

Letter to the Editor

Library Funding Clarification

A recent article in the *Concord Journal* that reported on the use of Library funds for non-library purposes has raised questions in our community related to Library funding. The purpose of this letter is to address these questions and the confusion the article may have raised.

Library funding comes essentially from two sources -- the Town and the Concord Free Public Library Corporation through its benefactors.

The Town budget generally pays for library staffing, custodial services, and utilities. Other Library expenses that include capital expenses such as the current Library expansion as well as Special Collections are the responsibility of the Library Corporation and are funded primarily through donations to the Library Corporation.

The *Concord Journal* recently reported that \$333,000 was transferred from the Town Library budget to meet Town expenses, including \$291,000 to cover legal expenses for the Estabrook Road litigation, \$22,000 for Town elections, and \$20,000 for Town Meeting expenses.

Because the Library was shut down for several months during the pandemic, the Town did not spend all of its allocation of budgeted Town Library funds and the decision to re-allocate these Town funds was made solely by the Town which has the right to move money within its budget with appropriate concurrence of the Fin Com.

We want to emphasize that this money came from the Town library budget, NOT from Library Corporation funds, and certainly not from campaign donations.

Indeed, the Town has no control over donations, capital campaign funds, and annual donations made to the Library Corporation, whose use is solely in the control of the Library Corporation and may **ONLY** be used for Library purposes. The Library Corporation is a Massachusetts charitable corporation created by the Massachusetts Legislature in 1873 for the purpose of forming and maintaining a public library in Concord and continues so to do.

Sherry F. Litwack
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