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City's plan to ensure Memorial Hospital charitable fund used to benefit residents is approved - by Donald Grebien

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Donald Grebien

The health and safety of Pawtucket's residents have always been the city's number one priority. This effort has never been so important as it is now as we work to keep our residents healthy during this COVID-19 pandemic, but will continue long after the current crisis is over.

The city of Pawtucket along with the city council were pleased to announce that the Attorney General's (AG) Office and the Bank of America (BOA) Trustees have approved a plan put forth by the city to ensure that a trust fund created to oversee charitable donations made to Pawtucket Memorial Hospital will continue to benefit the residents of Pawtucket and the Blackstone Valley.

Since donations began in the late 1880s to benefit the health of our residents, this is what these funds have been used for. The proposed plan, to be finalized over the next several weeks, will ensure that this continues to be their use. It allows the city to administer a Request for Proposals (RFP) in order to attract proposals for alternative uses of the charitable funds that have accumulated since the closure of Memorial Hospital. Considerable interest will be earned from the trusts in the future. Indeed, more than \$550,000 of interest income has already accumulated from these trusts since the closure of Memorial Hospital.

Along with the RFP process, the plan calls for the creation of a Community Impact Committee to help expand the Trustees' outreach into the community to assist them in deciding how to best match the needs of our community and the intent of the donors. The committee will be made up of stakeholders from around the city and the Blackstone Valley, along with medical and legal experts.

We look forward to working with attorney general Peter Neronha and the BOA trustees to ensure that the funds are spent appropriately and in the best interest of the community. The city also looks forward to appointing a committee that will reflect the ethnic and racial diversity present in Pawtucket and the greater Blackstone Valley, as many communities of color have been disproportionately affected by the loss of Memorial Hospital, as documented in the so-called 'John Snow Report.'

All committee meetings will be open to the public to listen and provide feedback. Together as a community, we will ensure that these funds remain right here in Pawtucket where they belong.

Donald Grebien is the mayor of city of Pawtucket, R.I.

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