

## **Minot-Sleeper Library Regional Trustee Gathering, September 9, 2025, Bristol, NH**

On September 9, 43 trustees and library directors gathered at the Minot-Sleeper Library in Bristol, NH. Trustee and NHLTA board member Sue Nieman welcomed the attendees and thanked the Friends of Minot-Sleeper, the trustees and Library Director Patty Hayward for their help in planning the event. Rosemary D'Arcy, former Trustee Chair and former NHLTA board member facilitated.

During a lively, two-hour discussion the following topics were discussed. First up was **Policy Development**, even though some trustees admitted to "policy phobia". Concerns were shared about Artificial Intelligence (AI) – trustees felt that it was difficult to create an AI policy since things are changing so rapidly. There was a suggestion of using Chat GBT to proofread minutes and perhaps if the library director was trained in AI, they could train others.

**Legislative Update.** Attendees discussed HB 273 - relative to a parent's access to their minor child's library records, saying that there were issues developing a policy where the town and school library are the same. It was felt that the regarding family cards – having them placed the responsibility on the family, not the library. HB 488 was mentioned, the bill states that no person can hold two elected town positions at the same time. [At this time, it is unlikely to affect library trustees, but the bill is in the early stages and could be amended.] It was recommended that trustees learn who their legislators are, and contact them regularly with concerns. Regarding patron challenges, a variety of books and library displays had been targeted.

**Friends Groups and Fundraising** was discussed. There was discussion of how to start a Friends group (needs to be a 501c3 organization) as well as the differences between trustees and Friends. While the town usually owns the library building itself, the trustees are responsible for its maintenance and operation. The town approves the library budget; the trustees determine how each line item is spent. Fundraising is usually done by a foundation or the Friends group, which raises money for various library programs. Trustees can be members of the Friend, but should not serve on the Friends board or have a vote, due to conflicts of interest.

Attendees shared some successful **Fundraising Ideas** such as Book and Author Luncheons, Election Day Bake Sales, Basket Raffles, signing up for the state's various casino programs and holding book sales – sales by donation were more successful than selling books at a fixed price as was selling books by the bag. It was recommended that Friends check their liability.

Lastly, **Personnel/Hiring issues** were discussed. Small, rural libraries are at a disadvantage when attracting qualified candidates because of the low salaries; the idea of sharing director was mentioned. Trustees should have an MOU with the town that library employees will have the same benefits as town employees. When discussing offering a Library of Things, it was mentioned that smaller libraries could lack the space to store items.