

NHLTA Library Trustee

The Newsletter of the New Hampshire Library Trustees Association

www.NHLTA.org

A Record-Breaking Conference!

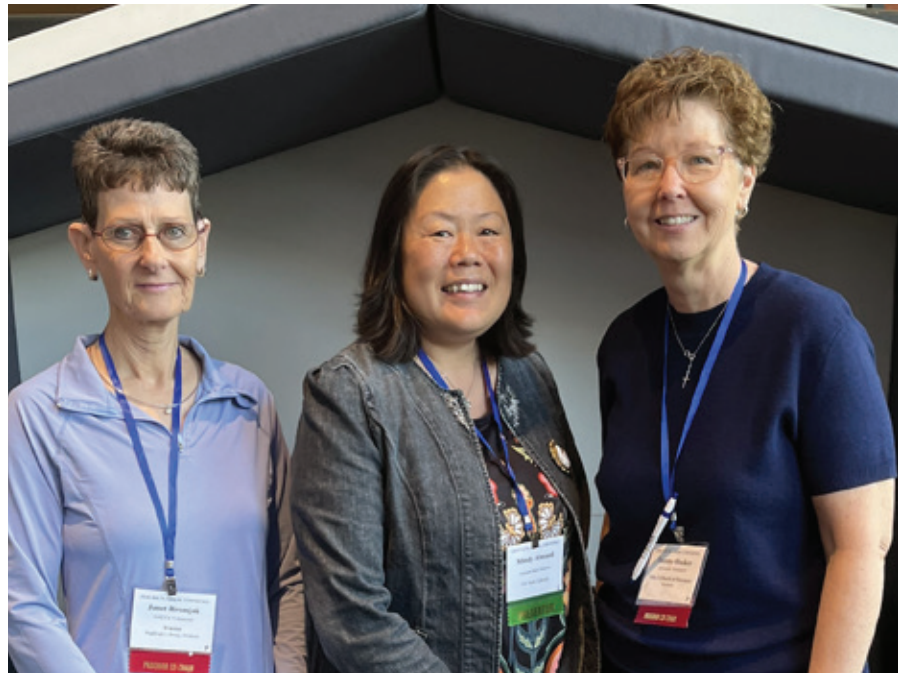
The 2026 Annual Conference is one for the history books – more than 300 library trustees, directors and supporters, the most we’ve ever had! To quote one attendee – “Hard to pull off a conference with 300+ people in that space, but it worked.” And indeed, it did work – thanks to our hard-working co-chairs Tammy Hooker and Janet Hromjak and the dedicated Education Committee, pretty much the entire NHLTA board. But the fact that it worked is also due to our presenters, sponsors, exhibitors and most of all, the attendees.

It wasn’t perfect, there were glitches, there always are: the bleed-through noise between workshop rooms, a few AV technical issues and the fact that the Armory can be chilly and at times downright noisy. Then there’s the food. No matter what is offered, there are always strong opinions regarding the food options. We appreciated this comment – “It was an excellent idea to offer the dessert at afternoon break. It seemed like a good budgeting move on your part since we were all very satisfied and the association didn’t need to pay for an additional round of cookies for an afternoon break. Win/win!” Keeping the costs under control in order to make the conference affordable is definitely a challenge.

But the NHLTA Conference has always been about the content and from the comments we received the content did not disappoint!

“So knowledgeable, gave so many helpful recommendations, the presenter was fun and interactive. She held my attention. Caitlin was a dynamic speaker and has inspired me to write some grant applications for my own library.”

“I loved how we came together to help brainstorm solutions to problems various libraries are having.”



FROM LEFT: Co-chair Janet Hromjak, Keynote speaker Mindy Atwood, and co-chair Tammy Hooker.

“Thought-provoking, and helped me realize the importance of young & old learning how to think more critically about AI. It still scares me though!”

“The keynote felt down to earth, she did a great job at combining common sense (things are a little bit crazy in the US right now) with optimism (what we do is important, don’t forget our mission and the impact we can make). Mindy is definitely a state treasure.”

“The RSAs are kind of a dry topic, but so important and I really learned a lot ... Great overview, and reminder of how we need to follow these RSAs as they help us with our work as well as to keep our communities engaged.”

We’re already looking ahead to next year – Thursday, May 27, 2027 at the Doubletree by Hilton Manchester Downtown. We hope to see you there!

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Marcia McLaughlin
NHLTA President

Summer 2026

It's a wrap!!! The NHLTA annual conference held on May 27th, was, from what was heard, a big success. Some comments: "The information was inspiring!", "loved the lemon dessert", "Caitlin Frost was fun!" Attendees appreciated that NHLTA was able to cover the parking cost – thanks to our parking sponsor Kingsley Library Equipment. These comments testify to the time and effort spent in constructing the best conference possible for our attendees, the premier educational opportunity in the state for the library community as a whole. Special thanks go to Tammy Hooker and Janet Hromjak, co-chairs for the past two years. We said goodbye to Tammy at our June board meeting as she and her husband will move to Indiana in July to begin a new life adventure.

As I'm writing this before the final day of the 2026 legislative session, the final outcome of a

few pending bills which may affect libraries is yet unknown. The House and the Senate did pass HB1184 – specific to issuance of no-trespass orders on municipal or school district property; now it goes to the governor for her signature or veto. NHLTA will follow up on its impact on library property and provide guidance in policy creation. For more legislative updates, see the Legal Q&A on page 6.

The NHLTA board continues to reach out to our members who may be interested in volunteering for the board or one of our committees. A small amount of time monthly and interest in helping NHLTA fulfill its mission are the biggest requirements. I'd love to talk with you to explore how you would fit into the needs of the board. You can reach me at m.mclaughlin@nhita.org

Have great, safe summer!

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

Summer Learning Shines in New Hampshire Libraries



By Mindy Atwood,
Administrator of Library
Operations and
Assistant State Librarian,
New Hampshire
State Library

In March 2026, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) released a new report exploring what drives childhood reading engagement and how public libraries strengthen early literacy. The full report is available here: <https://www.ims.gov/sites/default/files/2026-03/Library-ChildLiteracySecondaryResearch.pdf>.

Public libraries have long been champions of childhood literacy, and this new research highlights just how essential our programs are – especially during the summer months when children need opportunities that inspire them to stay excited about reading and to keep their reading skills from backsliding during the summer months.

In their recent report, IMLS found that "successful programs are based on effective content, instructional methods, and motivational practices." They also highlighted that programs using "read aloud, book discussions, social interaction, adult reading support, and community participation" show especially promising results in motivating young readers. These are the very practices at the heart of summer learning programs across New Hampshire.

The statewide data tells an encouraging story: attendance at summer learning programs in NH has not only bounced back from preCOVID levels – it has surpassed them. Statewide attendance recently topped 115,000, a 6.5% increase and a clear sign that these programs continue to reach families in meaningful ways.

This national research and local data underscore a powerful truth: summer library programs do far more than fill time. They help prevent learning loss, spark joyful reading experiences, support caregivers, and strengthen a vibrant statewide literacy ecosystem.

Thanks to support from the Saul O. Sidore Memorial Foundation and federal IMLS Grants to States funding, the State Library awarded 23 summer learning grants this year totaling nearly \$10,000. NHSL also helped libraries access the Boston Bruins Story Time with Blades program and coordinated the distribution of iReads Summer Learning manuals.

This year State Library staff have gone above and beyond to ensure New Hampshire libraries continue to have the tools, funding, and encour-

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NH Library Trustee

The Newsletter of the
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The NH Library Trustee is published four times yearly by the New Hampshire Library Trustees Association (NHLTA), 25 Triangle Park Drive, Concord NH 03301.

This publication serves as a means of providing information and news to library trustees in New Hampshire.

Subscriptions are included as part of the annual membership dues for the New Hampshire Library Trustees Association. The content published is for informational purposes only and is not and should not be considered a substitute for legal advice.

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Library Trustees Association

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POSTMASTER:

Return Service Requested



Summer Learning *continued*

agement they need to deliver creative, high-quality summer programs. Their dedication directly supports the children

and families we all serve. By continuing to invest in strong, welcoming summer programs, NH libraries remain a cornerstone in helping children grow as readers and learners all year long.

2026 Spring Conference & Annual Meeting Wednesday, May 27, 2026

BELOW FROM LEFT: Co-chair Tammy Hooker helps an attendee register; Attendees listening to keynote speaker Mindy Atwood, shown at right.



ABOVE: listening to the keynote.

RIGHT: Networking during a break.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Exhibitor Adam Lempel; Sarah Brock, Clean Energy NH, explaining funding opportunities for solar; Katherine Heck and Christina Duane, TD Bank; Lisa Mathews and Laurie Brown, Sisters in Crime; Dave Van Arsdale, Road Scholar, signing a Passport card; Beth Fuller discussing books.



LEFT: Jodi Kosakowski and Anastasia Weigle, University of Maine; ABOVE: Attendees talking with NHPR's Sarah Plourde.

Library Legislative Update

Jonathan Cowell, Legal Services Counsel, NH Municipal Association;
Sarah Burke Cohen, Legislative Advocate, NH Municipal Association;
Brodie Deshais, Legislative Advocate, NH Municipal Association

Every year, the New Hampshire state legislature proposes changes to existing laws, or RSAs, that could have a significant impact on municipalities, including libraries. While you may be familiar with NHMA's legal services, NHMA also has a Government Affairs team that tirelessly follows and advocates on legislative initiatives related to municipalities. This year, as with every year, there were hundreds of bills proposed that were tracked and followed by NHMA's Government Affairs team. This article covers some of the important pieces of legislation affecting libraries that will likely become law this year, as well as some legislation that municipalities thankfully avoided.

Of the bills that are likely headed to the Governor's desk for signature, only one will positively impact municipalities and public libraries. **HB 164** aims to enhance the management and accessibility of local government records by establishing a publicly accessible website for the storage and public access of electronic records that is maintained by the state archivist.

The remaining bills headed for the Governor have components that will make municipal operations, including those of public libraries, more difficult. These bills include:

◆ **HB 340** redefines electioneering by public employees. It ties the definition of electioneering by public employees to the definition contained in RSA 652:16-h. More concerning is that the bill will seemingly prevent any public employee from organizing or conducting surveys should they show a preference for a candidate, political party or *one or more policies that are reasonably anticipated to be on the ballot or otherwise at issue in an election*. The italicized portion could prevent a library or municipality from conducting any sort of survey if there is a high likelihood that the issue would end up on a ballot or be an issue in an election. Finally, HB 340 contains an effective date of January 1, 2026, which impermissibly turns it into a retroactive law.

◆ **HB 1109** will require public employers to provide within seven days written notice to a public employee, who is being suspended from duty. The

notice shall include the date of the suspension, cause of the suspension and estimated duration. The bill also requires a public employee who has been suspended to receive periodic updates every 90 days or until a final decision is made.

◆ **HB 1184** creates a new section in RSA 635:2 with a process relative to issuing "no trespass orders" ("NTO") for public property. The new process requires all NTOs to be in writing and contain specific information. Further, the public employee authorized to issue NTOs will be able to issue an "emergency" NTO that expires automatically after 35 days *unless* the individual receiving the NTO appeals the order within 10 days or the public employee requests that the NTO be extended for up to a year. The governing body will hear individual appeals and be the decision maker relative to extension of the NTO. Finally, the bill requires the governing body to review within 90 days all NTOs in effect as of the effective date of this section and reissue or rescind them in accordance with this section. If no action is taken by the governing body on an NTO subject to this paragraph within 90 days, such NTO shall be void.

◆ **HB 1256** repeals RSA 201-A:0, VII that authorized the state librarian to award scholarships for qualified individuals to attend graduate library school.

◆ **HB 1309** requires the intent and effect of each warrant article to be stated clearly and without commentary or ambiguity.

◆ **HB 1442** revises New Hampshire's Laws Against Discrimination by adding the state recognition of "biological sex." With that recognition, it will not be considered discrimination to operate bathroom facilities based on biological sex, to require participating in sporting events/competitions to be based on biological sex or to maintain detention facilities to which a person may be committed involuntarily based on biological sex.

◆ **HB 1565** adds statutory language that allows a "professional mandatory reporter" of child abuse/neglect to be held liable criminally or civilly should

Subscribe to the NHMA Legislative Bulletin

www.nhmunicipal.org/legislative-bulletins

2026 Annual Awards

The submission deadline is **Friday, July 10, 2026.**

Visit nhlta.org for instructions, all criteria and a description of the awards.

that person *knowingly* fail to make a report or *knowingly* make a false report of abuse/neglect of a child.

As stated above, these bills have not yet been signed into law. There is still time to reach out to the Governor and ask her to veto the bills. However, if these bills do get signed into law, NHMA will provide guidance on the bills that are most difficult to understand and implement.

To end on a positive note, a number of bills that could have impacted municipalities and public libraries negatively were killed by voting either *Inexpedient to Legislate* or *Interim Study*. These bills included:

- ◆ **HB 488** sought to define conflicts of interest related to individuals serving on multiple local boards or commissions;
- ◆ **HB 1214** that would have allowed municipalities to vote to have the municipality's governing body

take control of the public library from the trustees;

- ◆ **HB 1224** attempted to tinker with municipal finances through changes in the default budget calculation and prohibiting certain tax dollars from being donated to non-profit organizations;

- ◆ **HB 1649** aimed to prohibit tax dollars from being donated to non-profit organizations; and

- ◆ **HB 1788** sought to expand language passed in 2025 in HB 2. HB 1788 sought to hold contracts with "DEI" provision with the state or a political subdivision as void and allow *any* person to file a claim against the state or political subdivision for having a contract that contains "DEI."

- ◆ **HB 314**, **HB 1359** and **HB 1360** were continued attempts to silence the local voice before the legislature by preventing lobbying by organizations that receive public funds such as NHMA, NHLTA, and NHLA.



Pettis Library Placed on State Historic Register

The Olive G. Pettis Memorial Library that has served the Goshen community as its public library for over a century was recently placed on the state register. Built in 1908, the library building is the only building in the town built in the Colonial Revival style. It has original features including an Oregon pine window and the pine bookcases that held the first books donated to start the library by the descendants of its namesake.





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Trustees Association**
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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 2026

June 24, 10:00 am–12 pm
NHLTA Regional Gathering
Hosted by the James E. Nichols Memorial Library, 35 Plymouth St, Center Harbor, NH 03226

August 12, 12:30 pm–4:30 pm
New Trustee Orientation
Hooksett Public Library, 31 Mount St. Mary's Way, Hooksett, NH 03106

October 16, 10:00 am–12 pm
NHLTA Regional Gathering
Hosted by the Daland Memorial Library, 8 Lilac Lane, Mont Vernon, NH 03057

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