CONCORD PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, June 1, 2026, 6:00 PM
Library Auditorium

In Attendance: Chris Casko; Stephanie Simard; Ceillie Clark-Keane; Sarah Fortin; Jeanie West; Norm Kinsler; Roy Geiser; Todd Fabian, Director

Not present: Jeremy Clemans; Charles O'Leary

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 5/4/26. By motion of C. Clark-Keane, seconded by J. West, and adopted by unanimous vote.

3. The next item was public comment: None.

4. Library Director's Report and Monthly Update: T. Fabian circulated 2 patron emails that expressed concern over fines and were in support of eliminating fines. He summarized that the fine issue is under review and that a patron owing fines should not prohibit their access to the library's services, including borrowing of materials. To date, 60 to 65 percent of overdue items are for juvenile titles. He recommended that the trustees consider 3 options: no change (i.e.; no recommendation to eliminate fines); eliminate fines for juvenile titles only; and third, eliminate fines entirely. Of course, even if fines are eliminated, at some point access will be restricted if long overdue items have not been returned, unless patrons have paid for a replacement copy. On the staff side, the argument to get rid of fines is supported to some degree because it will both reduce the burden on staff having uncomfortable interactions with patrons who owe fines, and lessen the burden on staff to deal with our unwieldy system with regards to financial transactions. Also, from a customer service standpoint, not having to address unpaid fines would make for better customer service interactions between staff and patrons,

thus reducing stress on staff. If there is a change to reduce or eliminate fines, there may be an initial increase in items being returned, and more patrons coming back into the library as having unpaid fines is a deterrent to patrons coming in. On the other hand, eliminating fines could result in more overdue items and longer wait times for people who have holds on items. On a positive note, were we to eliminate fines temporarily, we could amass data to determine its effect upon return rate, allowing for adjustments to the policy as more information becomes available to us. C. Clark-Keane indicated that the data she has reviewed supports eliminating fines. T. Fabian stated that recommending suspending fine collection for some time period as a trial and then reconsidering the issue after reviewing the data of the ramifications of suspending fines is certainly worth considering. He is unsure what the authority for doing that is but that the City Manager or City Council will likely have to approve this action. It's worth noting that while the money collected from fines goes into the city's general fund (not directly to the library) the amount collected is indeed earmarked for the library. N. Kinsler pointed out his disappointment that the vendor cannot take credit or debit cards for fine payment which has exacerbated negative patron feelings towards fines as it is more difficult for them to pay. He also expressed that maybe giving a reminder warning before a fine may be imposed, or a one week grace period, may be preferable to eliminating fines. R. Geiser asked if fines are suspended, what would happen to fines currently owed? It was noted that the trustees can eliminate fines while still retaining the ability to restrict access for having overdue items until returned or replacement fees paid. R. Geiser also asked whether there are alternative return options, for example, a mobile return vehicle dispatched from the library throughout the city to pick up items but that would need to

be funded first. S. Simard stated that if we limit reducing fines to only juvenile titles, since many families have a mix of both juvenile and adult titles, it may be difficult to manage, and T. Fabian stated separating out only juvenile titles may be confusing for staff. C. Casko expressed that patrons who have financial difficulties may not come forward with their concerns about fines due to embarrassment. Ultimately, it will be up to the city council or manager to determine whether they will allow for a pause in collecting fines should the board recommend it. T. Fabian said that our return rates are very high and overdue fines are not a significant source of revenue. C. Clark-Keane commented that there will still be due dates even if fines are lifted, and sending reminders will be very important because patrons will still have an obligation to return items on time. Overall, pausing fines may result in more people coming to the library rather than negative consequences from loss of revenue. Another issue is that a patron keeping a book longer than their loan time may deprive another person from reading that book and that there still needs to be a sense of personal responsibility among patrons. A year-long test of suspending fines became the board's preference of the 3 options suggested by T. Fabian. In accordance with that preference, S. Simard moved, seconded by C. Clark-Keane, to give the library director, T. Fabian, the authority to discuss with the appropriate legal authority with the city the trustees' recommendation to suspend fines for all overdue library materials for one year, with data collection and regular reporting during the year to the board on the impact of eliminating fines, with the issue to be reviewed after 1 year, and a permanent recommendation to be made thereafter to the city. This was adopted by unanimous vote.

T. Fabian briefed the board on the city budget. The city budget started with an increase of approximately 5 percent over last year but it may be lower when the budget is finalized. The 10-year Capital Improvement Plan moved the new library project back to 2035-2036. This is due to a great many other city and school district projects impacting the budget, and although this is a setback, in the big picture we hope that a new library will not have to wait 10 years, as the CIP is fluid. J. West recommended that the trustees discuss how to advocate for a new or renovated library in the community. T. Fabian recommended making it an agenda topic for future trustee meetings and that a joint meeting of the trustees and the CPL Foundation be held to discuss the issue at some point. In addition, we can have library ambassadors who will discuss the benefits of the library and its importance to the community and keep a dialog going on a new or renovated library and compare that to the ongoing costs of maintaining the old building, which will not go away and will worsen with time. The trustees will have a facility tour in the near future. T. Fabian recommended that the board have a demo of the new RFID system.

5. CPL Foundation Update: T. Fabian summarized recent activity. There are new members who attended the last meeting. They will hire a bookkeeper and possibly an administrative assistant. The chair and vice chair have recently changed. They will host an orientation meeting for new members.

6. New Business: S. Simard and J. West attended the NH Library Trustee Association conference recently and had positive experiences and learned about important issues including getting data, and how trustees discuss libraries and their importance to the community and to describe the library's return on the community's investment. It is

important to use data to support the library when discussing its benefit to the community. There were several beneficial breakout sessions.

7. Old Business: Discussions on a new or renovated library and how to best advocate for it will be held going forward.

8. Next Meeting: July 13, 2026

9. Adjournment: By motion of S. Fortin, seconded by J. West, the meeting concluded by unanimous vote at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Chris Casko, Secretary

Date: June 2, 2026