

Friends of the Exeter Public Library

DRAFT

Meeting Minutes for the meeting held on Tuesday, October 21, 2025 at 6:30 pm in the Children's Art Room of the Exeter Public Library

Present: Kaye Scheidler, Carol Eberhardt, Susan Ploss, Jan O'Brien, Jenny Medlock, Elizabeth Blanchard, Ute Tellini, Robin Thomas, Barbara Young, Sarah James, Julia Lanter (Library Director), Evelyn Kelso, Linda George, Andrea Renz, and Martha Walsh.

1. Prior Minutes: The minutes from the prior meeting held on September 16th were approved without changes.

2. Treasurer's Report: The current balance at Edward Jones is \$20,714.71, which includes a certificate of deposit that matures on November 6. The September 30 balance in the Citizens checking account is \$1,543.64.

Receipts during September included a \$250.00 donation and \$311.00 proceeds from the Fall Crafts Fair Raffle. Expenses included \$150 for a library concert, \$850.00 for Library staff training and \$298.91 for a Librarian's luncheon.

Proceeds from the October Charitable Gaming have not yet been received.

3. Ongoing Programs:

- The cribbage group had 4 attendees on October 11.

4. Old Business:

- Martha and Andrea reported on the September 27th regional gathering of library friends groups organized by the New Hampshire Library Trustees Association. The program was well attended and was very helpful both in providing information and allowing members of various friends groups to build connections. The main topics covered included: recruitment, fundraising, how to choose what to spend money on, community engagement and the nuts and bolts of governance such as compliance with governmental regulations for non-profits. Attendees expressed interest in an ongoing or follow up meeting but this has not yet been announced.

- Our group was the designated recipient of charitable gaming proceeds from Hampton's Beach Club Casino for the period of October 3 through 12. We have not yet been notified how much money we will receive.

- Our group helped fund a program for staff of the Exeter and surrounding libraries focused on de-escalating difficult situations. Attendees thought the program was well done and thanked us for the support. They learned new techniques that they feel they will be able to use regularly in their work.

5. New Business:

- We have approved funding for several upcoming programs to be held in the library: Cryptozoology on Tuesday, October 28 at 6 pm (\$500.00) and an A Capella concert by the group "Colgate 13" on Saturday, November 8 at 11 am. The A Capella group has agreed to provide a concert without charge to the library. Our group will donate \$50.00 to Colgate 13.

- Name tags: The new nametags arrived and they look great! There is a box to keep them in at the library OR anyone who would prefer can keep their nametag at home. Respond to this email or speak with Martha at an upcoming meeting if you would like to have a nametag made for you.

- Otto Pizza fundraiser: On Monday, December 1, Otto Pizza in Exeter will donate a portion of the day's proceeds to our group. The librarians will make some advertising posters and anyone who thinks of a place to hang them can ask for copies at the front desk. To be courteous to businesses and community boards we ask that after the event you remove any posters you have hung up.

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Gingerbread House Construction: Jan O'Brien will be leading our group in making a gingerbread house for the Festival of Trees community display. A meeting to plan our creation will be held at the library on Thursday, November 6 at 6:30 pm and we will meet on Monday, December 1 at 5:30 pm to assemble and decorate the house. At the December 1 meeting we will buy food from Otto's to make the meeting fun and to support our own group! Everyone is invited to attend one or both meetings. Respond to this email if you would like more information.

- December Craft Fair: The Friends will again run the raffle at the librarians' craft fair scheduled for December 6. Quite a few people signed up to volunteer

6. Future Business:

- Charitable Gaming 2026: Susan Feltus has filed our application to receive charitable gaming funds in 2026.

- Friends Group Officers in 2026: In March 2026 we will need to appoint officers. Andrea would like to join Martha as co-president. Any interested friends should consider serving as an officer - it is an easy and fun way to participate in the group!

- Friends Group Budget: Martha proposed that in the future we work on a budget outline for our group. This would serve as a general guideline for how to spend the money we raise. The suggestion was well received.

7. Library needs:

- Upcoming needs: Julia reported that the library has no acute financial needs. She anticipates asking the friends to fund additions to the "Library of Things" in the future, possibly some tools that people with low vision and low hearing can use to access reading materials. The goal would be that library patrons could check out these devices and try them before deciding which tool works best for them. Julia will investigate state and local groups who have experience with these types of materials so that we can purchase the most effective ones. Julia also asked the Friends to consider encouraging people; either personally or through social media posts, to donate to the Exeter Public Library Trustee's 2026 annual appeal once plans are finalized.
- Long Range Plan: As the trustees work on the 5 year long range plan they will plan community "listening sessions" to gather input on future library issues, activities and programs. Once dates are announced, please consider attending a session and express your preferences and ideas.
- 2026 Budget: The 2026 budgetary process is in progress and the town anticipates that the town and the voters will be looking to shave money from all department budgets. Julia is working hard to construct a library budget that is lean while still meeting as many community needs as possible. Once finalized, the budget will be discussed at the Town Deliberative Session. The date for this is not certain. In some nearby towns there are people working to defund their libraries altogether. Julia has not heard of such a movement in Exeter, but asks that people show up at the deliberative session to voice support for the library if the budget is challenged. Likewise it is important that library supporters the vote to pass the eventual proposed budget in the March, 2026 town elections. Any friends who are residents of Exeter can vote and we can all encourage our Exeter friends and neighbors to vote.
- Community Support of the Library: Julia asks that all friends keep an eye on social media posts about the library and discuss any concerns about them with the library staff. Friends are welcome to respond to the posts of others, but are reminded to stay safe and be cautious about revealing personal information. We discussed the library policy for dealing with requests for books to be banned from or moved within the library's collection. This has not happened recently, but if it does the friends may be encouraged to attend trustees meetings and voice their opinions on specific books as Exeter community members. We briefly discussed other ways to support the library's goal to provide library materials with wide ranging viewpoints, and acknowledged the value of being able to debate and discuss controversial issues rather than challenging or banning them. Julia will consider future actions that can foster positive ways for people to express their opinions on this topic, including proposing an event focused on book challenges at the 2026 Exeter Lit Fest and providing an "I'm with the Banned" pledge that people who oppose book banning can sign.

Additional information on the First Amendment rights is available at the American Library Association (www.ala.org) website, the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom website and PEN America at Pen.org.

8. Next meeting: Tuesday, November 18, 2025 at 6:30 pm in the Children's Art Room of the library

ADDENDUM OCTOBER 22:

The Exeter Select Board has confirmed that the date for the Exeter Town Deliberative Session is scheduled for Saturday, January 31, 2026 at the Exeter High School Auditorium.

The location for constructing the Gingerbread House meeting on Monday December 1 is changed to the Club Room at 27 Chestnut Street, Exeter because there are no available meeting rooms at the library that evening. This begins at 5:30 pm and we will be ordering pizza from OTTO Pizza.