

# **Onboarding Your New Library Trustee**

Presented by Marcia McLaughlin, President, NHLTA

New Hampshire Library Trustees Association Annual Conference -2026

## **1. Welcome & Orientation**

- Meet with Board Chair and Director one-on-one
- Overview of the library's mission, vision, and values
- Introduction to key staff and fellow trustees
- Services offered (circulation, digital resources, programs, outreach)
- Tour of facilities (physical and virtual systems)

## **2. Roles & Responsibilities of a Trustee**

- Governance vs. management (board sets policy; director manages operations)
- Code of Ethics
- Participation expectations (meetings, committees, events)
- Become familiar with NH RSA 201-A, library bylaws, policies
- Advocacy for the library in the community
- Participation in a library program or event when possible
- Identify an area of interest or contribution

## **3. Board Structure & Operations**

- Board composition and officer roles
- Meeting schedule and procedures (agenda, minutes, voting)
- Relationship with the Library Director
- Policies & Key Documents Review:
  - Provide a Trustee Notebook which includes:
    - Board bylaws
    - NH RSAs pertaining to public libraries
    - Annual budget
    - Recent board minutes
    - Library policies (circulation, collection development, behavior, etc.)
    - Strategic plan
    - NHLTA Trustee Manual – *A Guide for Library Trustees*
    - Onboarding outline

DISCUSS THE ABOVE ONE-ON-ONE WITH NEW TRUSTEE, TRUSTEE CHAIR AND LIBRARY DIRECTOR

#### **4. Legal & Ethical Responsibilities**

- Review of bylaws and governing documents
- Open meetings/non-public meetings; public records requirements
- Conflict of interest policy
- Confidentiality expectations
- Intellectual freedom principles (e.g., alignment with American Library Association guidelines)

#### **5. Financial Oversight**

- Overview of funding sources (taxes, grants, donations, fines, etc.)
- Budget structure and approval process
- Financial reports and how to read them
- Audit process and accountability

#### **6. Strategic Planning & Impact**

- Current strategic plan goals and metrics
- How trustees contribute to long-term planning
- Measuring community impact and outcomes
- Equity, access, and inclusion priorities

#### **7. Advocacy & Community Engagement**

- Role as a library ambassador
- Building relationships with town government entities
- Supporting fundraising and New Hampshire Library Trustees Association (NHLTA)
- Communicating the library's value

#### **8. Training & Continuing Education**

- Workshops, webinars, and conferences
- State library resources and the trustee association
- Encouragement of ongoing learning
- Mentor/buddy with experienced trustee

#### **9. Evaluation & Feedback**

- Self-assessment tools for trustees
- Board evaluation
- Opportunities to provide feedback on onboarding experience
- Exit interview