

Northwood Libraries Board of Trustees Meeting

Date: 10/10/25

Final

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

A motion to call the meeting to order carried unanimously at 9:04 a.m.

Minutes

- Minutes for 9/12/25 reviewed with minor changes and accepted

Treasurer's Report

- Reports were reviewed and accepted

Director's Report

- Book purchases continue at a conservative pace, but vendors maybe an issue (see New Business)
- Library of Things: carpet cleaner and kids' metal detector out of service; considering replacement with carpet cleaner as priority now; window cleaning deferred to 2026; carpets will be cleaned now, using Bright Magic, our past vendor who does good work.
- Library card holder numbers have increased by 20% YTD.
- We are partnering with Northwood Brewery for the FallFest and there are parking issues that may require parking at Northwood Diner across the street. More police coverage at the pedestrian crossing might be needed, a cost we would not be responsible for.

Expenditure Report

- 64% of budgeted resources remain with about 25% of the year's budget remaining; discretionary spending restricted town-wide and the library director is managing our budget well, given those constraints
- The resources to pay for the completed property reassessment costs required by RSA are still an issue and the final resolution may yet affect how much we can spend under the current budget.
- Hopefully, we will get more details during our 10/16/25 meeting with Mr. Irvine and Ms. Eastman

Trustee Business:

Budget for 2026

- The board continues to follow recommendation from the town that we include what we need in proposed budget
- The board approved the items to be included in the budget at the budget work session on 9/23/25 and asked the director to finish calculations
- The director has completed salary calculations including grade/step changes for the two full-time positions approved by the board, but associated health insurance costs are currently unknown given possible major increase in premiums
- The consequences of continued operating under an outstripped default budget continue to mount, including challenges in replacing our Technical Librarian due to low salary and lack of benefits, as just one example

Trust Funds

- Awaiting reimbursement from Alfred Parsons Trust for music books; process remains slow and difficult

Old Business:

Bryant

- Plan to invite Historical Society to next regular meeting to discuss oversight/caretaker responsibilities and issues related to the MOU

Preservation Consultant/Historic Building Assessment

- Consultant has reserved a spring 2026 slot for our work; will reconnect early in new year for schedule, agreement, and deposit. She can advise on grant application prep in the meantime

Project List/Building Maintenance

- Side deck board loose and repeated informal fixes have not resolved issues. This is a risk for the library overall as it potentially affects our response to an emergence. Specific safety issues are connected to the Senior Café preference for side entrance because of walking distance and because uneven, unpredictable surface is especially hazardous to them.
- The director will email Neil to elicit the town's help to resolve this with a permanent fix.

New Business

Baker & Taylor

- Vendor appears to be going out of business, recent orders heavily backordered
- There are few alternatives providing the service we need. Exploring Ingram as the main remaining national alternative and possible partnerships with local bookstores (e.g., Gibson's).

Correspondence

- Thank you notes to the library from Northwood Historical Society (Lafayette display) and Barnstead Library (Shirefest event)

Knotweed

- Kudos to Pat Savage who has cleared out the major growth. Cuttings are bagged behind the library with the plan to keep them there as recommended so sun/frost can help in killing plants before removal.
- We will invite Paul Eaton (Keeping It Native) to January meeting for guidance, coordinate with abutter (Willow K.), and explore how to maintain pollinator habitat

Lift

- Accessibility New England estimates installation last week of Oct or first week of Nov; expect 4–5 days closure for demo/installation.
- Staff may do downstairs deep cleaning during that time if construction allows
- The director will clarify dust mitigation expectations with contractor

Little Free Library

- Norma Heroux has offered a free standing little library structure to be installed on library property.
- Trustees have decline a similar offer in past. Maintenance responsibilities, patrons using it to drop off library books, risk management issues, and siting were issues. The same issues persist, and the board declined the offer.

Painting

- Quote received from Jeff Mackee: \$1,824 total; \$427 hallway/landing priority; youth room/bath/kitchen/teen room included

- Need two additional quotes for town purchasing; could use 2025 maintenance line for funds (approx. \$5,000 remaining); schedule after lift work

Solar Update

- Grant may not be released in midst of federal shutdown if it is approved. Work must start prior to 12/31/25 to retain 30% tax credit. This seems unlikely and project cannot proceed without the credit
- Ms. Kasper, the coordinator with Clean Energy NH referred to a need for a ballot measure in order to proceed. We don't know what she is referring to as any ballot measures would not arise until March voting, well past the essential start date. The director will clarify with Ms. Kasper.

Technology Librarian

- Six interviews completed; two second interviews scheduled; one strong candidate declined due to \$19.99/hr and lack of benefits
- Role requires blend of tech support plus creative programming, newsletters, posters, and story time support that is hard to find and especially so given current offer.

Winter Maintenance

- Town responsible for plowing/shoveling walks/sidewalks; must be done by opening (10 AM)
- We depend on the town for snow removal, so we need a reliable commitment. Otherwise we'll need to close the library more often.
- During storms or unsafe conditions, director will confer with board chair to delay/close; post notices to WMUR, website, and Facebook

Other Business

- Master Plan (land-use map) "open house" tentatively scheduled at library on 10/27/25
Oct 27

Next Steps

- Email Mr. Irvine about deck safety issues
- Schedule Historical Society meeting for November
- Follow up on solar project requirements with Ms. Kasper
- Complete painter estimates for purchase order
- Finalize technology librarian hiring
- Schedule carpet cleaning before winter
- Review continued spending for 2025 and our proposed 2026 budget in light of new information that may arise at 10/16/25 meeting.