

**Nahant Public Library
Board of Trustees
July 27, 2021**

Board Members Present: Chris Stevens, Anne Spirn, Daniel Munnelly

Others Present: Sharon Hawkes, Carolyn Ziering

Convened: 6:38 PM

Acceptance of the Minutes of May 11, 2021. Board President Chris Stevens requested a Motion for acceptance of the Minutes of May 11, 2021 as amended. Motion made by Daniel Munnelly, seconded by Christine Stevens, and Approved by roll call vote:

Anne Spirn – Aye
Chris Stevens – Aye
Daniel Munnelly – Aye

Acceptance of the Minutes of June 16, 2021. Board President Chris Stevens requested a Motion for acceptance of the Minutes of June 16, 2021 as amended. Motion made by Christine Stevens, seconded by Daniel Munnelly, and Approved by roll call vote:

Anne Spirn – Aye
Chris Stevens – Aye
Daniel Munnelly – Aye

Building. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has awarded the Town of Nahant \$50,000 toward repairs to the exterior of the library building. Thank you to architect Richard Smith, procurement officer Mary Ellen Schumann, Town Administrator Tony Barletta, and the Board of Selectmen for their assistance and support in writing the grant application. On July 7, Tony designated Sharon as the Local Project Coordinator for the Library part of the project. There was a training session on the deployment of the grant on July 8 and a walk-through by MHC Preservation Planner Ross Dekle, Tony Barletta, and Richard Smith on July 15.

The Town has also been awarded a Green Communities Competitive Grant totaling \$195,457 to upgrade various buildings. The library will receive a weatherization upgrade in the amount of \$4,435 for insulation.

The roof over the 3rd floor stacks continues to leak during heavy storms such as the one on July 9. No books appear to be affected, but it will be good to be able to move forward with repairs soon.

A leaking holding tank for the boiler has been replaced by Russo Plumbing in a \$6,700 purchase at the end of FY2021. Staff also learned that the new downspout clear-outs and terrace drains must be tended to regularly when the beech and mulberry trees are in fruit.

Tony Barletta requested that department heads advise him of their upcoming capital needs. Sharon will be compiling a list of these for Tony.

Friends. The Friends of Nahant Public Library met on June 19 at 1:00 at the library. Treasurer Robin deStefano announced her pending retirement from the Board in September, and it was announced that Pat McArdle would take over the books until a permanent replacement could be found. They scheduled their “Super” Book Sale for July 31, and Cecile Rouleau volunteered to organize people to sort and price books in preparation. The Friends will offer thousands of books for sale on July 31, 9:00-4:00. There will be food and fun for all, so the public is invited to come and support the Library’s many programs and its building project through this Friends fundraiser. The Town gave permission to close off Pleasant Street, and the Friends will work with the Council on Aging to provide hot dogs for the event. The Friends received a \$1,000 donation to kick off the book sale.

Director’s Report.

Staff. Laura Raboin began work on July 12, and hit the ground running with a story time at the Library Playground on July 13 and another one at the Rec Program at Flash Road Playground on July 15. She is assuming the coordination of the Summer Reading Program and is gearing up for twice-weekly story times now and this fall. The Page is going through a background check and is expected to be on board soon.

New computer. A new computer was purchased at \$2,130 for the public stations, and a year-old computer was rotated to the Children’s Librarian station. The purchase of publicly-accessed technology can count for up to 10% of the state-required Materials budget, so this practice helps the Library replace aging technology while fulfilling the Materials Budget Requirement. This machine was purchased at the end of FY2021, and the Library will most likely purchase 1-2 new laptops in the current year.

Hotspots. The Library will receive 5 hotspots in a program funded through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). T-Mobile and the Mass Board of Library Commissioners are administering the program, which will enable the Library to lend wi-fi hotspots to cardholders who might use them wherever access is weak, such as for work, homework, and vacation.

Selectmen’s meetings. Sharon has received permission to make periodic reports of Library activities at selectmen’s meetings. She will keep residents informed of upcoming events and activities. Her first report was made at the meeting on July 14.

Town credit card. Town Accountant Alison Nieto let the department heads know that she would be maintaining a credit card account. To access it, department heads would ask her in advance to pay for something, and she would let them know when the bill arrived so it could be assigned to the correct account. Some products and services, particularly online, only take credit card payment, so not having a card has meant that Sharon has carried as much as \$500 on her personal card until she could be reimbursed.

Volunteers. Sharon expressed gratitude for the many volunteers who are working at the Library this summer, including a client with Work Opportunities Unlimited, a Senior

Municipal Work-Off Abatement program participant, a teen member of the Honor Society, two additional local teenagers, and several Friends of the Library volunteers. They are assisting by shelving and shelf reading, readying sleeves to house the herbarium specimens, and in getting the Friends' "Super" Book Sale ready by July 31.

Summer Reading Program. The Summer Reading Program now has 51 participants reading and exploring the theme, "Tails and Tales." On July 4, a number of families contributed to an online slideshow of masked characters, which can be viewed online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UR8e4FFYy-E> Other activities include finding Rufus, the stuffed dog mascot, in the Children's Room; an online shadow puppet performance and workshop by Sandbank Shadow Factory; two theater groups with online shows; and a weekly story time at the Library Playground and the Flash Road Playground summer recreation program. Children will be able to pick a free book and a certificate at the end of the program, July 31 and those that read/are read to 350 pages or more will receive a free pass to Topsfield Fair. Thank you to the Friends for supporting these programs.

Summer Music Series. Chris James kicked off the Summer Music Series July 8 at 6:30, followed by Nahant vocalist Lisa Haley on July 15. Performances were outdoors or online this year, depending on the weather. The Series closed on July 22 with guitarist Gian Carlo Buscaglia. The Series is underwritten by the Friends of the Library and coordinated by Carolyn Ziering.

Little Free Library. The Little Free Library opened in June, and is turning over books by an estimated 20 books per week. Both the Library and residents are contributing books. And the Little Free Library organization announced that the Library has won a Read in Color books and promotional pack, putting some brand new books and promotional pieces concerning diversity, equity, and inclusion into the Little Free Library. These materials will be picked up toward the end of August.

Open Space and Recreation survey. The Library partnered with the Open Space and Recreation Committee to promote their open space survey. The Library put a direct link to the online survey on its public computers, had hard copies of the survey in the building, and promoted the survey through its social media pages. Staff were available to assist anyone with the online survey. The survey will assist the Committee in drafting a new long-range plan for open space, and will be available through July 27.

Library Tours. Kenneth Turino had two groups stop in on his walking tour of Nahant. A photography club also dropped in on two occasions.

Project Coyote. John Maguranis, the Massachusetts representative for Project Coyote, spoke to the public via Zoom on July 8 about how to handle the presence of coyotes in the community. Fifteen people attended, and Sharon will follow up with the presenter, the police, and the animal control officer on next steps.

Pressed plant exhibit. The students at Johnson Elementary School collected and mounted pressed plants, using the same materials and techniques used by students in 1897. Robert Wilson professionally photographed the 5th and 6th grade specimens, and Sharon chose ten of those to enlarge into posters, which are now on display at the Library. They will be on exhibit through September. Thank you to the students, teachers, and Kevin Andrews and Tony Pierantozzi for allowing Sharon to come into the school and present this project. Thank you to Robert Wilson for the digital photography, and to John Benson for his photos of the plants in real life. This project was made possible with a grant from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services, administered by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

Artifacts at Your Library. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBCL) voted on July 8 to award Nahant Public Library \$7,500 for its “Artifacts at Your Library” project, interpreting the Library’s artwork and Native artifacts through print and programs. The Library will digitize the artwork for uploading to Digital Commonwealth, create a walking tour brochure and signage for the art, add books to the circulating collection, and invite speakers to talk about Nahant’s Native past. This award is provisional upon the signing of a contract with MBLC in early August. The grant period will begin October 1.

Sharon has brought a total of \$767,507 in building and project grants to the Library since 2016, which have provided permanent and semi-permanent assets such as the restored terrace, a picture hanging system, a Story Stroll installation, the stereo system, and circulating materials of all kinds, as well as digital assets such as the Mass Memories Road Show and the Florence Johnson Herbarium.

Old Business.

Library Hours. Daniel Munnelly presented his proposal to increase library hours to include both weekend days and later evenings during the week. All Trustees agreed that the library should return to being open on weekends and have more hours available to older working adults. Anne Spirn reported that almost no libraries in the area are open both Saturday and Sunday. Chris Stevens, who used to visit on Sundays, recalled very low attendance and cited Sharon’s data that does not support being open on Sunday. After lengthy discussion it was decided that the library would return to pre-COVID hours after Labor Day with the addition of one weekday (Thursday) until 8pm.

Sharon Hawkes requested a Motion for the Library hours to total 37 hours open to be apportioned as the Director sees fit in accordance with above guidance. Motion made by Chris Stevens, seconded by Daniel Munnelly and Approved by roll call vote:

Anne Spirn – Aye
Chris Stevens – Aye
Daniel Munnelly – No

Agreement with Johnson School. The Trustees requested a draft of the agreement with more specific information about when the Children's Librarian would provide instruction/programs and inclusion of the phrase "freely given" to indicate that the Library is not receiving financial support from the school.

Salary and Expense Line. Per Anne's conversation with Mark Cullinan, there is money in the budget to fix the Library's issue of an excess in Salaries and a deficit in Expenses. Tony Barletta also offered a couple possible solutions. The Trustees were in agreement that if this can be resolved now, they are willing to entertain these possibilities. They are not, however, willing to wait until next year's Town Meeting for a resolution.

Adjourned: 8:18 PM

To: Christine Stevens, Chair of the Board of Trustees, Anne Spirn and Director Sharon Hawkes

PROPOSED POLICY AMENDMENT

It shall be the policy of the Nahant Public Library that:

The permanent open hours, except as required by law, are as follows:

Monday	Closed
Tuesday	12pm to 7pm = 7hrs
Weds	10am to 5pm = 7hrs
Thursday	12pm to 7pm = 7hrs
Fri	9am to 12pm = 3hrs
Sat	12pm to 5pm = 5hrs
Sun	12pm to 5pm = 5hrs

And that ALL STAFF WORK MUST BE SCHEDULED AND PERFORMED DURING OPEN HOURS

I write to you all to explain and clarify the basis and reasoning for my motion to amend the policy of the Nahant Public Library regarding Open hours and Staff hours. The formal policy changes which I will submit for a vote at our next Trustee's meeting are attached. In brief, the policy change is to institute regular open and staff hours to include limited early evening and weekend hours and to require staff work and program hours to be performed during open hours.

Open hours and work schedules are different for the staff of a public trust, like our Library, and a private non-public employer; we are responsible to the public via the elected trustees. I want to make very clear that my policy amendments are not a comment on the work that is being done or the value of employees. I understand that staff may have a different opinion or personal preference about hours of operation. My amendment to the policy is designed to meet the needs of the most public

My push for open hours is about a customer service vision and an expansion of public use of the library, that is one of my prime goals as a trustee (along with care of the building).

When I became a Trustee, I articulated a vision of what the NPL should and should not be, and how this public asset is not fully utilized by the Town or the Townspeople. This underutilized gem is not used enough, not enough people visit the library and not enough people know what is available to them and what is needed to care of it.

First, I wanted the building to be clean, and maintained as a place fit for townspeople to visit, which was not always the case. Next, I wanted the staff to be open, kind, personable and customer friendly, which was not always the case. I wanted the library to be a destination; welcoming to children and parents, open to teens and adults, open to talking and laughing, with coffee and music, a “no shushing” library and programs to encourage physical attendance; a free, open, accessible public space. This was not always the case.

The NPL cannot and will not be the Valley Road School or the Life Saving Station, both historic buildings rarely used or visited by the Townspeople, and catering mostly to its membership.

My goal as a trustee has always been to make the NPL an open, available, in-person library for the greatest number of residents, with up-to-date technology and current book and media offerings. I want expand use of the library and its resources, to encourage new users and get townspeople involved as stakeholders. Since becoming a Trustee, I have advocated for signage, email blasts, advertising, linkage with other organizations and the schools to increase participation, and for more accessible hours matched to the public’s availability. It is a public resource – a public trust.

We need to make strides toward greater use, no matter how much we have improved from our recent past, before Sharon’s tenure.

PRESENT HOURS PRECLUDE IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE

The present hours, Open 4 days per week –10-6 four days during the week- Closed with a three-day weekend, are unacceptable for a public library.

Think of how many townspeople are completely excluded with these hours:

- * Anyone who works a 9-5ish type job with a commute, is physically unable to step foot into the Library during the present Open hours.
- * Selectman's meetings, bookclubs, library trustee meetings, PTA meetings, school plays and graduations, sports coaching and practices all occur after 6 during the week or on weekends, because if not, most (if not all) working people would not be able to participate.
- * During the school year, the present hours make it impossible for all children from grades K through 12 students, to step foot in the Library until after 2:30, and later for kids in the middle and high school.
- * Like Little League and other extracurricular activities, afterschool, evenings and weekends are the only time available for children and their parents to visit the Library.

Maintaining the 10-6 hours render the Library inaccessible for most residents of Nahant. We should not force the Townspeople onto the schedule that is most comfortable for the staff, we should be available when they are.

Imagine the Peabody Essex Museum having those hours. Imagine scheduling a town-wide reading event during those hours. Most people would not be able to attend.

Our most recent regular hours were:

Monday	Closed	
Tuesday	10AM–7PM	9 hours

Wednesday	10AM–5PM	7 hours
Thursday	10AM–7PM	9 hours
Friday	10AM–5PM	7 hours
Saturday	12PM–4PM	4 hours
Sunday	Closed	

ALL STAFF WORK MUST BE PERFORMED DURING OPEN HOURS

I don't doubt that work is done when the building is closed or on weekends by Sharon or Carolyn, but that does not translate into accessible hours. I was shocked when Carolyn stated that she was working weekends when the library is not even open. Work should not be scheduled for Carolyn, or any staff, when the building is closed.

There is no reason why all work can't be performed in open hours. I know that patrons interrupt staff work in open hours but that is what a library is; we don't house books for the sake of it. I have never seen our library overcrowded, in fact it is mostly quiet, without lines of patrons. We can try to grow our staff in the future, but we have to do whatever work is possible in the hours that we are operational. All programs must be scheduled in open hours. If the work necessary cannot be fit into the open hours, we have to prioritize what can get done in open hours.

PROPOSED OPEN HOURS REACH MORE TOWNSPEOPLE AND CAN BE COMFORTABLY STAFFED

I acknowledge that Sharon and Carolyn have carried the Covid load together. And that Sharon has been forced to fight with Town Hall frequently. But that is not a fair justification for refusing to work on days or hours that the library has had in the past. That the staff does not want or prefer to have weekend or evening hours is not acceptable. That is the job and has been for years.

At our current staff levels - Available 3 full-time staff currently, 35 hours each (40 with an hour for lunch) for Sharon, Carolyn and Children's position and 12 hours for the page is 117 hours per week.

All three full-time staff could work those hours, with the page position's hours scheduled on weekends to give staff consecutive days off several times per month. Doing it this way could actually almost eliminate one person working alone and allow for staff to schedule "high focus" work when there are more than one staffer on duty.

For example:

The Page is schedule for Weekends SAT/SUN 12-5

The two Librarians and Sharon rotate the SAT and SUN – each staffer gets two days in a row off 2/3rds of the time with Two people in the building.

During the week, plan hours for staff overlap when needed.

Focus children's librarian and duty and programs for after school hours and Saturdays, unless assisting at Johnson school.

With careful planning, Sharon could attend Town Hall meetings in the day in open hours times with coverage. Of course Sharon has some evening hours, Selectman's or Fin Comm board meetings in budget season, but that is the job of a director.

Important voices, like Lynne and Josh Antrim, Mark Cullinane and so many others have commented about open hours, and lack of weekends, and lack of knowledge of what goes on at the Library. The public does not have a set idea of our hours. We need to make strides toward greater use, no matter how much we have improved.

HERE IS MY PREVIOUS PROPOSAL IN 2018 THAT WAS DEFERRED

Here are the current hours – total 36 hours

Monday	Closed	
Tuesday	10AM–7PM	9 hours
Wednesday	10AM–5PM	7 hours

Thursday	10AM–7PM	9 hours
Friday	10AM–5PM	7 hours
Saturday	12PM–4PM	4 hours
Sunday	Closed	

REQUEST POLICY CHANGE a policy change regarding Library hours beginning October 1, 2018 – July 1, 2019. I am amenable to the Summer 2019 hours resembling the above, then reverting to the below on September 1, 2019.

Here are my proposed hours - total 36 hours

Monday	Closed	
Tuesday	12PM – 7PM	7 hours
Wednesday	12PM – 7PM	7 hours
Thursday	12PM – 7PM	7 hours
Friday	12PM – 5PM	5 hours
Saturday	12PM – 5PM	5 hours
Sunday	12PM – 5PM	5 hours

My grounds for the change, in a quick summary are as follows:

1. Sunday hours were Library Policy for years;
2. Many of my constituent requests/complaints are a lack of Sunday hours including selectmen, and many active town participants;
3. Saturday and Sunday hours are often the only time working people/Boston commuters can make it to the Library;
4. Our demographic average age is 49.9 to 52.0 depending on source – this is a working full-time demographic – average working people with evening commute from anywhere earliest getting to library 600-630
5. Having a regular opening time at 12PM and closing at 7PM, (5PM otherwise) almost every day is easy to remember;
6. Still leaves only 6 hours out of 36 after 5PM;
7. We could target teens to come to the Library after school early evening for home work time
8. 10am to Noon hours are not available to elementary school age children, middle school young adults, High school teens, and working adults (almost all possible patrons)
9. There are many options for staffing, even with our small staff;

10. With our Director, Assistant, Children's Assistant (excluding our page position) there are 108 staff hours
11. Staff can rotate to have Sunday Monday off, every other week;
12. Alternatively, Saturdays and Sundays could be staffed by the Page position;

This is a very workable and reasonable, schedule with simple and marketable hours.

Permanent hours would make our open times predictable and increase use.