

George H. Stowell Free Library Trustee Draft Minutes

July 11, 2026, 1:00 p.m. at the George H. Stowell Free Library

Present: Trustees: Laura Cousineau, Kathi Patterson, Marie De Rusha

Librarian: Deanna Fitch

Citizens: Judith Kaufman

1. Meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. Agenda was reviewed with no changes.

3. Approval of minutes was tabled.

4. Librarian's Report:

There were 71 people who signed up for the summer reading pick up party. The summer reading program had 19 adults and 45 children sign up. There were 14 "buddy readers" signed up to help with Story Time on Thursdays. On July 14th there will be a DIY mini flower bouquet class in conjunction with the Garden Club with a wild flower theme. Summer teen book club will start on July 21 with a focus on poetry. The monthly newsletter has become so popular that the service used is now charging a fee of \$12 a month beginning August 1 to come from the Advertising budget line. There are currently over 250 people subscribed to the newsletter, which exceeds the number allowed for free use through Mailerlite.

5. Treasurer's Report:

See attached.

Marie asked Kathi if she would like to have all of her reports included as attachments in the minutes. Kathi responded she didn't feel it necessary as the other reports are added to the binder, the monthly statements would do fine for the attachment.

6. Progress report from the CCI:

See attached.

Laura read aloud a text from Colleen O'Neill she received earlier in the day which read: "Wanted to confirm that the new library kitchen will be a limited use warming kitchen that will not include frying of foods. This kitchen does not require a commercial suppression system per the NH state Fire Marshal. Residential style hood and ventilation go above the 2 electric stoves. Wanted to keep the Trustees informed."

7. Progress reports on moving tasks:

Deanna described her meeting with Ian Drennan, project manager for Trumbull-Nelson, and Laura for moving and use of interior design, including how shelving will be placed. Kathi offered a metal desk she has for use as a research desk. She will send a picture for reference along with its measurements to Deanna for consideration. Laura stated the interior/exterior committee have been working on furnishings and are looking into the Dartmouth warehouse, Smith Auction House and other furniture companies for possible pieces. They are also researching ideas for table and chair storage for the community room. Kathi reminded Laura they have all the slat wall that was removed from the general store available for use. Laura stated the committee is considering electric shades in the gambrel end due to the size of the window in order to help with interior temperatures in summer. Kathi reviewed the bullet list from the brainstorming meeting of June 13, categorizing what has been done, what is unnecessary and what needs to be considered regarding relocation. Laura asked about the collection development meeting. Kathi stated she and Deanna met with David Kruidenier of the Cornish Historical Society (CHS) who stated they need to maintain a collaborative, formalize an arrangement and he plans to make a proposal to the BOS regarding the cy pres for the CHS to move into the Stowell building. The collection in the basement was reviewed and there was discussion as to what would stay. Kathi believes the decision made was what was on the main floor pertaining to town would stay on the main floor and what is downstairs could go in the "special collection" area for a revolving exhibition in the new building for a month but ultimately stays in the Stowell building for CHS to maintain. Laura asked if the decision of where things will go is based on where it is currently located physically or how often it is requested for use. Kathi stated that would be up to David because it's "historical", not part of the library's book collection. Laura requested the next time Kathi, Deanna and David meet, they consider discussing how often the historical collection gets used and how to make it more available. According to Kathi, CHS will move the collection currently in the basement to the main floor as they will have use of all the shelving in the current stacks area. Deanna explained there would be two key pads, one for the front entry and one for the community room. The other doors will have key lock entries. The key pads will have back up keys in case of a problem. Deanna stated key codes will be created by staff for individual key codes and can be changed as necessary. Kathi suggested providing a key rather than an access code to the community room, eliminating the need to regularly change the codes or having too many people able to access the building. Laura suggested that point be added to community room policy as to how access will be addressed. Deanna stated the Cornish Police Department requested an exterior camera which will be installed facing Route 120.

8. Correspondence:

Marie emailed the two moving companies in New Hampshire that are bonded and specialize in moving libraries. The first would be expensive as they are far away and charge for travel time.

The other company, College Bound Movers, responded with answers to the Trustees' questions and a request to come see both buildings prior to the move. Marie will forward this email to her fellow Trustees and Deanna. Laura requested Marie follow up to make a date for a visit from a representative of College Bound Movers. Marie asked if anyone had found out who Plainfield used for their move. No one had. Laura requested Marie contact Jim Allen in Plainfield to see who they used and whatever other information is available. Laura stated any reports she receives she has been forwarding to Kathi and Marie. If anything is sent to her personal email regarding Library business, she has forwarded it to her official town email. Kathi mentioned an email from Laura, forwarded by "Dan" where Laura requested information regarding the money held in Capital Reserve for the Stowell. Kathi did a spread sheet of when the Capital Reserve began in 2020 and included every article number, amounts raised and appropriated, interest and when funds were used and what for. She then subtracted those expenses. Kathi stated there is almost \$100,000 in the Capital Reserve account. It is Kathi's belief if a warrant article is written to change the name of the account from the Stowell Library to the Cornish Library and Community Center, the designation of those funds will go to the new building. Laura stated she asked specifically about that and was told although we (the Trustees) should talk to counsel and BOS, it was of the opinion the funds are for the library at large, not for the building specific. Laura feels the funds are for the purpose of maintaining "A" library, so in that instance it would go to the new library. Kathi stated the funds under control of the Cornish Trustees of Trust Funds stays with the Stowell. Laura stated according to NHCTU (NH Charitable Trust Unit) those funds go to the new building but that is something that needs to be made more explicit. She would like the petition to go forth to NHCTU as it is her hope CHS, BOS and the Library Trustees move forward with a cy pres for CHS to take Stowell building for their use. Laura also stated once the cy pres is given in favor of the CHS use of the building, it is then up to the CHS Board to make a decision to lease the building or own the building. Laura continued on to say the BOS will decide what would ultimately happen with the building at that point. Kathi stated we need to check with legal counsel for guidance.

9. Other Business:

Marie proposed an email (see attached) be sent to Trumbull-Nelson's project manager, Ian Drennan, requesting RFIs (Request for Information) and corresponding answers from any architects or engineers involved and was willing to send it once reviewed and accepted. It is in her opinion documented information is important for protecting the town in the future as this will be a "forever" building. She stated she spoke briefly with BOS on Monday, July 6th and it was agreed construction related specifics should be included in the file related to the renovation project headed by the CCI. She explained that when anything gets changed regarding the building, Ian sends an RFI for clarification as to the reason for the change, which has a response from whomever made said change. Laura thought it could cost \$100,000 for all we knew to get

this information and any such cost to the CCI was an undue burden. Marie stated as Ian is on salary and would already have this information, there shouldn't be any cost attributed to the request. Laura stated she would pass the proposed email to Michael Fuerst for review and opinion before the Trustees decided it should be presented to Trumbull-Nelson. She feels the information is not needed and is an overreach. Kathi stated the Trustees agreed the CCI had the funds to begin construction and that BOS, and the Trustees had agreed the renovations are substantially consistent with the preliminary design plans, so those two conditions were met to satisfy the warrant article. Marie stated she disagreed because the meeting referred to was related to small changes within the building, changing the original design plan slightly. She felt that while both boards agreed to the change, the warrant article refers to the time the building is accepted by the BOS as a town building. Laura stated she believes the request for information from Ian is an attempt to throw a roadblock on the CCI's progress. Marie stated she felt she is doing her due diligence for the tax payers and town, possibly well into the future. With having the answers as to why these changes were made, it would be a positive for the town in the event of a possible law suit. Laura asked if anyone buying a house would ask for such information. Marie responded if she was buying a house, it wouldn't have asbestos buried in the floor or have mold; and for a 3 million dollar house she would get whatever information was available. Laura again stated before the Trustees make the decision to send the request, she will have Michael Fuerst review it. It was agreed to have Michael review the letter and discuss it at the next meeting. Kathi clarified the RFI is representative of the "why" for any changes made in construction.

10. Citizen Comments:

Judith announced there will be Friends of the Library meeting on Wednesday, July 15 at 6:30 at the Stowell Library. They are looking into procuring funds for a yearly lease to show movies in the community room via a company that leases to libraries. Laura pointed out programming requests go through Deanna and that perhaps it should be part of a policy to charge for certain events in the community room in the form of donations.

11. The next meeting was scheduled for Saturday, August 29 at 1:00 p.m. and the meeting was adjourned at 2:17

Respectfully submitted,
Marie De Rusha
Secretary

Treasurer's Report (07-11-26)

- a. Building Fund balance as of 06-30-26 is \$14,738.12
- b. Checkbook balance as of 07-11-26 is \$12,954.39
- c. Donation Fund balance as of 06-30-26 is 1,763.81
- d. Non-Lapsing Fund as of 06-30-26 is \$1,207.50
- e. Palmer-Norell Fund as of 06-30-26 is \$1,007.64

Donations - \$75.00 (Hanover Garden Club)

Non-Lapsing - none s

July 11 CCI Update

Provided by Trumbull-Nelson

- Interior and Exterior Framing: Complete
- Plumbing Rough: Complete
- Electrical Rough: Nearing completion (exterior disconnect to follow siding)
- Energizing new electrical: Pending utilities relocation by Liberty
- Mechanical Rough: in progress (Complete by 7/17/26)
- Exterior Insulation: Complete
- Siding and Trim: In progress (Complete by 7/31/26)
- Roofing: In progress (Complete by 7/17/26)
- Interior Insulation: Scheduled to start 7/20/26)
- Sheetrock and Ceiling Grid: to start 8/3/26
- Flooring: to start 8/17/26

Dear Ian,

I am writing you on behalf of the George H. Stowell Library Trustees.

As the date for the town to accept the newly renovated building as its Library draws near, having whatever information available to be on record at this time and for the future is in everyone's best interest.

With that in mind, the Library Trustees are requesting for Trumbal-Nelson's project manager to provide all RFIs (Request for Information) and ensuing memos from architects and engineers since the renovation project began to be made available to us and the Board of Selectmen for our perusal. This information will be included in the file related to the CCI and the renovation for future use if needed. This will not only protect the town if unanticipated problems arise but it will also give clarity to what has been done and how it may be addressed. The town is inheriting a three-million-dollar building. This information should be considered on par with receiving an owner's manual that would accompany the purchase of a new appliance or motor vehicle.

Thank you for taking the time in considering our request. We are looking forward to your answer.