CONCORD PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, May 4, 2026, 6:00 PM
Library Auditorium

In Attendance: Chris Casko; Stephanie Simard; Ceillie Clark-Keane; Charles O'Leary; Sarah Fortin; Jeremy Clemans; Jeanie West; Norm Kinsler
Todd Fabian, Director
Not present: Roy Geiser
Public Member: Megan Bresnahan

1. N. Kinsler called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

2. The first agenda item was to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 4/6/26. By motion of J. West, seconded by C. Clark-Keane and adopted by unanimous vote. J. Clemans, S. Fortin, and C. O'Leary did not vote.

3. The next item was public comment. Megan Bresnahan spoke to check in concerning the issue that she raised previously regarding eliminating fees and fines for overdue books. Her account has been blocked since December due to fines. She spoke with a staff member concerning the issue while at the Heights Branch and the fine was reduced by $10 and she was prepared to pay the fine but was told she could not pay at the Heights branch. This renewed her frustration with the situation. She then spoke to others, one who had a large book she was unable to renew again due to having reached the renewal limit, who was required to come into the library in order for a librarian to waive the limit so that she could keep the book longer, and another who had an account blocked due to an unpaid balance. Ms. Bresnahan was also frustrated with a comment in our recent minutes about fines "teaching responsibility" and she posed the question of whether fines really teach responsibility to a 3-year old? Moreover, she disagreed with the idea of the library being a proper forum to teach personal responsibility, particularly when other libraries have eliminated fines. She also has concerns about the board focusing only on the children's collection. Rather, libraries have

eliminated fines and the broader issue is fines generally and whether they are necessary. T. Fabian expressed that the board may make a decision on a recommendation to the city council at the June meeting. Also, the lack of information from the vendor on fines was a factor in delaying the subcommittee and a reason why a decision on a recommendation to city council has not yet been made. C. Clarke-Keane stated that the meeting minutes are summaries and don't reflect the entire discussion on fines that the board has had since this issue was first raised. C. O'Leary expressed his prior points of fines teaching personal responsibility and Ms. Bresnahan expressed that fines are not the proper way to teach responsibility. T. Fabian said that she should have been given access to the Heights Branch prior to paying, and relayed that there was an incorrect application of procedure in another case. Ms. Bresnahan made the point that the fines process makes her feel bad and that most libraries don't have fines anymore. At the UNH Library, a person who loses a book is required to pay a replacement fee or provide a similar condition copy of the book as a replacement. J. West also stated that the board had a long conversation on the issue and that in good faith our intention is to do the best we can to remedy the problem, including forming a subcommittee.

Furthermore, Ms. Bresnahan stated that the library feedback form online is difficult to navigate on the web site and a person has to navigate through several pages to find it. Finally, she suggested that having the ability to pay fines with credit/debit cards might be worthwhile, despite the fees charged to patrons.

4. Library Director's Report and Monthly Update- T. Fabian stated that although we plan to continue to explore the issue of fines at our June meeting, he advises that it would be most likely to have influence if brought to the City Council after next year's budget has been finalized. He noted that such a recommendation is not likely to be viewed favorably during this

challenging budget year, as it would eliminate a revenue source. Nonetheless, he stressed that the board may make whatever recommendation it wishes.

There has been a conscious effort not to make fines a barrier to usage of the library. The fine and fee amount collected 10 years ago was $50,000 but has dropped to $15,000 last year and is projected to be the same again this year. J. Clemans asked whether information about resolving unpaid fines could be added to the web site so that the public would learn that the library staff will work with people to resolve those issues, and T. Fabian indicated that he will follow up on that, as well as making it easier for patrons to communicate concerns or feedback through the website.

Customer Service training has become a big part of the business of larger libraries. The number of services and systems has increased significantly in the last 10 to 12 years which gives staff many more responsibilities, and which requires providing additional training. The library opened later to allow for additional training recently. It is difficult to find time to conduct training due to the number of open hours. The City Manager supports giving additional training time during the work day and opening late by 2 hours if necessary to do so. It is hard to retain staff because there is so much to learn, and the duties can be overwhelming.

HB 1184, a bill regarding no trespass orders, has passed the house and passed the senate subcommittee with an ought to pass recommendation and is headed to the full senate for a vote. The new version, after amendments, is that a no trespass order will expire 45 days after issuance, but will be effective immediately. It will impact managing city owned property. T. Fabian indicated that the legal standard for removal is unclear, as the parameters for removal do not appear to be specified in this proposed legislation. The bill does not address whether violation of a library rule will be sufficient for removal even if the conduct is not a crime. Both

the library and the police have concerns regarding this. The bill notes that a person removed will have a right to a hearing. This is the most significant library related legislation still pending this year.

A new partnership has been forged with an ice cream shop, Sweet Dreamz in Penacook, where if patrons read a certain number of books in a month they will get a free ice cream. They gave ice cream to staff on the in-service day. J. Clemans asked if the Library Foundation could fund partnerships like this, so that the business would not have to pay the full cost of a similar promotion, and whether the schools could promote this program. All ideas will be explored, although in this instance, the business has offered to fund the program. This started May 1.

5. CPL Foundation Update- The Concord Reads author event went very well and ran smoothly. Sy Montgomery, the author, and Matt Paterson, the illustrator, were very easy to work with and provided the ultimate positive experience. The event sold out. Some of the extra book copies will be retained and some could be sold, although as the foundation paid for all of the copies, disposition of the books will need to be done while giving that fact consideration.

Tomorrow is the event at Street, a downtown restaurant, where for each meal sold, 20% of the bill will be donated to the foundation.

6. New Business- T. Fabian indicated that the board service terms for C. Clark-Keane and C. Casko will expire. C. Clark-Keane indicated that she will extend and C. Casko will think about whether to extend or not and notify T. Fabian within the next week. T. Fabian said that although a renewal is for a full three-year term, several trustees have resigned mid-term as

their life circumstances have changed, so that concerns about the length of the commitment shouldn't be a barrier to an extension.

S. Simard briefed the board on the board's membership to the NH Library Trustee Association and options for renewing.

7. Old Business- T. Fabian stated that at the June meeting we can decide whether to meet in July to continue discussions regarding fines after the city budget process is concluded as the budget will not be finalized by the June 1 board meeting.

Eliminating revenue from fines may result in cuts to city government as the fine money goes into the city general fund.

Hoopla is an expensive platform. Some libraries have eliminated it; for example, the Bow library. If fines are eliminated or reduced, eliminating Hoopla may be a way to get the lost revenue back. Moreover, the retired Penacook library branch is being sold, but T. Fabian is unsure where in the city budget the money will go.

8. Next Meeting- June 1, 2026

9. Adjournment- By motion of C. O'Leary, seconded by C. Clark Keane, the meeting concluded by unanimous vote at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Chris Casko, Secretary

Date: May 5, 2026