

NH Library Trustee

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The Newsletter of the New Hampshire Library Trustees Association

www.NHLTA.org

Mont Vernon Library Project Grant Status

By Cindy Raspiller, Chair, Daland Memorial Library Board of Trustees

In early 2022, the Mont Vernon Library Charitable Foundation (MVLCF) was awarded a matching grant worth up to \$655,000 by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). This Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grant was intended to directly support Mont Vernon's journey to replace its beautiful, but tiny, 113-year-old public library with a modern, accessible building, sized appropriately for today's population.

The grant award was the result of an extensive application submitted by the MVLCF Board of Directors, with support from many other Mont Vernon organizations. The grant provided for a 25% match on all qualifying contributions. The library was the only 2022 NH recipient and one of only 23 projects nationwide. It was also the largest NEH grant ever awarded in NH. Winning the grant was an important milestone for achieving the project's success. Residents and friends of Mont Vernon rose generously to the challenge presented by the match requirement. When the project was approved at the 2024 Town Meeting, taxpayers were asked to fund only a third of the \$6 million cost.

Last year with all the necessary matching funds in place, the project successfully completed all NEH's requirements and Mont Vernon qualified for the full grant funding, meaning that \$655,000 was available for the project. Then NH State Librarian Michael York spoke at the project groundbreaking on September 12th, 2024, applauding the public/private partnership that made this important new facility possible.

By the end of April 2025, with construction well



Senator Maggie Hassan talks with Trustee Chair Cindy Raspiller and Clerk of the Works Anne Dodd during her tour of the Daland Library construction site in May.

underway, MVLCF had collected \$164,000 of the \$655,000 grant funding when we were notified that the grant had been terminated as part of the Department of Governmental Efficiency (DOGE) efforts to cancel grants awarded during the prior administration.

Since that time, the Select Board, the library trustees, MVLCF and the Library Building Committee have been working on a three-pronged approach. First, the trustees led efforts to reach out

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Letter from the President . . .



Marcia McLaughlin
NHLTA President

Summer 2025

I want to briefly acknowledge the NHLTA conference committee, board members and volunteers who once again orchestrated a wonderful annual conference. The buzz was that it was “one of the best I ever attended in all my years as a trustee.” The conference has been and will continue to be the premier educational opportunity for all New Hampshire trustees as well as library directors and Friends. If you have not had the opportunity in the past to attend, mark your calendars to May 27, 2026 and make attendance a priority.

The winds of change have been blowing through our library world in recent months, either through presidential executive orders, federal legislation or legislative bills in New Hampshire. Some changes we already know about, others are yet to be determined.

NHLTA sounded an alarm when the executive order defunding IMLS (Institute of Museum and Library Services) was issued. It directed that IMLS be eliminated to the maximum extent of the law and to reduce its services and personnel to the minimum amount required to perform the functions required by law. A temporary restraining order was granted on May 1st to block the dismant-

ling in response to a lawsuit filed by several entities, including the American Library Association. There has been no additional action on the suit as of this date (June 6, 2025).

Additionally, the proposed federal budget for 2026 includes defunding IMLS. Should the budget pass intact it would mean there would be no more state grants to help fund public library services through our NH State Library. The decision on the budget is expected to be made by October 1, 2025.

As if this news isn't concerning enough, there have been numerous bills winding their way through the New Hampshire House and Senate which will directly affect libraries. Three that have passed both the Senate and the House and sent to the governor for her signature are detailed on page 4. There will also be a compilation of the bills on the NHLTA website. It is your duty as a trustee to stay informed and respond accordingly to any changes, if required, in your library.

On a lighter note, I wish you all a wonderful summer. I hope you get time away to rest, relax and recharge your batteries.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marcia". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Marcia

m.mclaughlin@nhlta.org

There's still time: 2025 Annual Awards Deadline is July 11!

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.

Mont Vernon Library *continued from page 1*

to the interim NH State Librarian, our NH congressional delegation and NH Governor Kelly Ayotte for their support in restoring the full grant funding. Second, MVLFCF has been working closely with NEH staff to understand how much of the remaining \$491,000 may yet be released to the project based on the work that had been completed prior to the grant termination. Finally, the Library Building Committee has been working hard to make the necessary trade-offs to ensure that the project is completed, regardless of the fate of the remaining NEH grant funding.

It has been a roller coaster, and the entire story isn't yet known. We hope to fully understand the impact of the grant termination over the next few weeks. We remain determined to complete the project on schedule this fall to provide the residents of Mont Vernon with a modern, accessible library that meets their needs and provides the talented and dedicated staff with working conditions that allow them to flourish and to continuing to serve library patrons with excellence. Updates can be found at www.mvlibrarybuildingcommittee.com.

Summertime and the Reading Is Easy

“Summer” and “Reading.” In the library world, these two words go together as naturally as “peanut butter and jelly,” and at your local library the youth services staff have been planning for Summer Reading events for months and months. It’s a phenomenon that also has expanded beyond the library world. Soon you will hear talk of “summer reads” or “beach reads” on all the morning shows. *The New York Times* has released its annual list of books to read over the summer, and celebrities will be posting on social media about their summer reading lists.

As many of you know, RSA 202-A:1 declares that because “knowledge and learning generally diffused through a community” are “essential to the preservation of a free government,” the legislature recognizes its duty to encourage the people of New Hampshire to extend their education during and beyond the years of formal education and so “to this end, it hereby declares that the public library is a valuable supplement to the formal system of free public education.”

Schools out? Summer Reading at the public library is in! According to *WeAreTeachers.com* studies show that over the summer break children in grades three through five lose, on average, about 20% of their school-year gains in reading and 27% of their school-year gains in math. Library professionals are well aware of this problem, known as “summer slide.” As such, many libraries have expanded their Summer Reading programs to be more broadly called “Summer Learning” and now include math or STEM events as a part of their fun-filled but still learning-centric events.

However, summer reading need not be limited to a kids-only activity. An article in *Psychology Today* reminds us that reading has been associated with reduced stress and increased empathy. Azadeh Aalai’s May 2024 article states that, “The expanding perspective that fiction cultivates in reading has been well documented for some time.” And many libraries, responding in part to parents with their own fond memories of participating in summer reading, have expanded their offerings to include summer reading for grown-ups too.

At the NH State Library, our contribution to the Summer Reading effort is to coordinate state-wide participation in a national themed summer reading program and to offer workshops for library professionals who plan Summer Reading. This is an excellent example of the magnifying effect of the State Library and its staff. Last year, Deborah Dutcher organized a workshop for close to 100 library professionals who were involved with planning Summer Reading. That summer, more than 121,000 youth all across the state attended events that promoted learning and literacy with an aim to slow that summer slide and build relationships with their local public library.

Summer Reading, as with all reading, provides knowledge and learning and expands our perspective. It helps adults and children alike with social-emotional coping skills. So, whether Summer Reading looks like digging your toes into the sand with a recommended beach read or mixing up a batch of slime (your local youth services library professionals will know what this is) for an event at the library, let’s get out there and read this summer. With a special shoutout to all those hard-working youth services library professionals!



By Mindy Atwood,
Administrator of Library
Operations; Interim
State Librarian, New
Hampshire State
Library

What the State Library Staff Will Be Reading this Summer

*Book and Dagger: How Scholars and Librarians
Became the Unlikely Spies of World War II* by
Elyse Graham

Never Flinch by Stephen King

Komi Can't Communicate by Tomohito Oda

Interdiction: A Novel by Michael Davidow

The CIA Book Club by Charlie English

Village Library Demon-Hunting Society by C. M.
Waggoner

*On the Hippie Trail: Istanbul to Kathmandu and the
Making of a Travel Writer* by Rick Steves

Rage by Linda Castillo

His Majesty's Dragon by Naomi Novik

Foundation by Issac Asimov

NH Legislation Followup

In the Spring issue we listed quite a few bills affecting libraries that the NH Legislature was considering. Fortunately, many were deemed “Inexpedient to legislate” or are still in committee. Three that passed both the House and Senate and have been sent to the governor for her signature are listed below. As always, to keep up-to-date on all the legislation being considered, go to www.nhmunicipal.org/nhma-bill-tracker-fastdemocracy. NHMA’s weekly legislative bulletins can be found at www.nhmunicipal.org/legislative-bulletins. Want to let your legislators know what you think? Visit csni.org/contact-your-legislator to find out who your representatives and state senators are and how to contact them.

HB 265. Requiring that a public body’s meeting minutes include start and end times of the meeting and the printed name of the recording secretary.

This bill amends the existing law regarding the documentation of public meeting minutes. It mandates that minutes must now include the start time and end time of the meeting, as well as the printed name of the recording secretary responsible for producing the minutes. The language that is being deleted from the current law is the phrase “and” before the new insertions, which indicates a restructuring of the requirements for what must be included in the minutes. The bill also retains the requirement for minutes to include the names of members present, individuals appearing before the public bodies, a brief description of the subject matter discussed, and the names of members who made or seconded motions.

Additionally, the bill emphasizes the importance of timely recording and public access to these minutes, stipulating that they must be available for public inspection within five business days after the meeting. The effective date of this act is set for 60 days following its passage. Overall, the bill aims to enhance transparency and accountability in public meetings by ensuring that essential details are consistently documented and accessible to the public.

HB 273. Parental access to their minor child’s library records.

This bill amends existing law to grant parents or legal guardians the right to access their minor child’s library records. Specifically, it introduces a new paragraph (II-a) to RSA 201-D:11, which states that all library records related to a minor’s current borrowing of printed materials and audio-visual materials, such as DVDs and CDs, must be made available to the parent or legal guardian upon request. The request can only be fulfilled if the address of the parent or guardian matches the address on the minor’s library account.

The bill does not include any deletions from current law but adds this new provision to enhance parental oversight of their children’s library activities. The effective date of the act is set for 60 days after its passage, allowing time for libraries to adjust their policies and procedures accordingly.

HB 143. Relative to the issuance of no trespass orders on municipal or school district property

The “No Trespass Orders on Public Property Act” establishes a structured process for issuing, extending, and appealing no trespass orders (NTOs) on public properties, including municipal and school properties. The bill mandates that any NTO must be documented in writing and include specific details such as the date of issuance, the property in question, the reason for the order, its duration (not exceeding 90 days), and information regarding the individual’s rights to request a hearing and appeal. Individuals have the right to contest the NTO through a hearing, which must be scheduled within 20 days of their request. If the hearing does not occur within this timeframe, the NTO is automatically vacated.

Additionally, the bill outlines the procedures for extending NTOs, which can only be done through a governing body vote during a hearing. If an NTO is to be extended beyond 90 days, a restraining order must be pursued. The governing body must approve any extensions, and existing NTOs that exceed 90 days will be automatically rescinded. Individuals have the right to appeal decisions regarding NTOs to the superior court within 30 days of receiving written notice of the decision. The bill aims to ensure procedural safeguards for individuals affected by NTOs while maintaining the authority of governing bodies to manage public property.

Editor’s note:

Bill text is taken from fastdemocracy.com.

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2025 Conference

The 2025 NHLTA Conference is now in our rearview mirror, and from the comments we received the keynote and workshops were a resounding success! We heard the feedback on the disappearing breakfast and shortage of cookies. We are thinking of moving the keynote to the large conference room or adding more screens/speakers to the Armory. We had 301 people registered which was fantastic and folks loved the Book-mobile! As always, we'll review the comments and keep them in mind as we plan for next year. Planning a successful conference takes a dedicated team, and we'd love to have more voices and hands involved! If you're interested in volunteering to help shape next year's event, please reach out—we welcome fresh ideas and enthusiasm.

Congratulations to the Passport Raffle winners: Marie Elena Potter, Chesterfield Public Library; Elsa Voelcker, Kingston Community Library; Christine Dixon, Salisbury Free Library; and Judith Robinson, Olive G Pettis Memorial Library!

We look forward to seeing you at the 2026 Conference on Wednesday, May 27, 2026 at the DoubleTree in Manchester!



Keynote presentation.

“The topics were very relevant to the issues libraries are facing.”

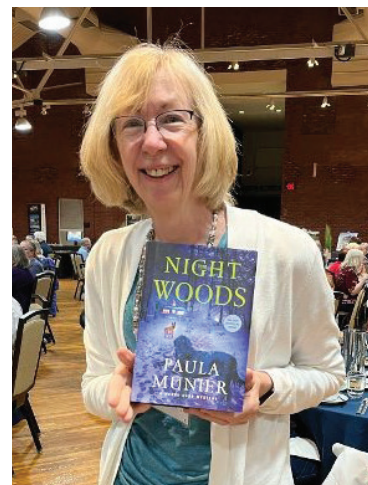


New this year, tote bags sponsored by Placework

“This was a very informative workshop. Valuable instructions on how to find and track legislative actions that could impact our library and patrons.”



Attendees checking in



Donna Capern, Hampstead Public Library Trustee, who won sponsor Paula Munier's mystery novel

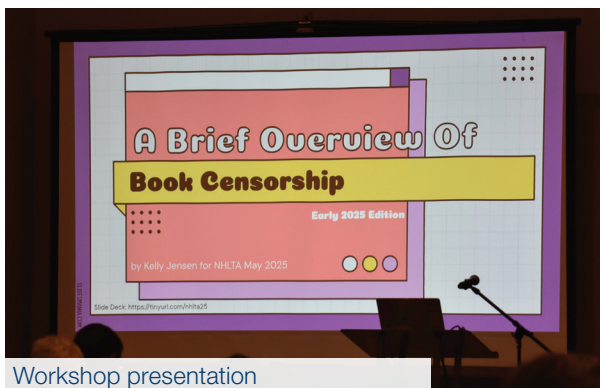


Visiting the sponsors during a break



NHLTA President Marcia McLaughlin and Keynote Speaker Kelly Jensen

“This was my first NHLTA conference and I feel empowered as a brand new Trustee. This theme got me fired up to do the job, and I can’t wait for next year!”



Workshop presentation



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Exhibitor/Water Bottle Sponsor: Jeffrey Hoover, Tappé Architects

“There was so much information. I’m glad that I was able to attend.”





By Jonathan Cowal,
Municipal Services
Counsel, NH Municipal
Association (NHMA)

Policies must be clear and unambiguous, again, so that all who are subject to their terms understand the rules.

Library Policies

It can be confusing trying to understand who has the authority to manage town property. These questions can range from managing the actual building or property, to managing the employees who work in those spaces, to managing the behavior of the members of the public allowed to access those spaces. When it comes to libraries, they can differ from many other public buildings in that one goes there not because they must but because they want to. When citizens go to various other public buildings to register a car, pay property taxes, vote or attend a public meeting, the activities conducted in those buildings are highly regulated. In contrast, people in libraries are free to read books, magazines and newspapers, conduct research on just about any topic, check their personal email and search the Internet. Because the activities are so varied, library patrons must be given a fair amount of latitude to allow them to decide how best to utilize library resources. This article discusses some of the local rules, regulations and policies that may be used in managing the library and its resources.

Q. Who manages what goes on at the library?

The library trustees, as the governing board of the public library, have “the entire custody and management of the public library.” RSA 202-A:6. The library trustees “adopt by-laws, rules and regulations for the business and government of the library.” RSA 202-A:11, I. The library trustees appoint a librarian who serves as the administrative officer of the public library. RSA 202-A:11, V; RSA 202-A:16, I. Thus, the library trustees adopt the rules and regulations for the library, and the librarian administers them.

Q. What are the most common methods used to manage town property and employees?

There are three main categories of regulatory authority; ordinances or bylaws which are generally adopted by a vote of town meeting and govern the town as a whole; town policies which

are guidelines set by the governing body; and personnel policies which set rules and standards for town employees.

Ordinances, sometimes called bylaws, are rules or regulations that govern the municipality as a whole. These are established, in most cases, by a vote of the legislative body at town meeting, or by city councils; however larger towns may have granted the select board the authority to enact ordinances. Ordinances can regulate activities throughout the entire municipality such as noise or waste disposal or be directed towards the care, protection, preservation and use of public parks, libraries, etc. They are enforced by officers appointed to enforce local ordinances and through fines.

Town policies are more like guidelines that the governing body sets for managing certain activities, behaviors or use of property. For example, the library trustees could establish an unattended minor policy at the local library to prevent parents from leaving small children alone for extended periods of time. Policies are more guidelines than strictly enforceable bylaws, but they can play an important role in establishing when someone has crossed the line by repeatedly violating the rules. In these instances, it is generally the local police department that helps enforce these policies.

Finally, personnel policies are used to set the rules and expectations for town employees. The terms of these policies are agreed to as part of a person’s employment or position with the municipality and are enforced through the employer/employee relationship.

Q. What features should be included in a library policy for it to be enforceable?

To understand the answer to this question, it is helpful to look at situations where library policies have been challenged in the past. The most well-known case addressing the exclusion of people from a library is from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, *Kreimer v. Bureau of Police for Morristown*, 958 F.2d 1242 (3d Cir. 1992). Mr. Kreimer was a homeless man who was forced to leave the library because he violated established library policies on acceptable behaviors

(his unacceptable behaviors included staring at and following patrons, and talking loudly to himself and others) and because his odor was often so offensive that it prevented the library patrons from using certain areas of the library and prevented library employees from performing their jobs. *Id.* at 1247.

Mr. Kreimer filed suit in federal court claiming his First Amendment right “to receive information and ideas” was violated as a result of the library’s rules. While the Court agreed that receiving information is a First Amendment right, it found the library’s hygiene and appearance and loitering policies constitutional because public libraries have a significant interest in ensuring that all patrons can use facilities to the maximum extent possible during its regularly scheduled hours. *Id.* at 1264. Moreover, the Court found that the rules promoted the library’s interest in maintaining its facilities in a sanitary and attractive condition.

The library policies upheld in *Kreimer* contained several important features and therefore provide guidance on what library policies should look like. Library policies must be in writing and posted so that all library patrons and staff know what is expected and what behavior will lead to expulsion from the library.

The policies must be clear and unambiguous, again, so that all who are subject to their terms understand the rules. The policies must be equally applied and enforced, and not subject to interpretation and arbitrary enforcement by the staff. Finally, policies should include a process for appeal (due process) of decisions that result in the deprivation of a patron’s privileges to use the library.

Q. How can libraries enforce their policies?

A The first step would be to have library staff remind someone of what the rules are and refer them to a written copy, ideally one that is posted in the library or readily available. We have seen from other court cases that a single instance of a rule violation may not be enough to warrant removing someone from a public space, and therefore it is important that members of the public be given several chances to comply. If an individual refuses to comply with a policy, you could consider getting the police involved. However, you must remember

that public libraries are just that, public places open to the public. Much of what irritates or annoys other patrons usually does not rise to the level of criminal activity. That is not to say that the police should never be called, and maybe sooner rather than later, depending on the situation. However, calling the police may not be the most practical response, or even the best response, and should be given careful consideration.

Moreover, library staff who summarily require patrons to leave the library because of complaints or for reasons that staff members believe to be inappropriate run the risk that the ejected patron will sue the library for a violation of civil rights. In *Wayfield v. Town of Tisbury*, 925 F.Supp. 880 (D. Mass. 1996), Mr. Wayfield, a library patron, sued the Vineyard Haven Public Library, claiming that his constitutionally-protected due process rights were violated when his library privileges were suspended without a hearing. The library claimed that Mr. Wayfield caused a “disruptive incident” with the librarian and also that he stole a menorah from the library. The library suspended Mr. Wayfield’s library privileges for nearly four months. He was offered no appeal process for the suspension. The library had no established policy for suspension of library privileges in the sorts of circumstances that were at issue in this case. As a result, the Court found that the library did not afford the patron adequate due process; in fact, it found that “they afforded him no due process at all.” *Id.* at 889.

When a decision is made that a patron must leave the library, either by request of staff or by involving the police, that decision should be based on well-crafted library policies that address the circumstances that will lead to suspension of one’s library privileges.

Q. Can policies include a total prohibition against guns?

A This is a complicated question because it must be considered under the facts of the specific situation. Generally speaking, if the patron is in lawful possession of the gun and is not using it in an unlawful manner, then the patron should be allowed to remain in the library with the gun.

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Questions? email: listserv@nhlta.org



Spring Regional Gatherings



Chesterfield Public Library

Thirty-five trustees and two library directors met at the Chesterfield Public Library on April 9. After sharing reminiscences of their first library experiences, the group addressed several important issues.

Topics of discussion included library policies (a list of recommended policies with examples can be found on the NHLTA website under Resources); it was suggested that trustees review one policy a month at their board meeting to make certain they are current, and to update when new laws and changes to existing ones go into effect. The issue of having a gun policy was raised; it should be noted that New Hampshire is an open carry state.

Library cards and parental responsibility pending current parental rights legislation (HB 273) was also discussed. Jaffrey Library has adopted a new circulation policy and will be updating library cards for all patrons. Youth ages 5–17 will be updated with a new registration form that must be signed by the parent/legal guardian, in person. The policy is available on the library's website <https://town-ofjaffrey.com/183/Library>.

Other topics included an update on IMLS (Institute of Museum and Library Services) funding to the NH State Library and its effect on Interlibrary Loan, Downloadable books and Talking Books; and how to keep the trustee board and patrons

updated with objective information and avoid the misconception of lobbying. Dublin and Jaffrey libraries both use their newsletters to inform their patrons.

A tour of the newly-renovated library concluded the gathering. One interesting feature of the renovation was the movable book shelves and the carpeting that allows for smooth and easy arrangements.

Newbury Public Library

Thirty-nine library trustees and library directors gathered at the Newbury Library on May 12 for two hours of discussion, questions and information sharing. Co-hosted by the trustees of the Pillsbury Memorial Library in Warner, who provided delicious refreshments, the conversation was facilitated by NHLTA Board Director Jeanne Palleiko. Jeanne is also a member of the Newbury Library trustee board and was instrumental in leading a successful fundraising campaign

to renovate and build an addition to the library which was completed in 2024.

The foremost topic of interest was book challenges. There were many varied descriptions on handling the situation such as reviewing library policies to include a reconsideration form for books and programs; publishing policies on the library website with paper copies at the circulation desk; requiring reconsideration challenges to be done in person; establishing an organizational chain of command including a reconsideration committee; and staff training on managing the situation. How to handle First Amendment audits was also discussed.

Friends groups and the relationship with trustee boards and library staff was another hot topic. The discussion covered organization of the different groups; procedures such as a MOU (Memo of Understanding); representation at their respective meetings; fundraising such as grants from local banks and large corporations; NH Casino Charity partnership; maintaining a donor list; and the importance of increasing the visibility of Friends groups.

Personnel management is always a concern. There were various comments on recruiting a new library director; the question of whether to provide travel expenses; where to advertise; using a headhunter for a wider search pool; establishing a search committee and setting up a Google account to hold the resumes received.

Continued on next page



Regional Gatherings

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The topic of building expansion and new construction ended the gathering. Many opinions were expressed including setting up a foundation and acquiring a preliminary design from an architect. It was agreed that it could take from three to ten years to be successful but it is worth the time and effort. It was noted that

the Enfield Library moved into a new building in February 2025.

At the conclusion of the gathering attendees toured the Newbury Library for a first-hand look at the renovations and addition.

More regional gatherings are being planned for the fall at Minot-Sleeper Public Library in Bristol on September 9 and the Barrington Public Library on October 25.

Legal Q&A *continued from page 9*

While the library trustees do have “the entire custody and management of the public library” and can “adopt by-laws, rules and regulations for its own transaction of business and for the government of the library,” this authority is subject to state laws. With regard to guns, RSA 159:26 provides that “[e]xcept as otherwise specifically provided by statute, no ordinance or regulation of a political subdivision may regulate the sale, purchase, ownership, use, possession ... or other matter pertaining to firearms,” The public library, as established by a vote of the town in which it is located, is an agency of the political subdivision and thus cannot regulate the possession of fire-

arms within the library. However, this is not to say that a patron who is using a gun to intimidate or threaten other patrons or staff must be ignored. Such a patron will likely be in violation of the criminal code as well as a library policy.

It is possible that other patrons may be disturbed at the mere sight of a weapon and, on those grounds alone, demand that the person be ejected. Caution should be used when ejecting a patron solely on the request of others when the patron in question is not breaking any library policies or state laws regarding gun possession. Of course, library staff who reasonably believe that a patron in possession of a gun is behaving in a threatening or erratic manner should contact their local police for assistance.

Coming Soon: The new Barrington Public Library

The sign is in place, the ribbon will be cut on July 10 and the library will celebrate on July 12 with a fun-filled Family Day. The trustees are looking forward to showing off the new facility during a Regional Gathering on October 25.



Library Trustee

**The Newsletter of the
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NH Library Association

MISSION

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

Calendar 2025

August 5 10 am–2 pm

Trustee Orientation

The Center at Triangle Park
(NHMA Bldg), 25 Triangle Park Drive,
Concord

Sept. 9 10 am–12 pm

Regional Gathering

Minot-Sleeper Public Library,
35 Pleasant St, Bristol

Sept. 27 10 am–12 pm

Friends of the Library Gathering

Hooksett Public Library,
31 Mount St Mary's Way, Hooksett

Oct. 25 10 am–12:30 pm

Regional Gathering

Barrington Public Library,
426 Calef Hwy, Barrington

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