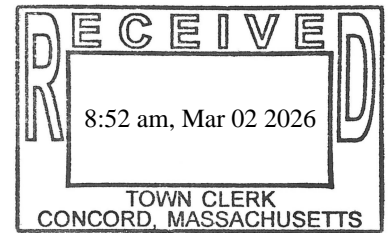


**Town of Concord
Select Board Meeting
Meeting Minutes
February 2, 2026**



Approved 02 /25 /26

Pursuant to notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, the Concord Select Board convened in person on Monday, February 2, 2026 at 6:00 PM at the Town House Select Board Meeting Room, 22 Monument Sq. The meeting was available for public access in person and via Zoom.

Call to Order

Present were: Mark Howell, Chair, Wendy Rovelli, Clerk, Mary Hartman, Paul Boehm and Cameron McKennitt

Chair Howell called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM, Ms. Rovelli took the roll call and confirmed that a quorum was present. Chair Howell announced that public comments would be taken for items that are not on the agenda. Additional comments would be taken during the meeting itself, as needed.

Public Comment

Aris, a Concord Public Schools student, in response to the Select Board's adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism read a story called *One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Fascist*.

Consent Agenda

- a. Town Account Warrants: January 27, 2026, January 28, 2026

Upon a motion duly made by Ms. Rovelli and seconded, it was **UNANIMOUSLY voted:** to approve the Consent Agenda as included in the agenda packet.

Chair's Report

Chair Howell stated that he toured several buildings on the western side at MCI Concord- specifically buildings that are being looked at for reuse as Department of Public Works (DPW) facilities. Proposals for the master plan of the MCI Concord site are expected in mid-February. The Select Board will discuss how to oversee the master planning work, with the potential to form a steering committee. Chair Howell indicated

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that the Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) and the Town of Concord is in process, with many shared priorities between the two entities. Chair Howell stated that a plan for collaboration with DCAMM throughout the master planning process will be created to ensure that the final zoning plan is amenable to both the Town of Concord and DCAMM . Chair Howell stated that DCAMM has not set a target for the desired number of housing units yet (that this figure is generated by the Department of Housing and Livable Communities) and that it has been communicated to DCAMM that the Town of Concord would like to work in collaboration to establish this figure. Chair Howell stated that while working with DCAMM, the Town of Concord will have the ability to look across all available parcels, inclusive of the MCI Concord site, when looking to establish housing goals as part of the redevelopment process. Both DCAMM and the Town of Concord are interested in discussions and resolutions for site access and the transportation design for the Rt. 2 corridor.

Town Manager's Report

Ms. Lafleur provided the following updates: The 2025 Annual Report is well underway and close to 95% complete with only a few reports outstanding. The 2023 Annual Town report won 3rd place at the statewide competition. The Civic Plus website is undergoing a refresh, which is being done in collaboration with the vendor. Changes to the overall color palette will be made along with some standardization and correction of links. A new audit team is on site for two weeks in support of the FY25 Town audit, which is now . well underway. The Fiscal 27 Budget and the 10-year CIP, budget documents and capital improvement plan documents will be available on-line on or before February 20th. The upcoming annual pavement program is out to bid, for two-year period made possible by the support of the voters at Town Meeting last year and at the ballot. The closeout of the middle school building project is approaching and the project will be reviewed in total at the February 23rd Select Board meeting. The status of the CMS solar project could also be discussed on this date. The Commission on Disability received a grant from the state to conduct an ADA self-evaluation and transition plan; a contract has been awarded and there is a kickoff meeting next week. Mr. Boehm and Mr. McKennitt provided feedback to Ms. Lafleur regarding website improvements.

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Discussion and Vote: Order of the 2026 Annual Town Meeting Warrant

-Vote: Withdraw Warrant Article: Fiscal Year 2027 Peabody Middle School Upkeep

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Chair Howell stated that there are now three citizens' petitions as one did not have the necessary number of signatures. Carmin Reiss, Town Moderator stated that there are 51 articles and that many will be on the Consent Calendar. Ms. Reiss reviewed the traditional order in which articles are placed. The Select Board members recommended changes to the *2026 Warrant Articles – Draft Proposed Order* document that was included in the meeting packet. Shannon McAndrew, Management Specialist tracked the recommended changes and will provide the final version to the Select Board. Ms. Reiss stated that the warrant will be published in the Concord Bridge as a booklet this year. Ms. Reiss also stated that the warrant will be published in the Concord Bridge on February 20th.

Upon a motion duly made by Ms. Rovelli and seconded, it was **UNANIMOUSLY voted:** to withdraw warrant article number 23 The Fiscal Year 2027 Peabody Middle School Upkeep article.

Upon a motion duly made by Ms. Rovelli and seconded, it was **UNANIMOUSLY voted:** to approve the order of the 2026 Annual Town Meeting Warrant as presented, with the edits as discussed.

Discussion and Vote: Letter of Attestation – Regional Dispatch Center

Ms. Lafluer stated that she would be renaming this initiative to “Shared Emergency Services.” Thomas Mulcahy, Chief of Police and Brian Whitney, Fire Chief were present. Stephen James Johnson, Emergency Communications Manager, presented the slide deck *Exploring Regional 9-1-1: Sustainability, Resilience, and Service Quality*. Ms. Lafluer shared additional information which included that three communities have been contacted and that the Town of Lincoln is ready to enter into an agreement for shared services with the Town of Concord. Ms. Lafluer also stated that the Town of Concord is seeking to serve as a host community, where the Town of Concord is the lead. This would allow Concord to benefit from grant opportunities as well.

Ms. Hartman inquired about the potential of installing next generation 911, to which Mr. Johnson stated that the State of MA controls the 911 infrastructure, therefore a town cannot independently make technology infrastructure decisions. Additionally, Ms. Hartman was assured that Mr. Johnson is considering planning for changes to the physical public safety facilities to support regional dispatch services. In response to Mr. Boehm's inquiry, Ms. Lafluer provided details on why a regional dispatch center with the Town of Acton did not move forward- the two main reasons being that the community was not brought along as the project progressed and that the project was

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evolving toward a model with Acton serving as a host. Chair Howell weighed in on the levels of efficiencies that need to be in place in order to be successful. Mr. Johnson commented that the state is studying the scale that makes regionalization effective. He also noted that the feasibility study will identify the potential efficiencies. Ms. Hartman stated that residents would like to know that when they call for emergency services that the dispatch center is still “their dispatch center,” regardless of regionalization or efficiencies. Mr. Johnson provided details on how his department is preparing organizationally for a transition to regional services. The Select Board members agreed that these preparatory steps are necessary.

Upon a motion duly made by Ms. Rovelli and seconded, it was UNANIMOUSLY **voted:** to approve the Letter of Attestation – Regional Dispatch Center.

Update- Land Use Working Group Progress Report

Chair Howell provided the introduction to the agenda item. Sven Weber, Co-chair of the Land Use Working Group (LUWG) provided the Phase I update, inclusive of the three areas for consideration- Public works, Fire/Police and Municipal Consolidation. Mr. Weber stated that starting Friday, the subgroups will come together to review findings and recommendations. These conversations will continue on February 20th. Mr. Weber stated that improvements or construction are needed at the West Concord Fire Station are a priority given existing and future growth and that the Walden St. police/ fire campus needs will also be presented. Additionally, there are three potential sites being considered for public works- with the focus being on the MCI Concord property as a potential location. Regarding municipal consolidation, the group seems to be strongly considering the use of unoccupied office space as their recommendation. In response to Mr. Boehm’s inquiry, Mr. Weber stated that Phase II will review the parcels that would be remaining if certain town departments were relocated to new sites. Mr. Weber stated that additional steering committees and working groups will be needed as the process continues. Mr. Boehm stated that capital planning is necessary and that he hopes that Phase II identifies more definitive capital planning requirements. Additionally, Mr. Weber advised that the process of relocating town departments will result in the potential need for rezoning of vacated properties to optimize resale value and provide funding for subsequent purchases and/or to build and expand new sites. Mr. Boehm, Mr. Weber and Mr. McKennitt discussed the complexity and importance of timing. Ms. Hartman expressed the importance of community input and bringing the school department into the capital planning conversation, requesting that Mr.

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McKennitt, as Liaison to the School District, begin conversations with the district administration and School Committee. Chair Howell indicated that the process of municipal consolidation is one that will take decades and that the development of the MCI Concord property and rotary redesign could take 10-20 years. Mr. Boehm expressed the importance of having a central steering committee for the project. Mr. Weber and the Select Board expressed concerns over building failure due to lack of capital planning for the Ripley building. Mr. Weber stated that the LUWG will be providing a written report of Phase I that will be available to the public. Chair Howell expressed concern regarding a decision to sell the Ripley and Peabody site, noting that these are spare school sites that could be needed with expanded housing development. Mr. Boehm added that 2229 Main St. needs planning attention, while Ms. Rovelli stated that there is potential for public/private arrangements that have the potential to provide recurring revenue from this parcel.

Discussion and Update Progress Update FY' 26 Select Board Goals

Chair Howell read through the document *2025- 2026 Select Board Goals*, which is included in the meeting packet, and indicated the status of each goal, while Select Board members provided additional comments and input of adding or extending goal for FY27.

I. Development and Land Use:

A. MCI Redevelopment – All goals likely to finish in FY 27.

B. Cell Service – Goal #1 is complete, Goal #2 - Goal #4 are in progress.

C. Wastewater Treatment System Capacity: (Goals are in progress) A. Cathcart provided an overview of the status of these goals, stating to Mr. McKennitt that the MCI Concord wastewater treatment plant may provide a more cost-effective approach to increasing wastewater treatment capacity for the town. Mr. Cathcart stated that consideration is being given to connecting the Assabet Pump Station to the MCI Concord facility. Additionally, the Sewer Improvement Fee is used to offset the costs of expanding capacity. Permitting will move to an FY 27 goal.

D. Transportation – Goal #1 (in progress) Chair Howell provided an update of meetings that have occurred with MA Department of Transportation and stated that it is important for the Town of Concord to continue to communicate the town's (and community's) priorities at future coordination meetings. Goal #2 (in progress).

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E. Town Facilities – Goal #1 -Seeking funds at Town Meeting. Goal #2. LUWG (in progress).

F. 2229 Main St. Acquisition negotiations – Goal #1 in progress. Goal #2 We are not at a point where recommendations can be made. G. Commercial Development – Ms. Lafleur stated that the Economic Vitality Committee should weigh in on how to advance this goal while Mr. Boehm felt that this is not in their scope. Ms. Hartman suggested there are no additional resources to fund a Economic Development Staff member or Department, Ms. Lafleur stated that the Select Board should communicate their established goals early in the process to all boards and committees and that the Economic Vitality Committee’s scope could be expanded to address development and collaborate with the Planning Board on ways to support more development.

H. Housing Goal - In process, 91B Main St. parcel was identified and CPC funding requested.

II. Financial Management

A. Reserve Policy: Articles are in place for Town Meeting.

B. Audits and Free Cash Certification: Audits are underway; FY 24 Audit complete, FY25 audit in process and will be completed by June, drafts of FY 25 Audit are targeted for the end of March. In light of recent audit findings, the board agreed that FY27 should include a goal related to Financial Integrity. Review of Free Cash; Ms. Lafleur reported that revenue estimates are historically done in September and October, they will be looked at again in March. The town is still waiting for the Free Cash certification.

C. Revenue Goals: Goal #1 Local Receipts - Ms. Hartman shared that Mimi Graney, Economic Vitality Manager, is tracking vacancy rates and is reporting quarterly to the Economic Vitality Committee and that local receipts are on track and have rebounded from Covid. License and permit fees were reviewed and modified (effective January 1). Goal #2 - Ms. Lafleur provided the document *PILOT Initiative – Reset Plan of Action* and informed the Select Board that a plan of action will be presented at the next Select Board meeting. Implementation of the PILOT program will be included in 2027 goals

D. Affordability and Budgeting: Goal #1 (partially met). Public safety has been benchmarked against peer communities, which was on the higher end in terms of FTEs; Ms. Lafleur shared that this type of information will be shared for each of the cost centers in the future. Goal #2 Some work was done with the MCI Concord conceptual work, though the goal is not in progress otherwise. Chair Howell shared a

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concept around housing goals beyond Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) (create a local definition) that was presented at the MMA conference. Ms Rovelli commented that the Town needs to define the type of housing we want to establish (elderly housing, etc.), Goal #3 Will not be done this year, but should be part of strategic capital planning in 2027. Goal #4 A report is expected in April.

III. Effective and Transparent Governance

A. Organizational Capacity: Goal #1 The Personnel Board is developing a dashboard/updated with a new MUNIS based system- Chair Howell will request an update from the Personnel Board at a future meeting and stated that the board is also looking at the period of time that vacancies remain open.

B. Committee Processes: Goal #1 Ms. Rovelli stated that the Select Board has revised charters and that many committees are thinking of making revisions. Goal # 2 The Town Clerk's Office is providing the four-part training. #3 APP #10 revision was approved. #4 Topical Forums have taken place.

C. 250th Celebration "Lessons Learned" Session: The final 250 report is complete and includes a section on lessons learned.

D. Quarterly coordination discussions with the School Committee need to be planned.

E. Correspondence is published, minutes are up to date, podcasts and Town Manager's report are in place.

IV. Sustainability and Ecology

A. Warner's Pond Management Committee was seated last week.

B. Middle School Solar Construction has not progressed - Mr. Boehm stated that CMLP and the district need to come into alignment on the project. Ms. Rovelli suggested Jason Bulger provide an update at a future meeting.

C. Bi-directional power flow – The project is in process and expected to be completed at the end of 2026.

D. Time of Use electrical billing will be implemented on April 1.

E. Climate Action: The Climate Plan project has just kicked off with the consultants and will continue into FY 27. Feedback is favorable on the organizational changes

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implemented in FY26. Several Sustainability projects are moving forward, but resources are limited.

V. Civility, Tolerance and Inclusion

- A. Reporting Task Force has been seated and has held meetings.
- B. Communication with the School Committee has taken place and will continue through collaboration of Town/School leaders via Concord United.
- C. Community dialogue has increased and continues to be promoted.

Discussion and Update - Progress Update FY '26 Town Manager Goals

Ms. Lafleur stated that her FY 26 goals are primarily a compilation of what did not get completed in FY 25, due to the 250th. Ms. Lafleur provided the Select Board with paper copies and included in the meeting packet is the document - *Town Manager Goals & Objectives - FY26*. Later in the meeting Ms. Lafleur stated that there are 14 Town Manager goals, of which 5 are completed and have become part of day to day work, 5 are on target and 4 are at risk (Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) water planning work with a group of communities is moving slower than anticipated, Concord Municipal Light Plant (CMLP) governance has been slow moving due to staff availability and legal work, Comp plan/ recognizing growth in position – ready to pilot plans, but needs to review by Personnel Committee)

-Progress Update Staff Goals

Jess Porter, Assistant Town Manager and Human Resources Director presented the slide deck: *Goal Setting Period Summary Report*. Ms. Lafleur provided an overview of organizational resilience practices within the town for Mr. Boehm and reorganizing the format/categories of the goals and subcategories was discussed. The Select Board will receive an update on staff goals progress in March and June.

-Preliminary Discussion for Select Board Goals FY '27

Comments for FY 27 goals were collected during the FY 26 discussion. Ms. Rovelli stated that further discussion on goal categories and specific goals will be planned for a future meeting.

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Update on Antisemitism and Bias Initiatives

Chair Howell stated that he is hoping to focus on community engagement and education now that the administrative tasks are complete. Mr. Boehm stated that the Select Board did not intend the proclamation to inhibit free speech, to which Ms. Rovelli and Chair Howell expressed agreement.

Liaison Reports

Ms. Rovelli and Ms. Hartman's liaison reports are in the meeting packet. There were no additional comments.

Chair Howell moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:04 PM.

[Meeting Packet](#)

[Meeting Recording](#)