

NH Library Trustee

SUMMER 2023

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The Newsletter of the New Hampshire Library Trustees Association

www.NHLTA.org

Friends of the Library and Library Foundations: Supporting Libraries in Different Ways

While the challenges facing libraries seem to change from year to year - Covid, book bans, diversifying and adapting offerings as technology changes - the one constant question library trustees always seem to ask is, "Where does the money come from?" While public libraries receive the majority of their financial support from local taxes, there are two other important sources of support that should not be overlooked. Both Friends of the Library ("Friends groups") and library foundations can be valuable tools for supplementing a library's operating budget and funding special projects and needs.

Some libraries have a Friends group, some have a foundation, some have both, and some have neither. While both Friends groups and foundations are sometimes thought of interchangeably, they actually differ in a couple important respects. At the core you can think of it as Friends groups have members, while foundations have donors. Both Friends and library foundations are non-profit 501c3 organizations and follow the appropriate legal procedures in order to accept donations. It's when you start to look deeper in the details of what each group does that you start to understand the differences.

A library's Friends group is a non-profit, volunteer effort, formed of dedicated residents who support programs that improve and expand library service to the community. Friends groups are separate organizations with their own officers and structure and have nothing to do with the governance of the library or its policies. Friends groups work closely with library management to

meet the needs of the day-to-day operations. They pull their support from the local community. Your Friends group might help facilitate events at the library, send out newsletters, or drum up support from local residents when budget time comes around. While a Friends group may undertake a large capital campaign, most Friends groups raise money for the library in grass-roots ways, through membership dues, running book and bake sales, holding auctions or raffles, or counting on their personal connections to other residents to help buy equipment, to fund library improvement projects, or to fill in the gaps when an unexpected expense pops up that wasn't accounted for in the budget. Friends groups are your library's ambassadors to the community it serves, and are often an extra set of hands at library events.

A library foundation is usually a more formal organization. Some foundations may hire professional fundraisers and grant-writers. Foundations spend most of their time soliciting donations from civic organizations and corporate sponsors, or arranging bequests to fund money for the library's "big asks," creating an endowment for capital improvement projects such as a library expansion or major renovation. Foundations, like the Friends, also advocate for the library, though they are more likely to do it through their corporate connections or at state levels.

Both organizations have vital, but separate, roles to play in the life of a public library. You can find more information on Friends groups, Foundations, and how to set up these kinds of support organizations online at the NHLTA website.

by Renee Mallett,
NHLTA Board of
Directors

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Letter from the President . . .



Marcia McLaughlin
NHLTA President

Summer, 2023

I begin my note with recognition of NHLTA's Education Committee, and especially to co-chairs Deb Caplan and Rosemary D'Arcy, for putting together an outstanding line-up for our annual conference in May, from the opening keynote address to the round table discussions which concluded the day. I also want to thank those



Conference co-chair
Rosemary D'Arcy and
NHLTA board member
Connie Kirwin prepare
packets for the 2022
Annual Conference.

who contributed to all of the behind the scene work which goes into the planning end. One overheard comment was that it was "the best annual conference ever." You can read more about the conference in the newsletter. Please note that the date for the **2024** conference is **June 5, 2024**, which is a change from what was announced at the conference.

The Board of Directors recently held a retreat which focused on two key areas: recruitment and a strategic plan for NHLTA in the coming years.

Recruitment is always an ongoing process for NHLTA as board and committee members come and go. At the retreat we focused on the idea of matching people to specific needs which complement an individual's skill set. There is an upcoming need for a person or persons with writing and editorial skills who could serve on the board or a committee. Might this be something in your skill set? Contact me if you'd like to find out more about this.

The Strategic Plan targets improving the NHLTA board engagement and communication with the NHLTA members. One step in that direction has been reinitiating regional meetings to foster open discussion and idea sharing after the long Covid hiatus. Three were held this spring and early summer and a fourth is slated for September in Peterborough. More information is available in this newsletter, on the NHLTA website, nhlta.org, and a Constant Contact blast which will come out later this summer. Watch for it!

Many of you have already begun to plan your library budget for the next fiscal year. It is imperative that you educate, educate, educate regarding the needs of your library – that means reaching out to the town officials who craft the budget, library supporters who can be a positive voice during the process, your Friends groups, anyone with skin in the game. Begin now for success at the polls or town meeting. It's never too early!

I hope to see some of you at the Trustee Orientation to be held in Concord on July 17th. For those I won't see, have an enjoyable summer!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marcia".

There's still time:

2023 Annual Awards Deadline is July 14!

Each year NHLTA is pleased to recognize the individuals and groups who have contributed to the excellence of New Hampshire public libraries. Email nominations to nhlibrarytrustees@nhmunicipal.org. Instruction, all criteria and a description of the awards can be found at www.NHLTA.org.



NHLTA Regional Meetings Have Returned!

NHLTA is once again facilitating regional gatherings of trustees around the state. After a hiatus of two years caused by the pandemic, NHLTA is providing an in-person opportunity for trustees to meet, learn from each other, express their ideas and concerns, and network. These informal gatherings are hosted by a local library and facilitated by members of the Board of Directors of the NHLTA.

Both the Madbury Public Library in the Seacoast region and Jefferson Public Library in the northern part of the state offered to host this spring. Other meetings scheduled include Webster Free Public Library on June 10 and Peterborough Town Library on September 21, which will also include a tour of the library; the renovation and addition to this historic library was completed in 2021.

On a sunny Saturday morning on April 15, 36 trustees and library directors gathered at the Jefferson Public Library, Jefferson, NH, for the first NHLTA regional gathering to be held since the beginning of the COVID pandemic in 2020. The discussion was lively and enthusiastic. Included as part of the meeting was a tour of the “new” Jefferson library, housed in a former school building repurposed as a community center, which will house, along with the library, town offices and a community auditorium.

On April 17, more than 25 trustees came out on a cool, rainy evening to tour the Madbury Public Library (built in 2019) and admire their new outdoor space which was constructed last year. Participants included trustees from Barrington, Somersworth, Raymond, Madbury, Durham, Lee,

Kingston, Rollinsford and Farmington – a diverse and lively group! The discussion included director evaluations and the problems several libraries are having with book challenges.

ABOVE: Jefferson regional meeting. BELOW: A lively discussion in Madbury.



Do you have a great idea for an article for the NHLTA newsletter?

We encourage you to submit articles and photos to us for consideration.

Topics could include events, programs, announcements or a recent success.

Please e-mail all submissions to the editor, Katrinka Pellecchia, at k.pellecchia@nhlta.org.



2023 Spring Conference: First Amendment: Censorship & Advocacy

The past couple of years have been rough ones for libraries – book challenges, attacks on free speech and diversity have made advocating for libraries more important than ever. These subjects and more were addressed in this year’s conference. Approximately 250 registered, and we want to thank those who made the day a success: attendees, presenters, sponsors, exhibitors and the volunteers who kept things running smoothly! And special thanks to those who responded to our conference evaluation – your comments are invaluable! We look forward to seeing you again at the Grappone Center next year on Wednesday, June 5, 2024.



Mike Morris, Diversity Audits



Keynote Speaker, Martin Garnar



Ready to Register Attendees



Tina Kriebel and Corinne Chronopoulos, Grant Writing



Dianne Hathaway and Jan Courageous Conversation



Exhibitor: TD Bank



Exhibitor/Sponsor: Jeffrey Hoover, Tappe Architects



"Thought provoking, as always. It's time to fight back on this important issue and have the tools and knowledge to do so."

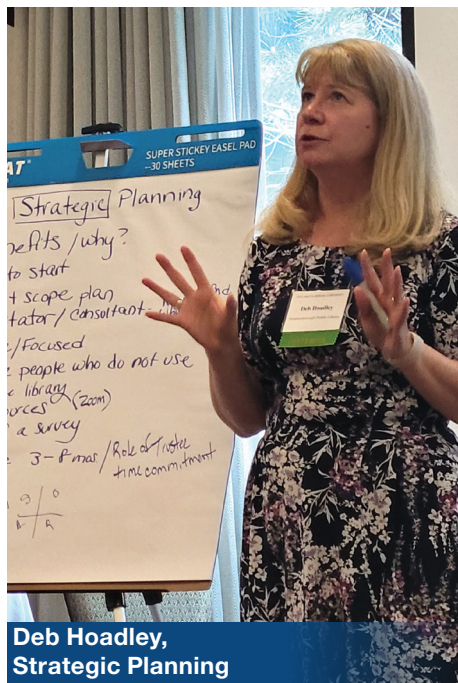
"Tons of information! [RSAs] could have been three programs, which I would like to see offered in the future, so we can choose which of the RSAs & hot legal topics to learn about."

"We are currently in the midst of a Capital Campaign and this topic gave us more tools for achieving our goal."

"The speakers presented ideas and topics that were real food for thought. Made for interesting 'how can we...' discussion on the ride home."



James McKim,
ns



Deb Hoadley,
Strategic Planning



Roundtable Attendees



Good eats



Exhibitor/Sponsor:
Alyssa Murphy, Placework



Exhibitor: Ron Lamarre,
Dore +Whittier



By Natch Greyes,
Government Affairs
Counsel, NH Municipal
Association (NHMA)

Figuring Out MOUs

Memorandums of Understanding – commonly known as MOUs – are understandings between two or more entities. They are frequently used to resolve issues that can arise between two governmental entities where there may be overlapping authority. These types of agreement are often considered only after a problem arises, but it is always a good idea to try to head off a problem before it becomes serious issue. The relationship between the library and the town is one of those areas where problems can arise. It's easy to see why, if one applies the logic of the New Hampshire Supreme Court in *Littleton v. Taylor*, 138 N.H. 419 (1994) regarding the library budget in RSA 202-A:6 and :11 to the similar wording about library property in RSA 202-A:6 and :11.

The library trustees have “the entire custody and management of the public library and of all the property of the town relating thereto,” but what does that mean as applied to your town? It's easy enough to understand that the shelves, the books, and the contents of the library are all under the control of the library trustees. There's very little debate or gray area there. But what about the structure? The actual building?

If the library is freestanding, that's one thing. But what if it is part of town hall or another municipal building? Are the trustees – who are charged with preparing an annual budget indicating “what support and maintenance of the [library will be required” – supposed to budget for repairs to the roof of the whole building in proportion to the amount of the building used by the library? Does it matter if the library is in the basement of the building as opposed to the top floor? Different towns do different things.

And what if that library is freestanding? Should the library trustees be budgeting for plowing the parking lot? Is the parking lot really library property? What if the parking lot is shared with another municipal building? What if the library has some learning opportunity, such as a pollinator garden, outside? Should that help inform under whose

custody the parking lot falls? Again, different towns handle things differently.

What is important, however, is for library trustees and select boards to work together to clarify the realms of responsibility where it is not clear. A basic starting point for existing libraries can be cataloging the various features of their library where there may be disagreements. For freestanding libraries, that's probably everything outside the physical structure of the library. For internal libraries, that's probably the four walls, the ceiling, and the floor.

From that basis, figure out which entity – trustees or select board – has traditionally maintained which feature and which features are in contention. For those where tradition has been long established and there isn't disagreement, it should be fairly easy to craft an agreement – a MOU – outlining the relative responsibilities of the trustees and the select board. For those contentious issues, more negotiation may have to take place.

Once an agreement is crafted, approved and signed by both the trustees and the select board, it is up to both sides to abide by it and notify the other if something goes astray. Additionally, both the trustees and the select board should routinely review the agreement – probably once a year, just after town elections – to ensure that new trustees and new select board members know the terms of the agreement and to identify any issues that have arisen over the past year which need further clarification via an amendment to the original agreement. If all goes well, any issues can be resolved quickly and without disruption to the services provided to the municipality's residents.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Examples of MOUs may be found on the NHLTA website under Resources at www.nhlta.org/resourcesmaterials.asp*

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2024 Spring
Conference,
June 5, 2024!

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EDITOR

Katrinka Pellecchia

DESIGN & PAGE LAYOUT

Jill Shaffer Hammond

CONTRIBUTORS

Susan Frankel

Natch Greys

Renee Mallett

Marcia McLaughlin

Email submissions and
inquiries to the Editor

k.pellecchia@nhlta.org

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Milford • k.parenti@nhlta.org

Mark Branoff, Treasurer
Windham • m.branoff@nhlta.org

Katrinka Pellecchia, Past President
Lee • k.pellecchia@nhlta.org

Deb Caplan
Peterborough • d.caplan@nhlta.org

Rosemary D'Arcy
Bristol • r.darcy@nhlta.org

Tammy Hooker
Hooksett • t.hooker@nhlta.org

Connie Kirwin
Antrim • c.kirwin@nhlta.org

Renee Mallett
Windham • r.mallett@nhlta.org

Conrad Moses
East Kingston • c.moses@nhlta.org

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MISSION

The NHLTA assists Trustees to be knowledgeable and effective in order to serve, improve and promote New Hampshire Public Libraries.

Calendar 2023

July 17, 10:00 am–2 pm
NHLTA Trustee Orientation Workshop

NHMA Building, 25 Triangle Park Drive, Concord

September 21, 10:00–11:30 am
NHLTA Regional Meeting

Peterborough Town Library,
2 Concord St, Peterborough

June 5, 2024, 9 am
2024 NHLTA Spring Conference & Annual Meeting
Grappone Center,
70 Constitution Ave., Concord

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