

SELECT BOARD



Select Board Members from left to right: Clerk Matthew Johnson, Henry Dane, Chair Terri Ackerman, Linda Escobedo, and Susan Bates.

General Business

The Select Board is composed of five members elected for staggered three-year terms by the voters at the annual Town election. Following Annual Town Meeting, Matthew Johnson succeeded Terri Ackerman as Chair and Ms. Ackerman became Clerk. Linda Escobedo continued to serve her second term and Henry Dane continued to serve his first term. Mary Hartman joined the board after her election in March.

The Select Board is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of Town policy for all Town matters other than the management of the schools and issues that state laws delegate to other commissions. Some specific responsibilities of the Select Board are:

- Appoint and evaluate the Town Manager, and work closely with them to set annual goals and objectives.

- Approve the calendar and Warrant for Annual and Special Town Meetings, propose matters to be considered and implement the decisions of Town Meeting.
- Make appointments to most Town boards, committees, and task forces, and approve appointments made by the Town Manager.
- Act as the authority for granting of numerous permits and licenses.
- Review the development of the Town's operating and capital budgets.
- Represent the Town in a variety of roles with federal, state, regional and other local government agencies.
- Acknowledge the many gifts, grants, and recognitions Concord gratefully receives.

Select Board Goals and Initiatives

The Concord Select Board annually affirms its values and guiding principles to align its goals and objectives

for improving the operation of our Town government. These include effective governance, financial stability, sufficient and sustainable infrastructure, Town-wide recreation facilities, diversity, equity, and inclusion, historic and cultural heritage preservation, enhancement of agricultural and natural resources, economic vitality, and advancing Concord's interests in the region and the Commonwealth.

The Board also interacts with the Town Manager, other boards, committees, and task forces, Concord residents, and other units of government to establish strategic priorities and provide support, guidance, and encouragement. Some significant initiatives taken in 2022 included:

- Hired a new Town Manager: Kerry Lafleur served as Interim Town Manager from January through June of 2022. The Select Board was quite impressed with her initiative and job performance; therefore by unanimous vote, the Board appointed Ms. Lafleur to be Concord's Town Manager.
- Sponsored a focused meeting on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) with presentations, brainstorming and public input.
- Sponsored a focused meeting on the Town's Transportation challenges and initiatives with the Transportation Advisory Committee, Director of Public Works, and Director of Planning/Land Management, including presentations, brainstorming and public input.
- Called a Special Town Meeting to authorize \$7.2 million of additional borrowing for the new Concord Middle School for a total project cost not to exceed \$110 Million. The Special Town Meeting to approve this additional borrowing is scheduled for January 19, 2023, followed by a Town Election on February 16, 2023, to authorize the debt exclusion.
- Updated the Charge for the Concord 250th Executive Committee, participated in Executive Committee forums, and heard reports from Mike Lawson of the State 250th Commission.
- Continued to face challenges with affordable housing: Following the developer's withdrawal from the Christopher Height project at Junction Village, the Select Board took no further action on that project. The Board actively participated in the development of the Housing Production

Plan, endorsed the Assabet River Bluff project, approved guidelines for the Concord Municipal Housing Affordable Trust, and sent official comments regarding the proposed MBTA Communities Requirement for Multi-family Housing Zoning.

- Adopted a Small Cell 5G policy. Received a report and timetable from the PEG Access Committee on the upcoming franchise renewal.
- Worked with the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee and the Department of Planning and Land Management on a short-term conceptual redesign for Junction Park.
- Learned operational details of major town departments including Police, Fire, Public Works, Finance and Accounting, Broadband/Information Technology, and Planning/Land Management, as well as Minuteman National Park and Minute Man ARC.
- Reviewed progress to date on town committee policies and structure, volunteer recruitment practices and orientation procedures.
- Continued to work with the Town of Acton on the creation of a joint regional emergency dispatch center.

Communications

Meetings are open to all interested Concord citizens and time is allotted for public comment. Copies of agendas, minutes, and supporting materials for meetings of the Board are posted on the Town website. Minuteman Media Network records and broadcasts the Board meetings on Concord's local access cable channel 9 and online at minuteman.media. The Town's Public Information and Communications Manager oversees regular postings on the Town's website and social media.

When necessary, the Board meets in Executive Session to discuss issues of litigation, land acquisition, and labor negotiations.

Members of the Board also meet with neighboring officials and the Town's representatives in the Massachusetts legislature, as well as with representatives of the MBTA as necessary. Representative Tami Gouveia and State Senator Mike Barrett serve as our current legislative leadership.

To further engage citizens and to help ensure transparency, boards, committees, and commissions hold public hearings, forums and workshops throughout the year on a variety of matters. When not constrained by pandemic conditions, the Town also hosts several public events and celebrations each year.

Boards and Committees

Citizen participation has been a hallmark of Concord's governance since its founding. The Town's elected officials, as well as citizen members of over 60 other boards, committees and commissions are all volunteers, exemplifying the extraordinary democratic process of the Town. Over 300 citizens serve and annually donate hundreds of hours of personal time to benefit Concord.

During 2022, the Board revised the Charge for both the White Pond Task Force and the Public Ceremonies and Celebrations Committee. The Board also received final reports from three committees and then voted to dissolve these committees. The Board gratefully extends its thanks to the members of these 3 committees:

- Tax Fairness Committee
- Fiber Broadband Completion Task Force
- Personnel Bylaw Study Task Force

The Board hosts a monthly Chairs' Breakfast, which provides an overview of recent or planned activities from each of the Town's boards, committees and commissions in an informal information-sharing format that is an open and recorded meeting.

Notable Issues

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect everyone – residents, students, employees, business owners, and visitors – with only temporary respites during the year. That placed greater demands on Town staff and many local businesses as they continued work under difficult conditions.

The judge's ruling in the long-running Estabrook Road trial established that "Estabrook Road was laid out as a public way and also became a public way by

prescription, and that the 1932 order of the Middlesex county commissioners adjudicating Estabrook Road to become a private way ended the Town's obligation to maintain Estabrook Road, but did not end the right of the public to access and use Estabrook Road, which the public retains." The defendants have indicated that they plan to appeal the judge's ruling. Legal costs in 2022 for this issue and in total, were significantly less than in the previous few years.

Gifts and Acknowledgements

Concord's citizens, visitors and organizations continued their history of remarkable generosity to the Town. Concord was very fortunate to receive numerous gifts, and the Select Board formally acknowledges all gifts in excess of \$500.

The Board acknowledges, among many others, the following generous and greatly appreciated gifts in 2022:

- Eric Green and Carmin Reiss: \$25,000 to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund
- Mr. & Mrs. John J. Langan: \$800 to the Council on Aging,
- The Umbrella Arts Center: \$1500.00 for the Drive-in Movie Event
- The Rotary Club of Concord: \$1500.00 for the Drive-in Movie Event,
- Concord-Carlisle Youth Baseball: donation of backstop padding worth approximately \$2,500.00 for Rideout Field
- Michael B. and Mary S. Fox Fund: \$2500.00 to the Council on Aging Gift Account
- The Friends of Sleepy Hollow Cemetery Inc.: \$4,000 to the Town of Concord for the revitalization of the H. Thurston Handley Commemorative Garden in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery
- The Boston Foundation: \$2,500.00 to the Nanae Gift Account
- Rotary Club of Concord: gift totaling \$8,786.22 in partnership with the Concord Garden Club for the following work on the Veterans' Memorial Site – Water Fountain \$3,529.06, Landscaping \$5,127.00, and New Service Flags \$130.16
- Friends of Sleepy Hollow gift through donation

- by Mary McGuire Tyler and Family: \$10,000.00 to the Cemetery Trees Account for the replacement and replanting of trees and bushes near the intersection of Ripley and Bartlett Avenues in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery
- James Terry and Judith Terry: gift of \$55,000.00 to the Police Department Sustainable Vehicles Account for the purchase of a Tesla Model Y to be used as a patrol vehicle
- James Terry and Judith Terry: gift of \$5,000.00 to the Community Services Support Account to create a gift fund to be used to assist Concord residents under the age of 60 that are not otherwise covered by other support organizations
- Concord-Carlisle Community Chest, Inc.: gifts to the Council on Aging totaling \$17,696.50 and \$2,247.50 to the Volunteer Coordinator Account and \$10,901.00 to the Outreach Worker Account and \$4,548.00 to the Social Services Coordinator Account
- Concord-Carlisle Youth Baseball: gift to the Parks & Trees Division of the Concord Public Works Department and \$7,700.00 to the Ripley Field Baseball Account to support FY22 Ripley maintenance expenses
- His Presence Christian Fellowship: gift of \$1,000.00 to the Council on Aging Gift Account
- Middlesex School: total of \$75,000.00 for support of emergency equipment - \$50,000.00 to the Police Department, \$25,000.00 to the Fire Department,
- Mr. & Mrs. Langan: gift of \$1,000.00 to the Council on Aging Gift Account
- Concord Land Conservation Trust: gift of \$25,000 for the acquisition of the Emerson Land Conservation Restriction
- Friends of Concord Carlisle Fields: gift of \$50,000.00
- Concord Carlisle Community Chest: \$17,696.50 to the Council on Aging Gift Accounts
- Susanna E. Bedell Foundation: \$10,000.00 to the Council on Aging.

The Select Board wishes to thank all of the employees of the Town of Concord for their professionalism and dedication in serving the residents of Concord in these challenging times. We also wish to acknowledge and thank the hundreds of citizen volunteers willing to devote their time and skills to Town affairs, without whom the Town could not function.