



Representative Diane Pauer, Chair
House Municipal and County Government
State House
Concord, NH 03301

January 15, 2026

Dear Committee Members:

The New Hampshire Library Association (NHLA), which represents library personnel, trustees, and library supporters, is in opposition to House Bill 1214 relative to public libraries.

HB1214 would create an undue hardship to a municipality's governing body across the state. Members of Library Boards of Trustees are elected officials, many of whom come to the position with a wealth of knowledge conducive to the responsibilities they hold. The position requires management of a Library Director, adoption of and oversight of bylaws of the Board and policies for the library, and preparing an annual budget and any capital project funding requests as needed. Many trustees spend a great number of hours educating themselves on the unique facets of public library governance. To require a municipality's governing body to assume governance of a public library when authority and oversight are already established would be onerous and unnecessary.

HB1214 would not benefit the overall town's budget process. A public library follows the same budgeting process as a municipality's governing body, and presents department requests, warrant articles, and documentation for auditing purposes as every department is required to do so. To require a municipality's governing body to assume governance of a public library, further supports the above paragraph in regard to weakening traditional trustee oversight and providing additional burdens for municipal boards that are already fulfilled by elected library trustees. Funding for public libraries follows the same budget process as town departments. There is the same level of taxpayer oversight for a public library's annual budget request or capital funding request as there is for any town department. Library Trustees, just as Select Boards, present an annual budget to a town's budget committee or advisory budget committee. If there is a capital request, this is presented to a town's Capital Improvement Plan Committee. These are included on a town's warrant, just as town department requests are, giving taxpayers the same opportunity to vote on proposed funding requests from the library as they would on town funding requests. Public libraries are also audited on an annual basis, just as town departments are.

HB1214 would create inconsistent standards across the state. Libraries in New Hampshire vary in size, and this bill is not a one size fits all model. As it stands, trustee-led boards are elected by citizens of each town, just as other municipal boards, and provide each town with consistency in regard to local governance.

We ask that you find this bill **Inexpedient to Legislate**.

Thank you,

Denise van Zanten, NHLA President/Director, Manchester City Library
Sheryl Bass, NHLA Vice President/Director, Durham Public Library
Corinne Chronopoulos, NHLA Secretary/Director, Peterborough Library
Heather Rainier, NHLA Treasurer/Director, Hooksett Public Library
Rachel Baker, NHLA President/Director, Elkins Library, Canterbury