

Newbury Library Regional Trustee Gathering

May 12 was a beautiful sunny day in Newbury. Thirty nine library trustees and library directors gathered at the Newbury Library for two hours of discussion, questions and sharing information. Co-hosted by the trustees of the Pillsbury Memorial Library in Warner, who provided delicious refreshments, the conversation was facilitated by Jeanne Palleiko, NHLTA Board of Directors and Treasurer. 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 handling the situation. How to handle First Amendment audits was also mentioned.

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

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.

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.