

Southlake Foundation calls for more autonomy on decision-making

By Brock Weir

Members of the Foundation Board for Southlake Regional Health Centre are considering a return to the table, provided certain conditions are met.

In a statement, Jim Alexander, Former Chair of the Southlake Foundation Board of Directors, said there has been "a great deal of speculation"

regarding the mass resignation of Foundation members at the end of June, and lack of detail in media statements on the shake-up has created unwarranted speculation within the community.

"Unfortunately, many in the community have concluded incorrectly that the resignations were the result of a serious breach of donor trust with respect to dollars held by the foundation," said Mr. Alexander. "As this is certainly not the case, and because the hospital has not clarified the reasons for the resignations, we, the former Board, feel it is important to set the record straight and release our original statement. Recently, a few members of the Hospital Board have reached out to some former Foundation Board members. Those members of the Hospital Board have asked if they step back and allow the Foundation Board to govern as intended, would the former [Foundation] members return? This is a positive first step, but we feel the reasons for the resignations must be made clear before moving forward."

The decision to resign en masse was an issue weighing on the minds of the Board members for over a month, said Mr. Alexander, following a motion from the separate Southlake Regional Health Centre Board to replace a high ranking employee.

"Despite our best efforts, it was clear to the Foundation Board that our attempts to come to a mutually agreeable solution were futile and, in fact, the Hospital Board was attempting to impede our ability to govern effectively. It is the Foundation Board's responsibility to ensure that the senior management team of the Southlake Foundation is in place and operating to its full potential. The Foundation Board should determine the leadership of the Foundation and hold that leadership team accountable. The resigning Board members fully supported, and continue to support, the Foundation's current [executive]."

In a statement on July 7, Southlake Regional Health centre said the Foundation Board of Directors was "undergoing a time of transition" following the resignations and that the hospital was "saddened" by their decision.

"We are working together to reach out to the former Board members and engage them during this time of transition," they said. "We wish to assure our community, our stakeholders, our supporters and our patients that we remain committed to working together to ensure the delivery of shockingly excellent experiences and the completion of ongoing projects and campaigns while growing and safe-guarding the funds entrusted to us by our community.

"The Hospital and Southlake Foundation Boards have prioritized the important work of renewing the Foundation Board of Directors. On behalf of the Hospital Board and the Southlake Foundation Board of Directors, we thank each of the former members for their passion and dedicated service to inspire giving within our community."