

Exeter Public Library's First In-Service Day Delivers Major Savings

On Monday, August 31, Exeter Public Library closed its doors for its first-ever In-Service Day, a new annual tradition approved by the Library Board of Trustees. The Fall In-Service Day will be scheduled for the first day of school for SAU 16. This dedicated workday allows staff to tackle essential building care, collection maintenance, and program preparation after a bustling Summer Reading season, ensuring the Library remains a vibrant, well-maintained community resource. This inaugural In-Service Day demonstrated not only the hard work and talent of the Library's staff, but also their strong commitment to fiscal responsibility and stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

Significant Savings Through Staff Expertise

The day began with a major cleanup of the Library's two outdoor storage containers. With the assistance of Jeff Beck and the Town of Exeter's Department of Public Works crew, staff reorganized and consolidated materials so that the Library was able to cut its outside storage needs in half, resulting in \$197 in monthly savings. The goal is to eliminate outside Library storage by the end of 2026.

Inside the building, librarians transported, assembled, and installed two new shelving units for the Adult Large Print and Children's Chapter Book collections. This increased the Library's shelving by 96 feet in the adult area and 48 feet in the children's area with room for an additional 1,344 books to be added to the Library's collections providing the Library with long-term storage solutions for two of the fastest growing book formats in the Library. By completing this specialized shelving work in-house, rather than hiring outside specialized installers, the Library saved approximately \$8,000. Staff drew directly on the knowledge gained during the 2020 Renovation, demonstrating how that investment continues to pay dividends. The staff's in-house expertise ensured the shelving was installed to professional standards while keeping costs low for Exeter taxpayers.

Hands-On Care for the Building

Staff also turned their attention to the Library's exterior. Using power washers, they refreshed both decks and the ground-floor level of the building. The librarian's willingness to roll up their sleeves and take on this labor-intensive project saved taxpayers an estimated \$9,600, the cost of hiring external vendors for equivalent work.

Staff also addressed lingering issues in the parking lot: three spaces still showed blue handicap paint from the 2019 configuration, creating confusion for patrons. These spaces were repainted, resulting in three additional clearly defined parking spots now available for general patron use. With the Library's heavy daily traffic- 54,000 WiFi logins last year, roughly three times Exeter's population- every parking space matters. Parking remains an ongoing challenge in the downtown area, and these improvements directly support safer, more efficient access for the community.

Additional building improvements this year included sanding and repainting damaged interior and exterior walls. Staff also repaired water-damaged areas in the public restrooms, including the men's room, where a pipe froze and burst three winters ago. Throughout the building, chairs and tables were thoroughly cleaned, and all interior surfaces were wiped down to maintain a safe, welcoming environment for patrons. By keeping the Library's furniture and public spaces in good condition, we extend the lifespan of these materials and reduce the need for premature replacement, ultimately saving the Town money and helping preserve the Library's physical infrastructure for as long as possible.

Supporting Community Organizations

On the ground floor of the Library, the three walls across from the elevator and the main entrance have been transformed into a dedicated community messaging center. Newly installed felt boards now provide structured space for Community, Town of Exeter, and Library notices, along with posters promoting local programming. Community organizations are welcome to use this area; they may email or drop off posters with Library staff, and materials will be displayed as space allows. The goal is to create an inviting, informative hub where visitors and residents can easily learn about the many events, services, and opportunities offered throughout the community.

Preparing for a Strong Fall Season

Beyond the physical improvements, the In-Service Day gave librarians valuable time to plan and prepare for the Library's robust lineup of fall programs. The Teen Scene built three new shelving units and refreshed its furniture and decorations for the fall season just in time for school to begin. In the Children's Room be sure to visit the new window garden which will grow fresh food for the Library animals, thus saving \$320 dollars a month. This behind-the-scenes work ensures that Exeter residents continue to enjoy high-quality, engaging, and well-organized events throughout the season.

Gratitude and Community Support

The Library staff wish to thank the Exeter community for the opportunity to reset, restore, and revive the Library building during this in-service day. The Library does not retain an in-house maintenance department. By the Librarians completing as much of the work as possible, staff saved the community an estimated \$20,000 in vendor fees. The next In-Service day will be March 29th, 2027 to help with Winter cleanup. Winter In-Service days will annually occur on the last Monday in March.

We also extend our appreciation to Primex for providing Cyber Security Training to staff, ensuring librarians are well-prepared to help Exeter's residents avoid common digital security threats. The Library further thanks Jeff Beck and the Department of Public Works for their assistance in clearing out our storage closet, and the Trustees of Exeter Public Library for providing a delicious luncheon for staff.

We are fortunate to serve a community that consistently supports its Library. Exeter's generosity, collaboration, and shared commitment to public service make our Library stronger, more resilient, and better equipped to meet the needs of all who walk through our doors.