

# DONEGAL HISTORICAL FOUNDATION (DHF) LONG-RANGE PLANNING SUMMARY & BOARD DESCRIPTION

## PLANNING SUMMARY

### Executive Summary

The transition from the Donegal Society (DS) to the Donegal Historical Foundation (DHF) represents a **necessary and strategic evolution** from a traditional membership-based association to a **mission-driven, foundation-oriented organization** focused on long-term sustainability, financial stewardship, and expanded historical impact.

The original 1921 Charter established the Society with a clear purpose: to collect, preserve, and present the history of Donegal Presbyterian Church and its associated heritage, including the cemetery, artifacts, and historical records.

While that purpose remains valid and foundational, the current environment presents several challenges:

- declining membership participation;
- narrow operational focus tied primarily to the church site;
- limited financial scalability under a traditional association model; and
- increasing need for structured preservation and endowment management.

### ***DHF addresses these challenges by:***

#### **1. Revising Mission for Relevance**

The revised mission broadens the scope from a single-site focus to a **regional Scots Irish historical foundation**, while still maintaining strong alignment with Donegal Presbyterian Church.

#### **MISSION STATEMENT**    (*Revised Mission Statement (2026)*)

**"Our mission is to commemorate the early Scots Irish settlers of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania with a focus on those who settled in the area of Donegal Springs, so that their contributions to and significance in the history of our region and country may be recognized and perpetuated."**

[See also attached "What We Do" summary on the last page of this document.]

## **2. Transitioning to a Foundation Model (while honoring its member-based legacy)**

Moving from a dues-based association to an **Active Member and Endowment based structure** creates:

- financial durability;
- long-term capital stewardship; and
- multi-generational engagement.

### **DONEGAL HISTORICAL FOUNDATION Active Member & Endowment Levels**

#### **Active Annual Member Levels**

Student	\$25
Individual	\$50
Supporting	\$100
Sustaining	\$200
Corporate	\$500

[Note: Existing “Life Members” would be grandfathered in as “Life” Members.]

#### **Endowed Benefactor Levels**

Witness Tree Acorn	\$1,500—\$2,499
Witness Tree Branch	\$2,500—\$4,999
Witness Tree Trunk	\$5,000—\$9,999
Witness Tree Root	\$10,000—\$14,999
Witness Tree Canopy	\$15,000 and over

## **3. Modernizing Governance**

The new structure introduces:

- A blended-based board with 9 members
- Board membership: 3 DS, 3 DPC, 3 Open; Note: DPC max 3 members
- Defined committee architecture
- Term limits and accountability: 3-year terms, with an optional second term
- Chair may serve an additional 1-year ad hoc term for continuity
- Clear separation of governance vs. operations

## 4. Strengthening Financial Stewardship

With the introduction of:

- Benefactor tiers
  - Witness Tree Endowment structure creates a **perpetual funding model aligned with preservation and mission continuity.**
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## Strategic Positioning of DHF

The Donegal Historical Foundation will operate as a:

### Historical Stewardship Association

- Preservation of artifacts, archives, and genealogy
- Interpretation of Scots Irish heritage

### Preservation Partner

- Supporting Donegal Presbyterian Church grounds and structures
- Helping to maintain cemetery, trees, and historic landscape

### Community & Educational Platform

- Programs, events, and public engagement (with potential scholarship)
- Historical awareness and storytelling

### Financial Stewardship Entity

- Growing and managing endowment and long-term funds
  - Ensuring perpetual care of assets
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## Governance Philosophy (Shift from DS → DHF)

Donegal Society (Legacy Model)	Donegal Historical Foundation (Future Model)
Membership driven	Mission-driven & endowment-based foundation
Informal committee structure	Formal board-led committee system
Annual reunion centric	Year-round programming and engagement
Dues-based funding	Benefactor endowment + membership model
Limited growth scalability	Scalable institutional model

## Key Governance Enhancements

Building from the Constitution and By-Laws (officers, executive committee, meetings), DHF introduces:

- Defined **board fiduciary responsibility**
  - Structured **committee oversight model**
  - Formal **annual planning and budgeting cycle**
  - Accountability through **attendance and participation expectations**
  - Strategic use of **Executive Director (future optional)**
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## Meeting & Operating Cadence (Institutional Discipline)

As outlined in the new structure:

- **January** – Prior year review and adopt plans for current year programming
- **March** – Governance and nominations
- **June** – Annual Meeting
- **October** – Operating & Capital Budget, endowment, and next-year planning.

This creates a **predictable governance rhythm aligned with best practices for foundations**.

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## Conclusion

The DHF represents a **generational pivot** in the following ways:

- From preservation **reactive support** → **initiative-taking stewardship**
- From membership organization → **“institutional” foundation organization**
- From annual activity → **continuous mission execution**
- From limited funding → **endowment-driven sustainability**

This transition ensures that the legacy begun in 1721 with the founding of DPC and formalization of the DS in 1921 will be **preserved, expanded, and made relevant for the next one hundred years**.

NOTE—This governance model preserves the **intent of the original Charter** while evolving into a **modern foundation capable of long-term stewardship, financial sustainability, and expanded historical impact**.

## **BOARD DESCRIPTION**

### DONEGAL HISTORICAL FOUNDATION GOVERNANCE SUMMARY: Board, Officer, and Committee Responsibilities

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#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS – CORE RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Board serves as the **governing and fiduciary body** of the DHF.

##### **Primary Responsibilities:**

- Safeguard the **mission, vision, and long-term strategy**.
- Ensure **financial integrity and endowment stewardship**.
- Approve:
  - Annual operating plan
  - Budget and capital allocations
  - Strategic initiatives
- Provide **oversight of preservation, programming, and partnerships**.
- Ensure **legal and governance compliance**.
- Function as ambassadors for DHF in the community.
- Support fundraising and benefactor development.

##### **Term Limit:**

- Serve one 3-year term, with an option to serve a second 3-year term.
  - Chair may serve an additional one-year term in an ad hoc, non-voting capacity.
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#### **BOARD MEMBER EXPECTATIONS**

- Serve on at least one committee.
  - Attend minimum 50% of meetings.
  - Actively support fundraising and outreach.
  - Contribute expertise and leadership.
  - Uphold fiduciary and ethical standards.
  - Board member may be asked to step down if not fulfilling their responsibilities
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## BOARD OFFICERS – CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

### 1) BOARD CHAIR

**Role Summary:** Provides **leadership, direction, and coordination** of the Board and organization.

**Responsibilities:**

- Lead board meetings and set agendas.
  - Oversee execution of growth initiatives and strategic priorities.
  - Coordinate/provide oversight across committee work: membership, publicity, marketing, website, programing, and community engagement.
  - Serve as primary spokesperson for DHF.
  - Oversee operations (or supervise Executive Director to do so, if hired).
  - Ensure Board effectiveness and accountability.
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### 2) VICE CHAIR

**Role Summary:** Supports the Chair and leads **external-facing activities**.

**Responsibilities:**

- Chair External Affairs/Membership/Publicity Committee.
  - Oversee marketing, outreach, and engagement.
  - Coordinate fundraising initiatives.
  - Act in place of Chair when needed.
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### 3) SECRETARY

**Role Summary:** Ensures **organizational documentation and governance integrity**.

**Responsibilities:**

- Maintain official records and minutes.
- Ensure compliance with By-Laws.
- Document resolutions and decisions.
- Handle correspondence not assigned to other Officers.

#### **4) TREASURER**

**Role Summary:** Overseas **fiscal management and reporting.**

**Responsibilities:**

- Monitor financial condition and reporting.
  - Oversee operating and capital budgeting process.
  - Ensure proper financial controls.
  - Present financial updates to Board.
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#### **5) ENDOWMENT & INVESTMENT CHAIR**

**Role Summary:** Leads **long-term capital and endowment strategy.**

**Responsibilities:**

- Chair the Endowment/Finance Committee.
  - Manage endowment strategy and allocation.
  - Oversee investment performance.
  - Develop funding and capital growth plans.
  - Coordinate with Treasurer on financial planning.
  - Ensure alignment with preservation funding needs.
  - Execute any endowment, investment, and finance correspondence.
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#### **6) MEMBERSHIP & MARKETING COORDINATOR**

**Role Summary:** Leads **growth, engagement, and visibility.**

**Responsibilities:**

- Develop membership and benefactor programs; explore membership collaboration with area organizations.
- Promote DHF mission and activities.
- Manage communications and branding.
- Support fundraising campaigns.
- Maintain membership and mailing lists (coordinating with website).
- Execute membership correspondence.
- Engage in any other correspondence necessary to carry out these responsibilities.

## **7) PROGRAM COORDINATOR**

**Role Summary:** Leads **educational and cultural programming**.

**Responsibilities:**

- Develop events, lectures, and programs.
  - Coordinate annual reunion / signature events.
  - Align programming with mission.
  - Enhance community engagement.
  - Execute program-related correspondence.
  - Engage in any other correspondence necessary to carry out these responsibilities.
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## **8) SOLICITOR**

**Role Summary:** Ensures **Board effectiveness and governance discipline**.

**Responsibilities:**

- Chair Administrative/Governance Committee.
  - Lead nominations and Board development.
  - Oversee By-Law updates and organizational compliance.
  - Maintain governance policies.
  - Evaluate Board performance.
  - Engage in correspondence necessary to carry out these responsibilities.
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## **9) HISTORIAN**

**Role Summary:** Serves as **custodian of historical integrity and interpretation**.

**Responsibilities:**

- Oversee archival preservation.
  - Support research and historical documentation.
  - Collaborate with DPC historians.
  - Guide historical storytelling and interpretation.
  - Engage in correspondence necessary to carry out these responsibilities.
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## **BOARD COMMITTEE STRUCTURE & CORE RESPONSIBILITIES**

The DHF's committee structure is designed so that each board member coordinates specific required functions and participates by serving on at least one committee, but may serve on more than one committee. The Vice Chair and Treasurer serve on at least two committees, and the Chair is an ex-officio member of all committees.

The Chair of the Board may appoint a temporary ad hoc committee for a specific purpose or for a specific action, subject the By-Laws and Charter guidelines.

If an Annual Reunion were to be held, as opposed to having an Annual Meeting, each member of the Board would serve as a member of the "Annual Reunion" committee and would be responsible for a specific aspect of that event as assigned.

The Chair of each committee assists the Board Chair in: providing coordination across committees, executing board decisions, and ensuring operational continuity.

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### **1) Administrative / Governance Committee**

**Chair:** Solicitor

**Members:** Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer

**Responsibilities:**

- Board nominations and succession.
  - By-Laws oversight.
  - Governance policy.
  - Special organizational matters/requests.
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### **2) Endowment / Finance Committee**

**Chair:** Endowment & Investment Chair

**Members:** Board Chair, Treasurer, and one external non-board member (consistent with the endowment committee agreements)

**Responsibilities:**

- Investment oversight.
  - Endowment growth strategy.
  - Budget and capital planning.
  - Financial sustainability.
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### **3) External Affairs / Membership / Publicity Committee**

**Chair:** Vice Chair

**Members:** Membership & Marketing Coordinator, Program Coordinator, and Historian

**Responsibilities:**

- Marketing, PR, and communications.
  - Membership and benefactor growth.
  - Fundraising initiatives.
  - Programs and public engagement.
  - Explore collaboration with regional organizations.
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#### **ADDENDUM: “What We Do” Summary**

This is offered to show how the mission statement supports what we do. This list can be added to and adjusted at any time by the board. Such changes would not be a change to the mission, but what we do must support our mission.

***“What We Do”***

- Collect and preserve artifacts, documents, and other materials relating to the early Scots Irish settlers of Donegal Springs.
- Work with the historian(s) of Donegal Presbyterian Church to help them preserve the early history of their church.
- Work with historians to help them interpret, preserve, and perpetuate the early history of settlers in the Lancaster County region.
- Assist Donegal Presbyterian Church with preserving, maintaining, and beautifying the grounds, trees, springs, cemetery, and the outside of buildings, as far as the DHF funds permit.