

FINAL

**JOINT LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND LIBRARY FOUNDATION
MEETING AGENDA**

Remote via Microsoft Teams

LebanonNH.gov/Live

TUESDAY, November 10th, 2020

7:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Francis Oscadal (Chair), Stephen Taylor (Treasurer), Susan Desrosiers, Susan Weber Valiante (Secretary), Ann Sharfstein, Laura Barrett, Donna Hartford (Alt.), Pat Hayes, Catherine Rentz, Phil Bush, Renee Dunn, Morgan Swan

MEMBERS ABSENT: Emma Wunsch (Alt.)

STAFF PRESENT: Sean Fleming (Library Director), Amy Lappin (Deputy Library Director)

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Francis Oscadal called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

- **Chair Oscadal reviewed the meeting procedures for remote meetings and NH RSA 91-A “Right to Know” requirements.**

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None

3. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Report Changes in the Foundation’s Investment Policy and Reserve Fund’s Investment Results:

Ms. Renee Dunn gave the Library Foundation Investment Policy report. The Investment Policy for the Foundation serves as a guideline for the Reserve Fund. Funds that are raised by the Foundation Board, that are not part of the annual support or given to the Library’s Operating Budget, are used to further the Foundation’s goal to accumulate an endowment and provide financial support in perpetuity. The endowment has no liabilities, its sole purpose is to grow, so the Foundation seeks investments that get the best returns, within reason. For the return they currently receive, 95% allocation is in stocks and 5% is in short term bond funds which act as a reserve. The \$5,000.00 in reserve is there to be withdrawn for any reason, such as to cover expenses, and the policy allows up to \$5,000.00 to be withdrawn per year.

This year has been a challenging year. The performance report balance as of October 31, 2020 is \$117,000.00. Since March 31, 2020 there has been a 25% drop due to Covid-19. Parts of the economy have rebounded and so has the portfolio. As of now it is back to where it was as of January 1, 2020. There are no changes to the Investment Policy except, for last summer, when the Foundation added a socially responsible index fund. Over the last 1 year, 3 months it has outperformed the S&P 500 index by 4% over a year’s time.

No questions were asked by the Board.

B. Discussion Regarding the Finances of the Trustees and Foundation, Annual Gift from the Foundation to the Trustees: Director Fleming explained that due to Covid-19 and the Libraries being closed for a while, purchasing of books have been lower than usual. Usually, the Library Trustees receive a \$25,000.00 gift from the Foundation to purchase books. This year Director Fleming did not think that

would be necessary. He acknowledged that some of the Trustees had concerns that the donor's intentions for the money they donated, which should go to books, was not being honored. He explained that those funds will eventually make it to the Trustees for the purpose it was intended for.

Deputy Director Lappin reported that book expenditures will be approximately 60-65% of their book funds this year. They were not able to order as many books as usual due to the Libraries being closed for Covid-19.

Mr. Phil Bush said they currently have \$31,000.00 in the Foundation bank account. They will get the money to the Library Trustees eventually. He felt that it was good to have a cushion because they are unsure what may happen with the annual fund due to Covid-19 and the capital campaign for the renovation of the Library.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Foundation Update on the Lebanon Library Renovation Fundraising Campaign: Mr. Pat Hayes gave an update on the fundraising campaign. The Foundation's goal is \$300,000.00. As of right now, \$90,000.00 has already been committed to with a lot of good prospects still out there. Mr. Bush is working with some different foundations for the campaign and Mr. Hayes has heard from some area clubs, like the Lebanon Rotary Club. The Foundation also felt bolstered by an article in the newspaper that commented that the Lebanon City Council was looking at 2 capital improvement projects and one of them was the Library renovation.

Director Fleming reported that he, Chair Oscadal, Mr. Hayes, Treasurer Taylor, and Mr. Bush made a presentation to the City Council on the renovation project. The presentation took approximately 20 minutes. The Mayor asked them for a video of the facility being renovated and Director Fleming will be meeting with the architect on Thursday to make the video. Councilor Heistad asked for data on the air turnover rate to make sure the new HVAC system will be accomplishing what is desired from it.

Director Fleming reported that the upcoming budget cuts from the Libraries budget came from the part-time positions that were not filled and will not be filled. He said the City Council was focusing on alternative measures to cover any budget shortfalls without having to make any layoffs, if at all possible.

Chair Oscadal asked if the \$90,000.00 pledge for renovations included the \$50,000.00 matching grant that the Foundation had received? The response was it did include that as well as gifts from the Foundation. Fundraising efforts will be increasing in the coming months.

5. OTHER BUSINESS:

A. Review and Approve Proposed Change to Lebanon Libraries Covid-19 Transition Plan: Chair Oscadal explained that the Libraries have been in Phase 3 and were scheduled to go to Phase 4 on Monday, November 16, 2020. The Trustees had previously given the Library Director authority to pull back from Phase 4 to Phase 3 if he felt the situation warranted doing so. Director Fleming sent out an e-mail a day ago saying that, based on the pandemic numbers, both locally and nationally, and after speaking with the Library Management Team and Chair Oscadal, he decided to move back from Phase 4 and remain at Phase 3 indefinitely.

Since Director Fleming announced that decision, he received feedback from the Trustees, and he is now suggesting that the wording should be changed in the Covid-19 Transition Plan in Item 9 for Phase 4. The Change would be, "The Library Board of Trustees may return services to Phase 3 if the situation with the pandemic warrants such action". Currently the Library Director is authorized to make changes to the provisions of Phase 4 in consultation with the Library Management Team. Director Fleming is asking to change the authorization of moving back to Phase 3, removing it from the Director's purview and returning it to the Library Board of Trustees.

Director Fleming explained that what drives his decision-making process is listening to the concerns of the staff members about reopening, since the numbers have been moving up. Across the staff, the concerns for the local numbers rising have become greater. Director Fleming looked to be cautious and thinks the decision should reside with the Board of Trustees. If needed, an emergency meeting can be called.

Ms. Barrett supported the change to leave the decision on moving Phases to the Board. She also believed that the input from the Director and Deputy Director about the staff's concerns was very valuable as well.

Chair Oscadal did not have a problem with the Library Administration making the decision to back track to Phase 3 if need be. The policy that is in effect right now is exactly that. Since Director Fleming made the call yesterday the Libraries are technically back to Phase 3. If the Board decided to take the Libraries to Phase 4, Chair Oscadal asked Director Fleming, how he saw things playing out? He asked who would initiate any new decisions on changing phases? Who would come forward to ask to change the phases? Would an emergency meeting need to be called?

Director Fleming said the next scheduled meeting is on November 24th. The Board could change the policy now and revisit the decision on November 24th but then the next scheduled meeting will not be until the end of January 2021.

Mr. Swan asked how much time did the Library staff need for a transition between Phases? Director Fleming said it should not be too difficult. Deputy Director Lappin agreed that time should not be an issue. Mr. Swan agreed with Ms. Barrett and said that the Trustees priority should be the staff's safety. He would like to figure out a metric for moving forward or backward through the Phases.

Chair Oscadal said he was not sure how to go about creating a metric for that. Director Fleming said that since the Library was part of the Urban Library Group, he knew that the Group tried to come up with a metric and so far, have been unable to do so.

Chair Oscadal said before they went further in the discussion, they needed to first vote on whether to change the wording in the Covid-19 Transition Plan.

***A MOTION was made by Ms. Barrett to approve the Covid-19 Transition Plan for the Lebanon Public Libraries as amended by the Library Director.
Seconded by Ms. Desrosiers.***

No discussion was had on the Motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Francis Oscadal, Stephen Taylor, Susan Desrosiers, Susan Weber Valiante, Morgan Swan, and Laura Barrett all voting Yea.

Ann Sharfstein Abstained.

None voted Nay.

*** *The Vote on the MOTION was approved (6-1-0).***

Chair Oscadal said the next vote the Board would need to take was to remain at Phase 3 or move to Phase 4 of the Transition Plan.

***A MOTION was made by Ms. Desrosiers to move to Phase 4 as planned.
Seconded by Ms. Sharfstein.***

Discussion was open on the Motion. Ms. Desrosiers said that City Hall was re-opening on November 16th, the schools are currently open full-time for the past 2 weeks and the City just held a national election. She believed that Director Fleming and the Library Staff's planning and safety measures that have been put in place should allow the Library to open in a limited fashion.

Ms. Valiante believed that it is an individual's decision to go to the Library or not, but she had deep concerns about Covid-19 transmission. She believed that is part of what the Board would be voting on.

Deputy Director Lappin understood the comments that Ms. Desrosiers made, but what made her concerned about re-opening was the numbers rising in NH. She asked what the metric might be that would close the Library in the future?

Ms. Sharfstein believed that the anxiety of re-opening was worse than the reality of doing so. She was not sure why it was safe for computer users to be in the Library but not other patrons looking for books? Deputy Director Lappin wanted to make it clear that currently there were no patrons currently allowed inside the building.

Ms. Dunn spoke but her audio was muffled, and it was hard to hear what she said. Mr. Swan said that he believed what Ms. Dunn was saying was that if the Library was closed, it should stay closed. He said that he believed that Library Staff were working very hard remotely to provide services to the public. He did not believe that things should be done just because everyone else was doing them. He is not sure what services are not being provided, that people think should be, at the risk of the staff and the public's safety?

Director Fleming explained that at City Hall, when they re-opened, he believed they would have almost zero interaction with the public. Glass had been put up between the Clerks and the public. He also said that DPW was still closed to the public and the Lebanon Recreational Department said they may not even open the pool in the summer of 2021. He asked the Board members if they felt that the measures at the Library, that were being put in place, were so safe that no staff members were being put at risk?

Ms. Valiante said that she believed that the schools only went back to full-time last Monday and that she heard more parents took their children to remote learning since that transition. She believed that the kids were not going back to full classrooms.

Ms. Barrett felt very conflicted. She felt that the Library may have missed its opportunity to re-open back in August. Hindsight being what it is, it would now appear to have been a safer time. She did believe there was a distinct difference between schools and libraries. The quality of remote learning could not be matched for a large portion of students. She believed that the detriment of the Libraries being remote was not as great as the schools being remote.

Ms. Sharfstein supported the safety of the Library staff. She regrets not re-opening when the Covid-19 numbers were low in the area. Maybe the Board should hold off re-opening the Libraries at all, until there is a vaccine out there.

Deputy Fleming admitted that at the moment most Libraries their size were open, but other nearby Libraries like Howe Library may not open until a vaccine is widely available. Howe had been planning on re-opening in December with self-checkout and minimal to no staff interaction with the public. He was not sure what their plan was now.

Mr. Swan realized that the Library did lose something by being remote but was not sure what the best thing to do would be. He thought that the Board may need to keep re-visiting this issue monthly. Director Fleming asked to hear if any other Trustees or Foundation members had anything else to say?

Treasurer Taylor wanted to do things with consistency in mind, he did not want to re-open the Library and then close it down 2 weeks later. He stood behind Director Fleming's decision to remain at Phase 3, he felt that it was the Director's decision to make.

Ms. Rentz mentioned that she did get questions from the public, while trying to raise money for the renovations, about when the Libraries will re-open. She felt they were more of the inquisitive nature and was not necessarily a criticism toward the Libraries.

Ms. Barrett believed it was a risky time right now to re-open with the complication of the holidays and family gatherings and increased cases. She did not feel it was an ideal time to re-open. She would like to revisit this in January 2021 and perhaps the Board may be able to come up with a re-opening criterion at that time.

Ms. Valiante reminded everyone that the Library was not closed and that many services were being offered to the public. Mr. Bush said that one possible metric might be a faster Covid-19 testing turn around. He agreed with Ms. Rentz, the public seemed to want to know when the Libraries would be re-open, but they do not seem to be demanding that they be reopen.

Chair Oscadal felt that the numbers were uncertain and kept rising. Medical experts said it will be a bad winter for infections. He felt like they could possibly put off moving from Phase 3 to Phase 4 until the end of January 2021.

Ms. Desrosiers withdrew her Motion to move to Phase 4. Ms. Sharfstein withdrew her second of the Motion. Everyone agreed that differing of opinions was good and that the discussions were good to have among the Trustee members.

Mr. Oscadal confirmed that the Motion to Move to Phase 4 had been withdrawn and that the Libraries are currently staying at Phase 3.

6. ADJOURNMENT:

***A MOTION was made by Ms. Desrosiers to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 PM.
The MOTION was seconded by Ms. Valiante.***

Roll Call Vote:

**Francis Oscadal, Stephen Taylor, Susan Desrosiers, Ann Sharfstein, Susan Weber Valiante, and Morgan Swan, all voting Yea.
None voted Nay.**

**** The Vote on the MOTION was approved (6-0).***

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Higgins
Recording Secretary