

Rye Public Library Board of Trustees

Minutes for public and non-public session, Wednesday, June 11, 2025,

Present: Trustees Michael Moody, Joe Marttila, JoAnn Hodgdon, Julie Tucker, Victor Azzi, Library Director Andrew Richmond and Town Attorney, Eric Maher

Meeting was called to order at 2:04pm by JoAnn Hodgdon. Pledge was said.

Motion at 2:07 by Julie Tucker, seconded by Joe Marttila to go into non-public session according to RSA 91-A:3 II(l) Legal and RSA 91-A:3 II(c) Reputation. Roll Call: Moody-Yes, Hodgdon-Yes, Azzi-Yes, Marttila- Yes, Tucker-Yes

Trustees obtain legal advice regarding program.

Motion at 3:24 by Julie Tucker to come out non-public, seconded by Mike Moody and approved.

Motion to accept statement as read by Julie Tucker seconded by Joe Marttila and approved with one dissenting. Roll Call : Moody-No, Hodgdon-Yes, Azzi-Yes, Marttila- Yes, Tucker-Yes

Dear Rye Residents,

We're writing to update you on the New Hampshire Outright session that was postponed last month. As your trustees, we recently met again regarding this event.

The postponement made last month was due to an abundance of caution while we worked to understand the requirements of the presenting organization, NH Outright. Specifically, we needed to better understand their requests for a list of attendees for the event and to address potential security concerns that were raised.

Upon further review, it became apparent that NH Outright requested the registration list to identify "bad actors" and "names of folks in the area who may pose a threat to the safety of the event" and could additionally provide volunteer "3rd Party Security". The suggestion that individuals may be excluded is contradictory to the Meeting Room Policy, which does not envision exclusion of individuals. These security issues raised significant concerns for the trustees, as we must always prioritize the safety of our townspeople and library staff.

After consulting with the town legal counsel, the Trustees felt it was prudent for the Rye Public Library to not directly sponsor the event. However, we also recognize the importance of upholding the First Amendment rights of the presenting organization.

Therefore, we sought a solution that would allow NH Outright to still use the library for their presentation, provided NH Outright consulted with the Rye Police Department regarding proper safety details. Additionally, due to the potential turnout of the event, the Trustees wanted to ensure that the event was conducted in accordance with applicable Life-Safety Code requirements related to room capacity limitations and egress requirements, and required NH Outright to consult with the Rye Fire Departments on those matters. We presented this option to NH Outright, and we are pleased they have graciously accepted the Board's offer to hold the event at the library.

We believe this approach balances the safety and security of our community with the important principles of free expression.

Meeting adjourned at 3:34

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Tucker