

2022 George H. Stowell Free Library Trustees' Report

2022 was a year of growth for the George H. Stowell Free Library as COVID eased its grip on our community. We continue to see increased demand for library services with library programming drawing 1,000+ participants throughout the year. The library trustees attended 41 meetings - either library trustee meetings or Library Exploratory Committee meetings as members of that committee. Trustee minutes are available at the library and on the Town of Cornish, NH website at:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1yg0sqWvDkKwJ4NxAl6-TArc5Zn47XRRQ>

Highlights for the year include:

- In January, the library trustees approved the library's operating budget for 2022; continued attending meetings of the Library Exploratory Committee as appointed members of that committee, and continued their research into the feasibility of moving the library to the former store location;
- In February, the library added Thursday morning hours bringing the total open hours to 12 per week. Michael York, the NH State Librarian came to Cornish to visit both the Stowell Library and the proposed library at the former general store;
- In March, the Town approved the library's request for its 2022 operating budget and voted to purchase the Newton property with the \$6,500 donated by the Patterson Family 2008 Trust. Unanticipated income - book sale money, donations, and grant money - does not reduce the amount requested for operating expenses. Trust Fund money, however, does. This money is the yearly interest earned from the bequest in George Sowell's will of \$10,000. The interest from this bequest was for maintenance of the library that bears his name;
- In April, the addition of Tuesday afternoon hours brought the open hours to 15 per week and Tom Ladd, the ADA consultant, submitted his Building Assessment Report of the Stowell Building (<https://www.cornishnh.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Ladd-Library-Report-May-2022.pdf>);
- In July, an Open Forum was held at the Town Hall. Although it was a hot, humid Saturday, 43+ people listened to the presentation, asked questions, listed their responses to the easel pad questions, and then ranked those replies. A place for human interaction and sharing skills, more space for programming, a building for the 21st century, more space for books, ADA accessibility, and increased space received the majority of the votes.
- In September, Banwell Architects presented their Phase 1 renovation plans for the proposed library at the former general store building and answered questions from those in attendance. All costs for that 2.4-million-dollar renovation will be paid by the CCI capital campaign and no tax dollars.
- In October, MA+KE Architects presented their Phase 1 renovation plans for the Stowell Library and answered questions from those in attendance. All costs for that 1.99-million-dollar renovation will be paid by tax dollar, bond, donations, grants, and fund raising.
- In December, the trustees met to develop the 2023 operating budget. They added a budget line for programming, increased the librarian's and library aides' pay rates, and increased allocations for electricity and fuel oil to reflect the increased costs for those budget items.

Respectfully submitted by the Library Trustees,
Laura Cousineau, Kathi Patterson, Richard Scheuer