

CONCORD PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 5, 2025, 6:00 PM  
Shakespeare Room

In Attendance: Jeremy Clemans; Chris Casco; Norm Kinsler, Chair; Ceillie Clark-Keane; Jeanie West; Stephanie Simard; Charles O'Leary; Fatawu Isaah; Todd Fabian, Director

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 April 7, 2025. By motion of J. Clemans, seconded by J. West, the board adopted the minutes by unanimous vote.
3. The next item was public comment. There was no public comment.
4. Library Director's Report and Monthly Update- T. Fabian gave a history of e-book use. He stated that in 2007, 1,164 items were downloaded using the first e-book system. By contrast, in 2020, 43,000 items were downloaded using the Libby/Overdrive websites/applications. Now, approximately 70,000 items are downloaded per year. A patron contacted him concerning artwork and donated it from a noteworthy Native American artist, Mr. Fountain, a direct descendant of Sitting Bull.

The Vegetation Station is a new exhibit that has had much usage. It is a community run program to get people thinking about planting. It is a passive program (i.e., it does not take much library staff time to run).

There is an active campaign of "Donate This/Not That" to encourage good quality donations to the library. At times, moldy and/or bug-infested books have been donated. Such items could put our current collection at risk of contamination and should not be donated. In other instances, books that are in poor condition and are unable to be re-sold or added to our collection have been donated. Because of both the risks and the

time required for staff to inspect donations, some libraries have stopped taking donations altogether. This has resulted in more items coming to Concord. We may go from a 24/7 donation program to specified hours so that items may be inspected before being accepted. J. West, who volunteers on the book sale, stated that current fiction books are strong sellers in the book sale. T. Fabian indicated that children's books are typically not good sellers. J. Clemans asked about immediately implementing specific donation hours. CPL has avoided limiting donations to specific hours because it would require book sale volunteers to commit to being available at specific times, which may be incompatible with their schedules. As an alternative, the campaign delineating what are appropriate items to be donated is an initial attempt to address this problem.

There are several ongoing building projects. First, some better AC units from other buildings are being repurposed for the short term with the hope that they will get CPL through the next year or two, although this is known to be a short-term fix. More long-term solutions are also being explored. Some of the scaffolding on the northwest side of the building is being repointed to resolve water issues. For the flooring, demolition is happening soon and then flooring will be replaced. Some library closure will be required, so the plan is for demolition on a Saturday with replacement on Sunday. As soon as the flooring is done, the new gates at the entryway will be replaced. These are at the vendor awaiting installation. Another ongoing project is the ADA lift for the auditorium. Once done, we can reopen the auditorium. The costs are all being covered in the budget as part of the capital improvement plan. For example, the air conditioning project is approximately \$150,000. Overall, the cumulative projects are a few hundred

thousand dollars. Going forward, there are several required projects based on the age of the building, which continues to degrade.

The library budget for next year is unknown, but he will find out the numbers this week. Thereafter, meetings will start for the budget. The Director will notify the board if there are any concerns with the budget proposal. The N.H. State library long term funding is not known as the Senate budget process is ongoing but there have been no public hearings. It is funded through the end of the current fiscal year.

5. CPL Foundation Update- The Concord Reads author event concluded and was a success. Almost 600 copies of several books by Ty Gagne were checked out. The discussion with Mr. Gagne sold out more quickly than any other event. It is difficult to forecast demand which makes finding the proper venue difficult. J. West, who sits on the Foundation, said that the event was a tremendous success. Many of the preliminary events in the lead up to the primary author event were also sold out. It was a great promotional event for the library.

6. New Business- Three trustee board members attended the NH library trustee conference recently, J. West, S. Simard, and C. Clark-Keane. Among the highlighted breakout sessions concerned the process of legislation, book and curriculum challenges, book censorship, meetings and nonpublic sessions, maintenance and facility improvement projects, artificial intelligence (AI), and conflict resolution/communication strategies. The consensus is that there was a lot of good information presented. Several hundred people attended the conference, which suggested that interest was high. T. Fabian commented that the library is discussing AI

issues and how to address them. The keynote spoke about the trustee role in the library, including that a trustee should be pro-library, but nonpartisan.

J. West described what the Peterborough Library did in order to build a new library, which included developing a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and launching a capital financing campaign. She participated in this multi-year process. They organized many events to talk about their hopes for a new library, to educate the public about what libraries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century can offer, and to raise funds. They were able to raise \$4.5 million dollars and get an additional bond from the town for \$3 million, which then launched additional fundraising which enabled them to complete the project without significant taxpayer impact. They published a book explaining their process, which is available for review.

7. Old Business- None

8. Next Meeting- June 2, 2025. Members were encouraged to bring their trustee books to be updated. Officers will be selected for next year. An issue to also be discussed is whether to meet in July and August as the board typically does not meet those months.

9. Adjournment- By motion of J. Clemans, seconded by C. Clark-Keane, the meeting concluded by unanimous vote at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Chris Casco, Secretary

Date: May 6, 2025