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Contact:

Lesley Kimball

Library Director

Wiggin Memorial Library, Stratham NH

603-772-4346

wigginml@comcast.net

WIGGIN MEMORIAL LIBRARY IN STRATHAM RECEIVES NATIONAL GRANT FOR SMALL AND RURAL LIBRARIES

\$3,000 Grant Will Help the Library Work with Residents to Improve the Civic Experience for All

[STRATHAM] — The Wiggin Memorial Library has been selected as one of 100 libraries to participate in round three of Libraries Transforming Communities: Focus on Small and Rural Libraries, an American Library Association (ALA) initiative that helps library workers better serve their small and rural communities.

The competitive award comes with a \$3,000 grant to support community conversations about easy access to information needed to actively participate in the decisions that determine the Town's future. These forums are an opportunity for residents of Stratham to drive improvements and help design ways to better meet voters' needs.

"We are so proud and excited to be chosen for this opportunity," said Library Director Lesley Kimball. "With this grant, the library can build on our successful Candidates Nights to work with residents to build additional ways for people to be heard on important community issues."

In New Hampshire all politics is local; the people are the legislature. Officials are elected, budgets are determined, and everything from recreation to life safety is discussed and voted on by town voters. Without convenient ways to get information or speak up about these decisions, voters don't have everything they need.

As part of the grant, Wiggin Memorial Library staff will take an online course in how to lead conversations, a skill vital to library work today. Staff will then host conversations with residents about ways to improve the civic experience in Stratham. Grant funds will be used to host conversations, invite additional input, and create a summary of community needs, ideas, and outcomes.

Conversations will take place in early Spring 2022. If you are interested in getting involved or taking part in the conversation, please contact Lesley at wigginml@comcast.net, 603-772-4346, or visit <https://library.strathamnh.gov> for more information.

Since 2014, ALA's Libraries Transforming Communities initiative has re-imagined the role libraries play in supporting communities. Libraries of all types have utilized free dialogue and deliberation training and resources to lead community and campus forums; take part in anti-violence activities; provide a space for residents to come together and discuss challenging topics; and have productive conversations with civic leaders, library trustees and staff.

"Libraries Transforming Communities: Focus on Small and Rural Libraries is an initiative of the American Library Association (ALA) in collaboration with the Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL)." ###