CONCORD PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, February 9, 2026, 6:00 PM
Shakespeare Room

In Attendance: Chris Casko; Stephanie Simard; Jeremy Clemans; Jeanie West; Ceillie Clark-Keane; Norm Kinsler; Charles O'Leary; Sarah Fortin
Todd Fabian, Director
Members of the Public: Casey; Megan Bresnahan; Hillary Adams
Not present: None

1. N. Kinsler called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. The first agenda item was to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1/5/26. By motion of J. West, seconded by S. Simard and adopted by unanimous vote.

3. The next item was public comment. There was public comment from three library patrons, as follows:

Meghan Bresnahan distributed written public comment and discussed overdue fines and shared feedback. She is a local mother and frequent library user. In addition, she is a UNH Librarian. She offered comments about how fines negatively impact patrons. She gave reasons for concerns about fines. She advocates eliminating fines for overdue items, and especially once those items have been returned. She suggests that blocked accounts because of overdue items are more likely to be children's accounts. There is a disproportionate impact of fines on certain groups. Her research indicates that the Concord Public Library, hereafter CPL, is one of 5 libraries that assesses fines. CPL has the highest fine amount at 25 cents per item per day. She gave an example of the negative impact of fines that she experienced. The week before a school holiday break, while her household was very busy, she had approximately 20 library checkouts. She received a reminder on Monday for a Wednesday due date but missed it. She was solo parenting that week and unable to return the materials until Saturday and owed

$15 and the account was blocked. Moreover, it is difficult to pay fines in cash or check only. A patron is not allowed to use the library until fines are paid. This causes feelings of shame. She also shared the comments of a friend who experienced a negative impact of owing money and not being able to pay fees. Some have chosen to go to a bookstore instead of the library for materials because the store accepts credit cards. Late fees are a deterrent to taking out books for low-income people.

Casey stated that she is also a mother who brings her children to the library. They feel welcomed except for having an issue with late fees. She is a frequent library user. She described an experience in the summer of 2023 where books were late and when they came to the library with all of the late books she was told she had more than $10 in fines and she could not pay the fine because she only had a debit card, not cash or check and was not allowed to check out books that day. The fine structure is challenging. She now tries to monitor her account to avoid fees. The fine policy denies access to books. She said that many other libraries don't have fines. She also wants a better way to give feedback to the library. She recommends eliminating or reducing fines and implementing a better system to give feedback.

Hillary Adams stated that she grew up in Concord and has moved back with her family. She also has children and would like a change in the overdue fee policy. She has a good relationship with the library. She understands and was taught when growing up that using the library is a privilege. Fines create a negative relationship between a patron and the library. Other libraries don't assess fines and disallow borrowing until items are returned. She is a member of the library in another town where the policy is different. She has chosen to drive there to use that library to avoid the possibility of late

fees. The current fee structure shadows a bad ideal. Patrons should be able to learn and explore the CPL without fear.

Ms. Bresnahan spoke again asking that the board consider a nonpunitive approach to managing overdue materials, for example, by implementing an amnesty program. She suggested that fines be forgiven when items are returned. It is still appropriate to apply a replacement fee for lost items but there should be no fines for overdue items when returned.

T. Fabian stated that the trustee board does not have the authority to implement an amnesty program as fines are part of a city ordinance for overdue fees which is controlled by the City Council. The board may choose to make a recommendation to the City Council regarding fees. Any board recommendation in the future that may be made will be reflected in future meeting minutes. In summary, they have concerns about the fine structure and wish to see it changed from assessed fines to amnesty upon return of items, and to make payment easier. Finally, they would like a better method of expressing feedback to the library staff and board.

4. Library Director's Report and Monthly Update- The board welcomed new member Sarah Fortin and other members introduced themselves and gave their background information. T. Fabian said that another new member is being approved at the City Council meeting tonight and he expects that they will be seated at the next trustee board meeting.

There was discussion concerning the fine/late fee issue expressed during public comment. T. Fabian will review the issue. As to staff fine waivers, there are some members who have the ability to waive fines to allow the patron to still check out

materials, although there is no written waiver policy. The CPL checkout periods are consistent with what other libraries have. A patron can renew items if no other patron has the item on hold, for up to six weeks. This can be done electronically if the patron checks the “renew item(s)” option on their account.

Next, he distributed a policy entitled Artificial Intelligence with regards to Collection Development and board members reviewed it. In summary, the library will make every effort not purchase works created solely by AI for the collection. This is a difficult issue because publishers are not necessarily forthcoming about the use of AI in the creation of their books. This was developed by staff to address this issue. As to content that gets into the collection with AI, it will be identified and evaluated for removal from the collection. The board discussed the text and offered suggestions on amending the language. T. Fabian will work on the draft and present it at a future meeting for adoption by the board. The goal is to not allow AI generated materials.

There are hearings at legislative committees involving library related bills upcoming and he will continue to monitor and report back to the board. There are some bills of concern this session including one dealing with control of the library although the way CPL is organized, it would not necessarily be impacted.

The library is close to being fully staffed for the first time in months.

There is a library consortium of the state’s largest libraries (Urban Library Administrator’s Consortium) in which he participates and he is chairing that group until September. It is a good way to network with other similar libraries and share and receive relevant information.

5. CPL Foundation Update- Concord Reads is moving along and the books are here. It will go live on March 5, 2026 when the name of the author will be shared and marketed. S. Simard stated that the restaurant Street downtown has a program where it donates part of the proceeds of particular days to community organizations and on 5/5/26 the library foundation will be the recipient of a percentage of the sales from that night as a donation as part of that program.

6. New Business- The new trustee will be approved at the City Council meeting tonight. C. O'Leary made a motion, seconded by N. Kinsler, to move the March meeting to 3/9/26 as he is unavailable on 3/2/26, and the board adopted the motion by unanimous vote.

7. Old Business- None

8. Next Meeting- March 9, 2026

9. Adjournment- By motion of J. Clemans, seconded by S. Simard, the meeting concluded by unanimous vote at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Chris Casko, Secretary

Date: February 10, 2026