

The background features a light gray sky with several stylized white and gray clouds. A bright sun is visible in the upper right quadrant, casting a soft glow. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

# Post Pandemic Libraries

What Has Changed, What Hasn't,  
and Where We Can Go From Here



Lori Fisher, Assistant State Librarian  
NH State Library  
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# Disclaimer, of course...

I am not an attorney, nor do I play one on TV. The information shared in this presentation is gleaned mainly through conversations with staff of national professional organizations and my colleagues from across the nation, webinars attended over the past year and a half, and my own personal experience with assisting librarians, library trustees, and library advocates during the COVID-19 pandemic. This information should guide you in best practices, but specific circumstances in each community should be strongly considered when making any decisions regarding library resources, services, and staff. And as I always say, ALL library policies should be vetted by an attorney for your library/town prior to adoption/revision.





# What Has Changed

- How we interact with each other
- Community expectations around service, pivoting, and how quickly we respond
- Our reserves of resiliency, compassion, patience, and empathy are depleted (divisiveness in communities is more apparent)
- “Normal” has shifted to encompass ideas and behaviors that we never considered prior to 3/2020



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# What Hasn't Changed

- Our communities need opportunities for connection and communication on a regular basis
- The need for reliable sources of information that are available to EVERYONE, not just those who can afford it
- Public libraries continue to have a messaging problem – that we're outdated and concerned with just printed books
- The core responsibilities of elected library trustees remain: Funding, Advocacy, Policy-Making, and Strategic Planning

# **Four main areas for Library Trustees that we'll talk about today:**

- Library Funding
- Library Advocacy
- Fundraising
- Sustainability



# LIBRARY FUNDING

Federal, State, and Local Perspectives



# Federal Funding

## **Happening Now:**

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) funding (Spring 2020)

- NHSL received \$122,861 from IMLS CARES allocation (must be spent by 9/30/2021)
- State received \$1.25 billion (<https://www.goferr.nh.gov/covid-expenditures>) – spent by 12/31/2020

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding (Spring 2021)

- NHSL received \$2,297,692 from IMLS ARPA allocation
- Within ARPA, the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery fund provides \$350 billion for states, municipalities, etc. including \$130 billion for local governments to split evenly between municipalities and counties. For up to date info, visit the [NH Municipal Association web site](#)

## **In The Works:**

Build America's Libraries Act (BALA)

Broadband legislation in the US House and US Senate

# State/Local Funding

- What funding/services did your library receive from CARES (either IMLS CARES or through municipal CARES)?
- What funding is your library potentially going to receive through IMLS ARPA funds? Are there other ARPA funds that will be available to your library?
- Are there any broadband efforts in your County? How can your library trustees get involved/stay informed?
- Do you know what infrastructure needs your library has now? If not, can that become a priority over the next few months so that you are ready if there are federal construction monies available to libraries?



# LIBRARY ADVOCACY

Federal, State, and Local Perspectives



# Relationships Are Key

- Pandemic response has either forced more collaborative relationships, or isolated organizations away from each other more than ever. Which category does your library fall into?
- Have your library trustees completed the NHLA survey about their relationships with NH Senators, NH Executive Councilors, and our Congressional delegation? This info was sent to all library directors in early April, in the hopes that we'd have this become a regular annual activity to help NHLA document relationships and foster new connections with key state and national stakeholders.
- Did your library director take part in the April virtual meeting for librarians with either Representative Pappas (District 1) or Representative Kuster (District 2)? These are great opportunities to interact with our Congressional delegation and hear how other libraries are meeting community needs.
- Is your board functioning in a Crisis Management mindset still? How can your Board pivot to a more proactive approach to building a foundation for future crises?

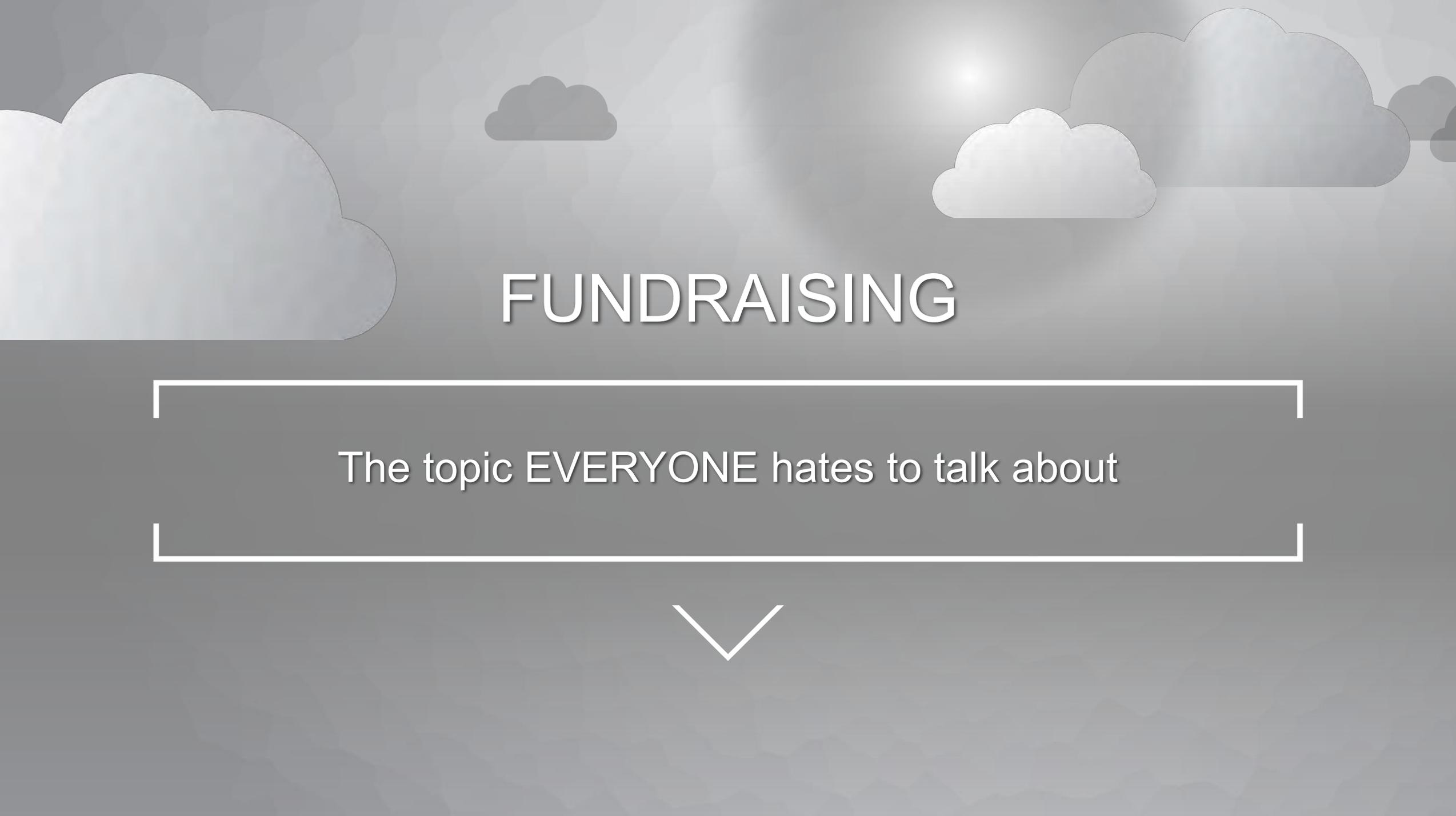
# Example: Grafton County Broadband Committee

In September 2020, Grafton County Commissioners appointed a 5-member committee dedicated to improving broadband throughout the county. Their focus is how broadband will improve economic development, distance learning, healthcare/telehealth services, and public safety.

Currently the committee is asking for support from fellow Grafton County communities to help identify and document the gaps and needs of the County through a survey and through connectivity data collected through an app, TestIt.

They have started an email distribution list so county leaders can keep current with developments, and have met with UNH staff, NH Office of Strategic Initiatives, staff from the federal Congressional delegation, and members of the state legislative delegation from the county.

For more info, email Carina Park (Campton Town Administrator), [toc.cp@camptonnh.org](mailto:toc.cp@camptonnh.org)



# FUNDRAISING

The topic EVERYONE hates to talk about



# Fundraising is a Trustee Responsibility

- Trustees should not buy into the “easy out” that Friends and Foundations are the only ones that should be concerned with fundraising
- If your library (through your staff AND Trustees) has not fostered some new relationships/partnerships with local organizations, WHY NOT? This is an important question to ask yourselves with huge ramifications on fundraising (including grants).
- Only 15% of giving comes from businesses/corporations....so make sure you are not putting all of your eggs into one basket. Use business donations to leverage private donations.
- Example – Manchester City Library Foundation’s National Library Week/Library Giving Day 24 hour Readathon on 4/7 raised over \$10,000 and fostered many new relationships and donors.
- Other targeted, library-specific days to think about: National Day of Giving (Tuesday after Thanksgiving)



# SUSTAINABILITY

Positioning Libraries for Post Pandemic Success



# What is “Sustainable” for your Library?

1. We can't continue to do everything – we must choose services and resources to focus on, based on what our community needs now (not pre-pandemic)
2. It's not a matter of virtual versus in-person services; it is a matter of choosing the format that works the best for whatever service or resource you are delivering to your community
3. What policies are in place that support your library's (and your community's) priorities? For example, do you have meeting room/program/exhibit policies that include an appeals procedure?
4. How are you supporting your library director in managing the stress and anxiety that continues to occur given that we've been in crisis-management mode for over a year?
5. How are you obtaining feedback from your community about what they need? Speaking with leadership stakeholders? Surveying users? Trying to reach non-library users? Paying attention to Selectboard meetings/issues or School Board minutes/meetings?

# What do these questions have in common?

Community needs at center of discussions

Choosing priorities [a library cannot do everything]

Regular communication with community members **OUTSIDE** of the library

Foundation for all activities is relationship building (increase pro-active support that will be there for future crises)



# CONTACT ME!

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