George H. Stowell Free Library Trustee Draft Minutes
September 24, 2026, 1:00 p.m. at the George H. Stowell Free Library

PRESENT: Trustees: Laura Cousineau, Kathi Patterson, Marie De Rusha
Librarian: Deanna Fitch
No citizens were in attendance.

1. Meeting was called to order at 1:07 p.m. and the agenda was reviewed. Additions were made to the agenda for items to go under "Other Business".

2. The approval of the August 29 meeting was tabled as Laura had not had the chance to review them. They will be discussed at the next meeting.

3. Financial Reports:
a. See attached for Treasurer's Report.
b. The $20,000 donation from the Schulle Trust held by the Trustees of Trust Funds was discussed. Laura emailed Heather Meeks seeking advisement as to how and when the Trustees may access these funds as she wishes to use the Schulle donation toward moving costs. At the time of the meeting, Laura had not received a response.
c. The Capital reserve Fund for the Stowell Library was established at the 2000 Town Meeting by Larry Dingee. It is Article 14 and states $2,000 shall be placed in said fund. Stated in discussion for that Article the following year (2001) was the verbiage that the future use for the funds be used for ADA access yet was not officially voted on for that purpose. Kathi stated any decision to be made regarding what happens to this fund in relation to the new building would have to go to vote at a Town Meeting. Laura asked where the fund would go and how it would be used and where we could possibly get answers. She also wondered if the Capital Reserve funds are for the Stowell building or for "a" library, therefore it could be used for the new building. Kathi stated she could not find information if it stayed with the Stowell or was just for library use as the Article was not specific in its wording. Laura asked if it was the Town's decision what the funds can be used for. Kathi suggested contacting NHMA or the AG regarding this matter for guidance or answers. Laura will do so. As of 2026 there is a total of $98,844.19 in the Capital Reserve Fund for the Stowell Library.

4. Librarian's Report:
See attached for full Librarian's report. Laura asked about the usage of the Library of Things as Meriden had reported there seemed lack of use at their location. Deanna is trying to advertise more for the options available within the Library of Things via staff. Deanna believes the musical instruments can be a draw but it is too new to determine. Some things, like the telescope and

metal detector, have very specific use so do not get checked out often. The seed catalog remains popular. Deanna has also been looking into a company out of Rhode Island that comes to the Upper Valley to pick up books slated for discard. They take them away and discard library books in an appropriate manner.

5. The Trustees and Librarian had a tour of the new building on September 17. Laura mentioned a fence will be constructed around the air exchange unit out back that had not been mentioned at the tour which will shield the unit from being seen when people are using the patio. She also stated the community room will hold 50 chairs. Sue Fitch asked Laura about storing the community China somewhere in the building. Deanna pointed out that Cornish Aging in Place is allowed storage in the basement. Marie stated that is in writing and is a stipulation from Colleen O'Niell regarding the donation of the building. Deanna asked how it is accessed and who will be managing anything stored in the building. Laura stated storage in the community room would not make sense and items should be stored in the basement and access to any stored items would have to happen during operating hours. Marie asked where would the line be drawn. She stated that various groups used the store building for storage while activities were taking place at that location. These groups went to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) requesting to store their things at the Town Hall once renovation on the store building began and they were no longer allowed access. As requests poured in, the BOS decided no one would be using the Town Hall as storage. Marie felt once that door was opened it would be difficult to close and it should be taken under consideration these groups will be moving whatever they have stored there from the basement and most of them are not young people. She did not believe the new building should be used as a storage unit. Deanna stated she did not want to be in charge of keeping track of miscellaneous items stored by a variety of people. Laura stated the library is there to serve the town on many levels and as long as there is space available, she would not object to people storing things in the new building that serve the community. She stated there just need to be clear policies in place.

6. Cy Pres:

a. Laura gave a synopsis of the meeting she and Michael Fuerst had with the BOS. See attachment for Michael Fuerst's draft cy pres petiton presented to the BOS. The BOS will review the draft cy pres petition, send it to Town Counsel for review and give us their decision.

b. The Stowell Fund, which was voted to stay with the Stowell building at our last meeting, was discussed. Laura stated Michael informed her the Attorney General rules on where it goes. The Chair of the Cornish Historical Society (CHS) stated CHS did not want the money and feel it should go to the new library. David Kruidener stated CHS would like to have both the old Selectmen's Office and the Stowell Library building for their collection. At some point there will be a public hearing regarding the cy pres for the Stowell building regarding the decision made.

The BOS and CHS will work out between each other how to handle the lease and use of both or either of the buildings if the cy pres is ruled in that favor.

c. There should be a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) according to Michael Fuerst between the BOS, the Library Trustees and CHS regarding the historical collection. Kathi asked about the paintings that are in the Stowell building. Laura stated they should be where best used in connection to either library. Laura requested it be a written document signed between Deanna, Kathi and David Kruidenier as to what stays at the Stowell and what goes to the new building. She believes there needs to be made a provision in the MoU as to how and what things get exhibited through collection rotation between the Stowell and the new building.

7. Laura is working with the Garden Club to see if they will take on exterior plantings of annuals or any holiday plantings/decorations. It would be up to library employees to keep things watered.

8. Other Business:
Laura is looking into the process of having the name of the Trustees changed for the new space. The spreadsheet that was made for tasks was postponed for a later date as the meeting was running long. Kathi asked Marie about the moving company. Marie stated she had not contacted them again as nothing had moved forward regarding the move and she had told the company they would be contacted once things were closer to completion. Kathi asked Marie to check with the company if they can bring carts, have volunteers load the carts, the company will shrink wrap, move and unload carts and volunteers will unpack them. Marie said she would. Laura would like for us to discuss at a future meeting plans for a ribbon cutting ceremony or grand opening date.

9. There was no new business.

10. No citizens were in attendance.

11. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 22 at 1 p.m.
Meeting was adjourned at 2:34

Respectfully submitted,
Marie De Rusha
Secretary

Treasurer's Report (09-24-26)

a. Building Fund balance as of 08-31-26 is $14,738.88
b. Checkbook balance as of 09-24-26 is $11,706.88
c. Donation Fund balance as of 08-31-26 is 1,762.89
d. Non-Lapsing Fund as of 08-31-26 is $1,207.56
e. Palmer-Norell Fund as of 08-31-26 is $1,007.70

Donations - none
Non-Lapsing - none
Schuelle Trust - $20,000

Librarian Report: 9/24/2026

CHECKED OUT MATERIALS:

2026 Count	Audio Book	Book	DVD	ILLs	Activity Backpack	Museum Pass	Rotating Collection Item	Telescope	Library of Things	TOTAL
August	2	397	3	32	0	6	6	0	1	447

Patron Log *(total in bold)*
Adults: **August 187x**
Children: **August 95x**
1x curbside
3x wifi
1x computer

Events & Programming Participants:

*August - **78x total participation***
Programming in August included:

- Adult Book Club, Story Time
- Summer Reading: Mocktails, Stuffy Sleepover, End of Summer Raffle
- Craft Night - Tin cans.

Updates:

- Mailed thank-you notes to all organizations that donated raffle items, gift certificates, vouchers, and items for the Summer Reading Program events.

- Internet: Xfinity replaced cable from powerline through basement and upstairs on Friday 9/11/26. They also replaced the modem. (Free of charge). We now have reliable internet again.

- Completed New Library of Things Policies to revamp current forms and add instruments. I also updated the circulation times to 2 weeks for consistency and created a clearer protocol for staff and patrons. Will give it to Kathi for review on Thursday.

- LUV Meeting on 9/21: UV Libraries suggested Bay Street Books for discarded books. They come to collect these and sort, donate, and dispose of them appropriately for Free. 200 min book/10x boxes, which we probably have in the basement. Do I need approval for this?

- NHDB - Overdrive will be $1,088. Up $23 from last year. ($1,065)

- Ancestry.com: Half of the NH Libraries have shown interest in renewing Ancestry, so not sure if we will have access again through the state. TBD

- Completed: Furniture spreadsheet, sent to Interior committee, and Tech spreadsheet to Tech Committee

THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

Sullivan, SS.

New Hampshire-Circuit Court
5th Circuit-Probate Division-
Newport

CASE NO:

Town of Cornish
and
Stowell Library Trustees

v.

New Hampshire Attorney General
Director of Charitable Trusts

VERIFIED PETITION FOR CY PRÈS

NOW COME the Petitioners, The Town of Cornish ("Town") having a business address of 488 Townhouse Road, Cornish, New Hampshire 03745, by and through its attorneys_____ and the Town of Cornish Stowell Library Trustees, having a business address of _____ by and through their attorneys, Buckley & Zopf, (Trustees) and respectfully petition this Honorable Court to apply the doctrine of cy près relief pursuant to RSA 547:3-d and common law. Petitioners state as follows:

1. Pursuant to RSA 7:28, the New Hampshire Department of Justice, Attorney General's office, Charitable Trusts Unit, represents the public interest in charitable trusts and is a necessary party to this proceeding. Its office is located at 1 Granite Place South, Concord, New Hampshire, 03301.
2. The Stowell Library Board of Trustees is the governing body of the Town of Cornish's sole library, the Stowell Library, and has the authority to manage all the property in the Town relating to that library pursuant to RSA 202-A:6.
3. The Cornsih Selectboard is the governing body of the Town of Cornish. The board of selectmen has the authority to manage all real property owned by the town and to regulate its use pursuant to RSA 41:11-a.
4. This Court has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to RSA 547:3-d (Jurisdiction over Cy Près Doctrine) :

> If property is or has been given in trust to be applied to a charitable purpose, and said purpose or its application is or becomes impossible or impracticable or illegal or obsolete or ineffective or prejudicial to the public interest to carry out, the trust shall not fail. Upon petition by the trustee or trustees or the attorney general, the probate court may direct the application of the property to some charitable

purpose which is useful to the community, and which charitable purpose fulfills as nearly as possible the general charitable intent of the settlor or testator. In applying the doctrine of cy pres, the court may order the distribution of the trust assets to another charitable trustor to a charitable corporation to be held and administered by it in accordance with the terms of the governing instrument as said terms may be modified by the application of cy pres under this section and RSA 547:3-e.

II. Prior to any court proceeding under this chapter on the intent to offer for sale or change the use of any land, buildings, or both, given, devised, or bequeathed to the town for charitable purposes, the municipality shall hold at least one public hearing with no less than 14 days' notice.

5. The Stowell Library was established with a gift from George H. Stowell, who had lived in Cornish as a boy. In 1909, he offered to build and furnish a library for the town. His offer was presented for a vote by the Town as shown in the Annual Reports of the Selectmen and Other Town Officers of the Town of Cornish, N.H. for the year ending February 15th, 1910. (Article #12, pg. 4)
6. The record for that vote states, "On the motion of Joseph H. Pierce voted that the town accept the offer of the Hon. Geo. H. Stowell to build the library building and furnish it at his own expense - that the town raise and appropriate the sum of $150 to buy a lot and use such part of the sum as may be necessary."
7. Mr. Stowell agreed to donate up to $5,000 for the construction and up to $1,000 for the furnishings.
8. The Town bought a 70' by 75' lot along School Street from E. B. Hunt by deed dated May 6, 1910, and recorded on May 12, 1910, in Volume 176, Page 44 of the Sullivan County Registry of Deeds.
9. Construction was completed in 1912, with formal dedication and presentation on October 4, of that year.
10. The Stowell Library has continuously operated as the Town's library since that time.
11. At a town meeting held on March 18, 2023 (and reaffirmed at the March 15, 2025 meeting) the Town approved the acceptance of a gift of a new library building, fully furnished, and the land it sits upon, to be constructed at no expense to the Town in the building previously occupied by the Cornish General Store on the northwesterly side of NH Route 120.
12. Pursuant to the terms of the warrant article the Town would accept the gift of the new library building, upon the completion of the fund raising and construction of the building by the Donor Cornish Community Initiative, Inc, (CCI), a NH nonprofit Corporation.
13. The original owner of the Cornish General Store property, Cornish Flat Enterprises, LLC gifted and conveyed the property to CCI in 2025.
14. CCI has raised more than $_____ to totally renovate the general store structure and convert it to the new town library.
15. Construction commenced in 2025 and is scheduled to be finished at or near the end of calendar year 2026.
16. At that time the Cornish Library will be relocated to the new building, and the George H. Stowell Library building will become vacant.

17. The impetus for this move was based primarily upon the following factors:
    - The chronic lack of space (only 1,226 square feet) on the only useable floor of the building. For each book purchased one must be removed due to lack of shelf space.
    - Access to the cellar space and composting toilets are via a set of steep, narrow stairs.
    - There is no ADA acceptable handicapped access to the building.
    - There is no running water.
    - The only bathroom is a composting toilet.
    - Parking is problematic.
    - There is no space for a designated meeting room.
    - There is very limited space for library programs. Lack of bathroom facilities and running water make programming difficult.
    - Space for expansion of the building is practically limited to the space between the library and the old Selectmen's office.
18. For the reasons noted above, the purpose of Mr. Stowell's gift will have become essentially impossible**, i**mpracticable and/or obsolete to achieve in its current location. The Town will no longer have need for the Stowell Library building as a public library.
19. The Stowell Library building sits on Town property along what is known as the old selectmen's office, which is no longer used for said purposes. (The old selectmen's' office parcel, the "Record Building" as noted in Volume 176, Page 44, and the Stowell Library parcel were originally separate lots but now appear as one lot on the Cornish tax maps).
20. The old selectmen's office has been rented to the Cornish Historical Society (CHS), a NH non-profit, for storing a portion of its collections and for exhibiting the same.
21. The old selectmen's office is a small structure with limited exhibition and storage space.
22. The Stowell Library building, right next door, is larger and would permit increased exhibition of the CHS's many holdings.
23. The Cornish Historical Society needs additional storage and exhibition space and has agreed to rent all of the Stowell Library building from the Town upon the terms and conditions contained in the Memorandum attached hereto as Exhibit A.
24. The CHS and the Cornish Library trustees have established a joint collection development policy to select the most appropriate materials for each entity, and to coordinate appropriate access, display, lending and storage of their respective collections and to coordinate the showing and storage of their respective collections in the existing Stowell Library building.
25. The Petitioners' proposed use of the building fulfills Mr. Stowell's probable intent as nearly as possible because it continues to benefit the educational, research and resource needs of the town.
26. Pursuant to RSA 547:3-d, this Court may direct the application of the Stowell Library property to use by the CHS, which is a charitable purpose useful to the community.
27. Upon George Stowell's death on May 19, 1915, the sum of $10,000.00 was bequeathed to the Town of Cornish pursuant to his Last Will and Testament, probated in the Sullivan County Probate Court (now the 5th Circuit- Probate Division-Newport). Said bequest reads as follows:

> "I have erected a Library in the town of Cornish, my native place, known as the 'George H. Stowell Free Library' and I now give and bequeath to the said town of Cornish the sum of ten thousand dollars ($10,000.00) as a fund to support and maintain said Library, the same to be safe and securely invested by said town and the income only to be used for such support, under the direction of the selectmen of said town and the Library Committee."

28. The bequeathed funds are held as the "Stowell Library" fund under the list of "Town of Cornish NH Trust Funds" and have always been used for the operation of the town's library. The current balance of that account is approximately $_____ as of the date of this petition. The balance in the trust fund at the end of Calendar year 2025, was $11,837.64 according to the Cornish town report for the year ending December 31, 2025.
29. The funds are administered by the library trustees.
30. Upon the relocation of the library, although the funds are identified as being held for the benefit of the Stowell library, the Petitioners propose that they be used for similar purposes for the benefit of the new Cornish library.
31. The purpose of the Stowell bequest was to support a library in the Town of Cornish. Permitting the trustees to utilize the funds for the purpose of the new library would seem to be an alternate use which closely meets the purposes of the original bequest.
32. The Trust property cannot be applied to its original designated use.
33. Mr. Stowell's original gift and his testamentary bequest contain no alternative distribution or automatic reversion provisions that would apply in the event of this failure.
34. The Petitioners' proposed use of the building and the fund fulfill Mr. Stowell's probable intent as nearly as possible. The proposed modification is useful to the community and will ensure the Trust assets are effectively used for a public charitable benefit rather than sitting idle.
35. The Director of the Charitable Trust Unit has had an opportunity to review and comment on all pertinent documentation, is supportive and has no objection to the transaction as proposed.
36. As required by RSA 547:3-d II, the Town held a public hearing on _____, 2026, on the proposed changes of use of the Stowell Library building and the Stowell Library fund.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, the Petitioners respectfully request that this Honorable Court:

- **A.** Give such notice as it deems appropriate, including notice to the NH Attorney General's Office, Division of Charitable Trusts.
- **B.** Grant the Petitioner's request for cy pres relief sought in this Petition;
- **C.** If needed schedule a hearing on the merits of this request; and
- **D.** Grant such other and further relief as equity and justice require

Dated this _____ day of _____***, 2026***.
Respectfully submitted,
The Town of Cornish
By its attorneys

By:_____

Address,
Phone #
Email
Bar#

Dated this _____ day of _____***, 2026***.
Respectfully submitted,
The Town of Cornish Stowell Library Trustees
By their attorneys

By:_____

Address,
Phone #
Email
Bar#

VERIFICATION

I,_____, am the Chair **of** the Petitioner, Town of Cornish Selectboard, and I have reviewed the within Petition. The facts stated herein are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.
Dated: _____, 2026

_____
Signature of Selectman

STATE OF NEWHAMPSHIRE
COUNTY OF SULLIVAN

Personally appeared before me the above named _____ and made oath that the foregoing is true and accurate to the best of his/her information and belief

Date:_____, 2026

_____
Notary Public/Justice of the Peace
My commission expires:

VERIFICATION

I, Laura Cousineau, am the Chair of the Petitioner, Stowell Library Trustees and I have reviewed the within Petition. The facts stated herein are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dated: _____ _____

Signature of Trustee/Petitioner

STATE OF NEWHAMPSHIRE
COUNTY OF SULLIVAN

Personally appeared before me the above-named Laura Cousineau and made oath that the foregoing is true and accurate to the best of her information and belief

Date:_____, 2026 _____

Notary Public/Justice of the Peace
My commission expires