

Hospital Board Support for Foundation Plan for Discussion

Communications and Development Committee, Jan. 13, 2026

Purpose

This document sets out a proposed framework for how the Hospital Board can actively support the Hospital Foundation in preparation for a potential major capital campaign, while respecting the Foundation's independent governance and operational authority.

The plan focuses on board-level responsibilities: leadership, visibility, alignment, and oversight. It is intended to strengthen public confidence, donor trust, and institutional readiness ahead of any public campaign decision.

Guiding Principles

This plan is grounded in the following principles:

- The Hospital Board and the Foundation Board are independent bodies with distinct fiduciary responsibilities.
- Alignment is achieved through dialogue, shared leadership, and mutual respect, not direction.
- Hospital Board members act as ambassadors, convenors, and stewards of trust.
- Communications, engagement, and philanthropy are leadership responsibilities at campaign scale.
- Readiness precedes solicitation.

1. Governance and Coordination

The Communications and Development Committee serves as the primary forum for board-level coordination related to communications, community engagement, and philanthropic readiness.

Approach:

- The Committee’s mandate will explicitly include oversight of hospital–foundation alignment in advance of a capital campaign.
- The Foundation will provide regular strategic-level updates to the Committee on campaign readiness, donor cultivation progress, and engagement activity.
- Up to two joint sessions annually will be convened involving members of both boards to review alignment, shared narratives, and readiness.
- The Committee will serve as the discussion forum for reputational considerations related to capital planning and major public announcements.

Why this matters:

Clear governance coordination reduces risk, prevents misalignment, and reinforces trust between boards at a time when institutional credibility is essential.

2. Communications Alignment and Governance Oversight

The Hospital Board, through the Communications and Development Committee, will exercise governance-level oversight to ensure that hospital communications support strategic clarity and public trust during capital planning, while respecting the Foundation’s independent governance.

Approach:

- Set expectations for the hospital organization regarding clarity, consistency, and discipline in public communications related to strategy and capital planning.
- Seek assurance, through regular reporting and dialogue, that hospital and foundation communications are aligned on shared narratives and community impact.
- Use joint board-level discussions to identify and mitigate reputational risks arising from fragmented or inconsistent messaging.
- Encourage mutually agreed coordination mechanisms between hospital management and foundation staff for social and digital communications, without prescribing operational structures.

Why this matters:

During capital planning, communications risk becomes governance risk. Board oversight ensures that public messaging reinforces confidence without crossing into operational direction.

3. Hospital Board Visibility in the Community

Visible governance leadership is a core responsibility of the Hospital Board, particularly during periods of transformational change.

Approach:

- Set an expectation that Hospital Board members serve as visible representatives of hospital leadership in the communities served.
- Set an expectation that board members attend hospital and foundation events as part of their governance role.
- Establish expectations for appropriate participation by board members in community events, service clubs, and municipal functions.
- Include board members in hospital tours, program announcements, and milestone celebrations.
- Provide board members with consistent briefing materials and talking points.

Why this matters:

Public confidence in major capital investment is strengthened when communities see informed, engaged governance leadership.

4. Targeted Information Sessions and Community Roundtables (idea)

Small, focused engagement forums will support understanding, trust, and long-term relationship building.

Approach:

- Establish a regular series of small lunch or breakfast information sessions.
- Position these sessions as jointly hosted by the Hospital Board and the Foundation Board and/or the respective board Chairs to demonstrate shared leadership.
- Other board members may host or co-host sessions within their communities or networks, serving as ambassadors and convenors.
- Sessions will focus on specific hospital initiatives and future direction, not fundraising solicitation.

Why this matters:

These sessions allow community leaders and potential donors to engage with hospital leadership in a credible, low-pressure environment that builds confidence over time.

5. Role of Hospital Board Members in Philanthropy

Hospital Board members play a leadership role in setting expectations and tone for philanthropy.

Approach:

- Reaffirm the expectation of 100 per cent Hospital Board participation in personal philanthropy.
- Set expectations for board members to support philanthropy through introductions, hosting, and ambassador roles.
- Invite board members to serve as table captains or hosts at appropriate Foundation fundraising events.
- Include board members selectively in donor cultivation meetings where their presence adds credibility and reassurance.

Why this matters:

Leadership participation signals confidence in the institution and its strategy, which is often decisive for major donors.

6. Individual Engagement Between the Foundation and Board Members

Structured, predictable engagement strengthens readiness and clarity.

Approach:

- The Foundation will meet individually with each Hospital Board member on an annual basis, and as needed at key campaign milestones.
- Discussions will explore personal philanthropic capacity, preferred engagement roles, and comfort with various activities.
- The Foundation will report annually to the Communications and Development Committee on whether 100 per cent board participation has been achieved, without disclosure of individual amounts.

Why this matters:

Annual engagement ensures leadership readiness while respecting individual boundaries and confidentiality.

7. Monitoring Progress and Accountability

The Communications and Development Committee will maintain oversight of progress against this plan.

Approach:

- Receive regular updates on implementation and outcomes.
- Monitor indicators such as board engagement activity, donor cultivation progress, communications reach, and community trust in the board as well as community feedback.
- Adjust expectations and approaches as campaign readiness evolves.

Why this matters:

Early course correction reduces risk and ensures the organization is truly prepared before public campaign commitments are made.