"
- The Friends of the Library are funding the summer reading program prizes again with \$300 to be used to purchase \$50 gift cards to different attractions, with one prize card each week to one of that week's participants.

Trustee Business

- We reviewed the prudent use of the trustees checking account and the interest from the CML trust accounts. Regarding maintenance and repair, we face expenses that belong to the town administration. Regarding the purchase of essentials like books, we face the default budget that belongs to the voters. We run the risk of both assuming we will handle problems we didn't create. We need to establish decision-making criteria so we can make the best use of these funds with the least unintended consequence.
- Alfred Parsons Trust Fund has \$800 available for children's music books.
- By unanimous vote the trustees approved \$528.88 purchase from The Symphony Store using the Trustees checking account. The director will submit this to the town to determine if reimbursement is possible, given the current procedure.
- Trust fund payment procedures need review to include situations in which the vendor requires an upfront payment, as with The Symphony Store. Their inventory is always changing, and we need to purchase the books recommended by the director now or they may not be available by the time the present procedure is completed.
- Total available trust funds: \$4,000 for books, \$1,865 for maintenance.
- RSA 202-A was not meant to be a topic on our agenda.

Old Business

Bryant Library Building Issues

- Leak discovered June 7th during museum hours.
- Missing section of slate roof and ridge cap issues identified.
- Staff placed buckets and plastic sheeting to protect materials.
- Chris Brown and Devin Haley are investigating repairs.
- The existing maintenance agreement calls for the town to manage any repairs, so it makes sense for the town to do regular building checks. We need help from Chris and Devin with this.
- Restoration requirements for a registered historic building complicate the repair. Apparently, the source for replacement slates no longer exists. It's unclear if alternative materials or colors are OK.

Lift

- Lift installation will hopefully proceed in mid-October per the contract, but supply chain issues may influence this.

Shirefest Event Planning

- The trustees unanimously approved up to \$1,191 for the August 16th event.
- It has already grown, and our support is likely to stimulate more participation.
- Three libraries participating (expanded from two last year).

- Budget includes crafts (\$361), entertainment (\$300), games (\$130), costumes (\$150), prizes (\$250).
- Trustees unanimously agreed that the Library will close that day to allow full staff participation.
- Event will serve as a summer reading program finale.

Solar Funding

- Recommended Solar Array with Battery Backup (\$61,840) for town CIP.
- Would replace previous generator request.
- Priorities listed as: resource protection, financial return, quality of life improvement.
- Awaiting CDSR grant decision (September earliest).

New Business

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

- We've been asked to submit our request to the CIP. We reviewed the detailed estimate for installing the solar array and battery backup that came from the recent grant application. We agreed this would be our submission for the reasons cited above. It meets the requirements of a capital improvements: cost >\$25K, lifespan >3 years.

Informational Bulletin #3 and Newsletter

- At this point, the bulletin and the newsletter refer to the same thing.
- We discussed whether to post bulletin #3 on the library's website and decided not to because the information is already outdated. It was delayed in the effort to have it fact checked through the State Library.
- We agreed that future newsletters should be reviewed by the trustees within a week after a meeting, allowing for timely approval and posting.
- The newsletter will be called the Northwood Libraries Update.
- We will post on the library's website and send it to our email list when we have a new one.
- We will also post it on the Northwood Community Chat Facebook page. Jen Daniels, an administrator, reviewed the existing Northwood Libraries Update from 6/4/25, approved it for posting and will monitor the response. It's our understanding the administrators will close off comments if they become contentious but will continue to post the updates.
- An edited version of the update is now published in the June 2025 edition of Our Northwood News, page 5. <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61560494055595>

Project List

- No revision since January 2024 and the list continues to include long-standing issues, i.e. the roof at Bryant, marked as an immediate concern for several years.
- We will review the list and prioritize the current items as best we can, knowing that we can't complete those that depend on the town budget.
- We would benefit from professional building consultant's assessment.
- We tabled the discussion for the next meeting to begin the review and discuss our own funding of a consultant.

Shed

- Water leakage issues.
- Caulking and leveling have been done to limit leakage through the door which is out of plum. This is not likely to be a permanent solution.

- The trustees had authorized up to \$500 for repairs, but so far, the expenses have been minimal, with no labor charges yet.
- The situation is being monitored to ensure the problem is resolved, with efforts to dry out the shed and check for leaks after rain.

Volunteer Project List

- We want to ensure that listed tasks do not overlap with the duties of librarians.
- A draft list has been developed based on examples from other libraries and will be emailed to the trustees for review before the next meeting.

Volunteer Requests

- Two volunteer requests approved.
 - Caitlin Linsky (CBNA senior project) - arts programming
 - Cassidy McGann (sophomore) - Shirefest preparation

Other Business

Director's Annual Evaluation

- The director has completed 38 years of service.
- The annual evaluation is due this month and trustees will review material forwarded by the director so this can be completed.

Future Planning & Concerns

- Significant funding cuts in 2026-2027 due to state and federal legislation seems likely. If they do result in drastic reduction or elimination of basic services, we need to take that into account when spending trustee funds and interest from CML trusts.
- We need to explore a potential consortium approach for e-books and services if we have to fund them ourselves.
- Monitor responses to our public updates.
- Determine if CML can reduce its energy expenses by participating in Our Town Energy Alliance.

Director's Report Addendum:

CHESLEY MEMORIAL LIBRARY

JUNE 2025 REPORT

March computer tally: 37 patrons

April computer tally: 59 patrons

May computer tally: 39 patrons

March Downloadable Audiobooks: 821 items

April Downloadable Audiobooks: 797 items

May Downloadable Audiobooks: 774 items

March circulation: 1,033 items

April circulation: 1,215 items

May circulation: 1,122 items

March new patrons: 17

April new patrons: 15

May new patrons: 7

Total number of registered library card holders: 1,150

NOTES

1) Library closed June 30-July 6 (Fourth of July week)

2) Library staff members will visit Northwood School on June 11 and June 18 to promote the Summer Reading Program

3) “Level Up @ Your Library” Summer Reading Program registration begins June 23

MEETINGS

June 13 – Trustee Meeting 9:00am

June 16 – Friends Meeting 4:00pm

PROGRAMS

June 2, 9, 16, 23 - Senior Café 1:00pm

June 4 - Afternoon Book Discussion 2:00pm

June 5 – Genealogy Workshop 2:00pm

June 7 – Build a Birdhouse 9:00am (Grano Children’s Initiative)

June 9 – Junior Writers 4:00pm

June 10 - Junior Book Club 4:30pm

June 13 – National Library of Costa Rica Virtual Tour 12:00pm

June 17 – Chesley Writers 3:30pm

June 18 – Evening Book Discussion 7:00pm (via Google Meet)

GIFTS

Cavarretta Gardens – 707 First NH Turnpike – lettuce, peppers, squash, tomatoes, watermelons, pansies, marigold, sage

Margaret Walker – PO Box 36 - Books: “Bicycling With Butterflies” by Sara Dykman, “Birding to Change the World” by Trish O’Kane; Items – Wind chimes, solar lanterns (also donated her time to paint the raised garden beds!)