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Durham Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 14, 2026
6:00 pm
Oyster River Room

In Attendance: Sudie Blanchard, Kat Gatcomb, Robin Glasser, Callie Langton, Beth Newkirk, Kim Sweetman, Susan Wagner

Board Alternates: Laura Mason, Joe Warzin

Absent: Martie Gooze

Observers/Guests: Linda Johnson (Friends liaison); Julian Smith (Durham resident); Peg Higgins (observer)

Library Staff: Library Director Sheryl Bass

1. **Call to order**
   - **a.** Chair Robin Glasser called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.
     - **i.** A quorum of 5 was physically present.
     - **ii.** Introduction of Julian Smith, Durham resident, who has requested to speak to the Board.

2. **Chair appointment of Alternate Trustee to serve as voting member, as needed**
   - **a.** All Trustees were present for the meeting. No Alternate was needed.

3. **Approval of meeting agenda**
   - **a.** Sudie Blanchard moved to approve the meeting agenda, as amended below. Kim Sweetman seconded. All were in favor. Motion passed.
     - **i.** The location of the meeting was changed to the DPL Oyster River Room to accommodate additional attendees.

4. **Public Comments/Public Correspondence**
   - **a.** Julian Smith, Durham resident
     - i. Mr. Smith prefaced his comments by providing some background on his connection to the Town of Durham and to UNH. He was a Library Trustee for 6 years and was a member of a 3-person subcommittee who recommended to the Durham Town Council the purchase of the current Library site. As a Town Councilman,

he then made the motion to purchase the property. He has been both a full and part-time Durham resident over the years and has witnessed the evolution of the relationship between the UNH Dimond Library and the Town Public Library. He is aware of complaints from Town folks about the lack of parking around the university library, but Mr. Smith has found it easy to park if arriving early in the day. He encouraged the Trustees to think about using Dimond as an alternative to DPL when DPL is not open, especially on Sundays. There is an abundance of space in study rooms and quiet areas, as physical library use by students has decreased over the years in favor of digital access to resources. Any photo ID will allow a Durham resident to borrow from the university library.

ii. Following Mr. Smith's comments, Kim Sweetman, current DPL Trustee and Dean of Libraries at UNH, mentioned that both libraries work closely together. The UNH library allows Durham residents to have library cards, and Kim offered to arrange a tour of the Dimond Library for the Trustees.

5. **Approval of September 9, 2026, Meeting Minutes**
   - **a.** Sudie Blanchard moved to approve the minutes, as presented. Kat Gatcomb seconded. Six were in favor; Beth Newkirk abstained since she was not in attendance at the September meeting. Motion passed.

6. **Friends of the Library Report – Linda Johnson**
   - **a.** Linda Johnson reported the following Friends activities:
     - **i.** The group last met on September 16.
     - **ii.** They will hold a book sale on Friday/Saturday, November 6/7.
     - **iii.** There will be no book donations accepted in October. The next donation period will be November 30 - December 5.
     - **iv.** They are investigating new shelving for their storage area in the library basement.
     - **v.** Their annual membership drive will be held in April '27. There are currently 226 members of the Friends group.
     - **vi.** They are in the process of creating a wish list to support both the Children's and Young Adult's programs.
     - **vii.** Their next meeting is January 13, 2027.
   - **b.** Beth Newkirk mentioned that the National Friends of Libraries Week is scheduled for October 18 - 24. The Library staff plans to acknowledge the group for all the work they do in support of the Library. Chair Robin Glasser and Director Sheryl Bass both acknowledged their great appreciation for all that the Friends accomplish.

7. **Treasurer's Report for September 2026 — Kat Gatcomb**
   - a. See Treasurer's Report for complete details

b. Callie Langton moved to accept the Treasurer's Report, as amended below. Kim Sweetman seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

i. There was a typo in the August report on line J38 (Restricted Equipment Bank Account balance) which was corrected in the September report.

8. Director's Report –Sheryl Bass

a. See Director's Report for complete details. Recently completed noteworthy items include:

i. The new router was installed seamlessly on September 30, and an ordered new access point is currently on backorder.

ii. The Town is in negotiations with the Postmaster to move the post box at the corner of Madbury and Edgewood to the Library's driveway. At the same time the Library's outdoor book return would be moved next to the post box. This is something our patrons have been asking for.

iii. Several adult programs were held during September, including:

1. Jane Oneail's presentation on artist Chuck Close and Photorealism.

2. Local Author Keith O'Brien and his new book, *Heartland: A Forgotten Place*, about basketball standout Larry Bird. This program was sponsored by the Durham, Lee and Madbury Libraries and held in Madbury.

3. A Lunch and Learn program titled Scams 101 with Officer Chloe Scott of the Durham Pollice Department.

4. A four-week Learn to Play class on Mah Jongg. The Library plans to offer an evening session starting in late Fall to reach additional players.

iv. Recent youth programming included:

1. Two Firefighter Storytimes on October 6 & 8 were well received, prompting inviting ORCSD bus drivers to do the same on October 12. A second school bus storytime has been scheduled for October 15. A future NHSPCA storytime is also scheduled for October 22, and an animal companion will accompany the reader on the visit.

2. The Library Kids' Favorites book program has been popular with both children and teachers. Voting participation has been strong, and DPL received 275 free picture books to support the initiative.

v. Staff have been busy presenting and attending various events:

1. Library Assistant Debbie Jarvis and Assistant Director Audra Lewis co-presented at the annual READS conference on October 2. It was Debbie's first conference presentation, and Audra said she did great!

2. Also on October 2, Director Sheryl Bass presented to the UNH Leadership for Sustainability Class on the topic of community sustainability through programming and outreach.

3. The Library hosted six librarians and paraprofessionals from various Oyster River Cooperative schools as part of their staff training. DPL staff held a book mending class for the group on October 9.
4. The Library is assisting the Durham Parks and Rec Department in hosting some programming at the Library while the Irving station next door is being remodeled.

vi. The Library has spent 80% of its allocated operating budget. Planning for the 2027 budget continues. Both Director Bass and Assistant Director Lewis, along with Chair Glasser, will attend the budget proposal presentation to the Town Council on October 19.

9. Director's Action Items

a. Substitute hiring recommendation

i. Director Bass proposed rehiring Substitute Library Assistant Lisa Harling @$18/hr, as well as hiring Substitute Library Assistant Sarah Corredor @$15/hr.

1. Lisa was a former Library Media Specialist at ORHS and holds a professional degree.
2. Sarah has good retail experience and interpersonal skills. She speaks fluent Spanish and is hand crafty and brave.

ii. Beth Newkirk moved to hire Lisa Harling @$18/hr and Sarah Corredor @$15/hr pending a successful background check. Sudie Blanchard seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

iii. Director Bass will schedule a future meeting with the Personnel & Policy Committee to discuss increasing the pay rate for positions in the library. Other area libraries are paying their staff at higher rates than DPL.

b. Renewal of Mango (language learning platform) and Swank (movie license)

i. The Park Street Foundation will not be renewing Mango Languages for libraries in the NH, so DPL needs to assume the cost. Mango is offering a limited-time 5% discount incentive for us to renew the subscription. Director Bass presented statistics on DPL patrons' use of the program, and it is worth considering the renewal. She is actively working with both Madbury and Lee Libraries toward a shared license to keep the cost down. No decision has been made at this time. Trustee Kat Gatcomb, who works with another library subscription service, suggested that DPL should ask for a larger discount.

10. Needs Assessment Survey

a. Director Sheryl Bass is planning to send out a needs assessment survey very soon to the Durham community. Survey Monkey will be used once a few technical issues are resolved (branching within questions). Chair Glasser suggested that Sheryl could send it to the Trustees to be tested, with the understanding that a quick turnaround time is needed.

b. The survey will be advertised in the Library's email newsletter, social media platforms, and the Library website. It will also be advertised to some targeted groups (e.g., Riverwoods), as well as hopefully near the top of the email in the Town's Friday Updates newsletter.

11. 2027 Budget

a. Director Bass presented the proposed 2027 Library operating budget to the Trustees which she and Chair Glasser will present to the Town Council on Monday, October Oct 19. Once again, Town Administrator Todd Selig has asked Director Bass and Chair Glasser to consider how the Library might generate revenue to offset some of the Town's budget allocation to the Library.

12. Review 2026 3rd Quarter Budget

a. Director Bass reported that the Library is right on target with its spending. It is currently under budget in personnel, which is offset by being slightly over in software support, equipment maintenance, digital resources, and technology (due to added expense for the router & license). The Library is currently under budget by $763 at end of September. Hoopla is currently right on budget after making borrowing adjustments to the digital platform.

13. Set Date to Address Letters for 2026/2027 Annual Appeal

a. The group agreed to meet on Wednesday, October 28, at 6:30 PM, at the Library to address letters for the Annual Appeal. Chair Glasser will make a package for each person who can't attend to complete at home.

14. Adjournment

a. Callie Langton moved to adjourn the meeting. Sudie Blanchard seconded. All in favor. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Future meetings 2nd Wednesday of each month 6:00 pm. Nov. 12 (Thursday), Dec. 9

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Wagner
Secretary