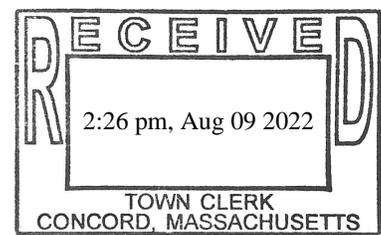


**Town of Concord  
Select Board  
Minutes  
January 31, 2022**



Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, the Concord Select Board convened in the Select Board Meeting Room and via Zoom on January 31, 2022 at 6:30pm.

Present were Terri Ackerman; Chair, Matthew Johnson; Clerk; Henry Dane, Linda Escobedo, and Susan Bates. Also present was Kerry Lafleur, Interim Town Manager; Christopher Carmody, Administrative Manager; Christine Reynolds, Finance Committee Chair; Karlen Reed, Chair of the PEG Access Committee; Mr. Howell, Chair of the Broadband Fiber Task Force; Kate Hodges, Deputy Town Manager; Marcia Rasmussen, DPLM Director; Alan Cathcart, Director of Public Works.

**Call to Order**

Chair Ackerman called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**Consent Agenda**

- Arbor Day Proclamation

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was UNANIMOUSLY **VOTED:** to approve the consent agenda.

**Committee Appointments**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was UNANIMOUSLY **VOTED:** to approve the following Committee Appointments:

Stephen Stasheski of 76 Jennie Dugan Road and Heather Bout of 33 Alden Road and Interim Town Manager Kerry A. Lafleur (ex officio) to the Concord Middle School Building Committee until the end of the project; Francesca Cataldo of 40 Hosmer Road to the Historical Commission as an Associate Member for a term to expire on January 23, 2023; Henry Moss of 557 Sudbury Road, as nominated by the Natural Resources Commission, to the Historic Districts Commission as an Associate member for a term set to expire on January 1, 2025; Abigail Flanagan of 398 Main Street as nominated by the Concord Museum, to the Historic Districts Commission from an Associate Member to a Member, for a term set to expire on January 1, 2027; Doug Bacon of 410 Lowell Road to the Concord Housing Development Corporation for a term to expire April 30, 2025.

**Purpose of Tonight's Meeting—Kerry A. Lafleur, Interim Town Manager**

Interim Town Manager Kerry Lafleur welcomed everyone and stated that tonight's meeting will focus on ARPA, particularly these 2 goals:

1. Promoting equitable outcomes and equitable recovery from Covid
2. US Department of Treasury urges us to utilize community engagement in determining ARPA allocations

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**ARPA Overview and Eligibility Requirements—Christopher Carmody, Administrative Manager; Q & A**

Mr. Carmody explained that ARPA, the American Recovery Plan Act, is generally considered to be the successor to the CARES Act. It is a huge \$ 1.8 trillion act, providing both direct and indirect funds to state and local government in the wake of COVID. Concord has been granted \$5.64 million in direct funding.

Mr. Carmody detailed the 8 general categories of eligible use under ARPA, as well as prohibited uses. Concord is eligible to utilize our entire \$5.64 million under the “lost revenue” category. Prohibited uses include stabilization and rainy-day funds.

Finally, Mr. Carmody briefly discussed the new Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, estimated to be 1.2 trillion nationwide.

Mr. Johnson advocated for Concord to utilize all ARPA funds under “Lost Revenue” and roll the entire 5.64 million into our regular budget process. No earmarking or segmenting would be necessary. Ms. Ackerman emphasized the need for community and SMT input, transparency and collaboration, regardless of whether the ARPA funds are designated under “Lost Revenue” or other categories.

Ms. Bates inquired, under eligible uses, whether \$1.84 million for FY21 and \$2.21 million for FY22 have been identified but not earmarked. Mr. Carmody confirmed.

Chris Reynolds asked for clarification on Concord’s eligibility for “Lost Revenue.” Mr. Johnson and Mr. Carmody clarified that the “Final Rule” allows for all expenditures under \$10 million. Ms. Reynolds liked the flexibility of this rule.

Karlen Reed, Chair of the PEG Access Committee, advocated for a low-income Broadband program. She inquired who will be the decision maker(s) for ARPA spending.

Ms. Ackerman stated that the Select Board, along with Town Manager, Senior Management Team, Town Meeting and with much community input, would decide. She emphasized the need for a specific plan that would be circulated and posted on the website.

Ms. Lafleur added that as grant funds, ARPA does not require further appropriation by Town Meeting. In addition to the \$5.64 million coming directly to Concord, there are funds coming to Commonwealth, which Concord may be eligible to apply for.

Mr. Johnson re-iterated that ARPA should not be treated as a slush fund; it should go into Lost Revenue and rolled into the budget process. Mr. Howell, Chair of the Broadband Fiber Task Force, stated that these funds are a windfall and should be segregated so that their uses are well understood. Ms. Escobedo stated that we may not necessarily yet know all the community needs, and this windfall gives us an opportunity to address one-time capital needs.

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**ARPA Preparations by Area Towns—Terri Ackerman**

Ms. Ackerman reported that she and Mr. Carmody had attended a webinar where other Massachusetts towns reported on their processes for deciding how to allocate ARPA funds. The Webinar emphasized accomplishing multiple objectives and working across silos. Bottom line is whether the spending will improve the quality of life, particularly for vulnerable populations.

**Ideas From Interim Town Manager & Senior Management Team—  
Kerry A. Lafleur, Interim Town Manager; Ideas from Union(s)**

Ms. Lafleur reported on Senior Management Team discussions for 5 of the 8 eligible ARPA categories. The Town is still expending funds related to the pandemic (testing, vaccine clinics, overtime), but we expect FEMA and MEMA to cover these expenses. Ms. Hodges added that the Town has experienced a recent spike in demand for expenditures in mental health, substance abuse, and utility bill assistance. Ms. Lafleur has earmarked \$400,000 so far in “Lost Revenue”, based on the revenue lost from the parking meter program. She advocated for Premium Pay for employees who faced the greatest health risk because of their service during the pandemic. Some area towns have awarded \$1,000 to \$5,000 for each public service employee. In the Economic Recovery category, Ms. Lafleur recommended aid to businesses and aid to affordable housing, specifically the Assabet River Bluff project and the municipal affordable housing trust.

Ms. Lafleur then introduced a number of possible capital items that could be funded via ARPA. Marcia Rasmussen, DPLM Director discussed \$110,000 for the Assabet Pedestrian River Bridge, a Cross-Town Connect vehicle, a transportation planner, and expanded sewer access. Alan Cathcart, Director of Public Works, recommended \$537,000 for pedestrian and bike improvements (out of a total need of \$34 million!) and \$310,000 for parking lot improvements, and funds for stormwater improvements. Ms. Hodges discussed \$345,000 for the Beede Center roof, expanded broadband access, and better cell service.

Detective Michael Bordenca spoke in favor of Premium Pay for those who took on additional risk during Covid. During the crisis, public safety responded to extra mental health crises, vaccination clinics, delivered meals and medicine. He explained how police officers risked their lives for the community every day: 28 of the 32 Concord officers contracted Covid, some more than once. Some brought the illness home to their families. The situation created more vacant shifts, family and childcare stress. Premium Pay would be a recognition to the officers for their courage and sacrifice.

Chair Ackerman then listed the ARPA ideas heard so far, totaling \$2.77million so far. These will need to be sorted by operating, capital, enterprise funds, etc. Karlen Reed added Low Income Broadband to the list.

**Ideas from Town Committees**

Nick Pappas, Chair of the Transportation Advisory Committee, reminded everyone of the high priority transportation needs stated in Envision Concord. Top priority is a Transportation Planner,

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creating a central transportation function in town government. He also recommended a consolidated Ride Service. Kathleen Fasser, member of the TAC and a professional landscape architect, highlighted the need for Complete Streets program.

Keith Bergman, Chair of the Concord Municipal Affordable Housing Trust, requested \$500,000 for the trust for coming year. In the past 3 years, \$500,000 from Free Cash has been allocated for this purpose, but Free Cash may be unavailable for this purpose this year.

Carol Wilson of the Concord Business Partnership, discussed the goal of strengthening the bond between the Town and local businesses. She stated that it is difficult to start and maintain a business, yet businesses are the heart of the community. The permitting process can be arduous in Concord and many decide to start their business elsewhere. The CBP recommends an ombudsman to assist with this process.

Mark Howell, Chair of the Fiber Broadband Task Force, described the inequitable access of the current broadband infrastructure. Some low income and business areas are underserved, which is a specific qualification for ARPA funds. Also, during Covid, people have become more dependent on broadband.

### **Ideas and Questions from Select Board**

Ms. Bates thanked all the committees for their ideas and asked for a more detailed breakout on the spreadsheet. Ms. Ackerman agreed.

Mr. Johnson stated that he supports many of the worthwhile ideas discussed tonight. However, he advocated for evaluating these ideas in the context of the entire budget and capital process, rather than in isolation. We will have \$1.4 million per year in ARPA funds over the next 4 years.

Ms. Escobedo reminded that we have not recently given the Non-Union employees a cost-of-living raise. She stated that there may be employees, besides Public Safety employees, who deserve Premium Pay. She emphasized the need for affordable housing funds and employee training.

### **Ideas from the Public; Q & A**

Dorie Kehoe suggested that some funds be put aside for a rainy day. Ms. Ackerman clarified that we are not planning to spend it all this year and that rainy day funding is prohibited under ARPA. However, Mr. Johnson explained how to indirectly contribute to a rainy-day fund via the “lost revenue” option and the budget process.

Tanya Gailus recommended ARPA funding for senior services and disabled people, and cross-town connect.

Diane Proctor commended the public safety personnel and all the committees for their thoughtful ideas. She recommended bus service to Newbury Court.

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Mary Hartman stated that we likely have far more in requests than the \$5.6 million we are receiving. We should prioritize based on equity, on the ability to achieve multiple goals, and the investment potential.

Chris Reynolds, Chair of Fin Com but speaking for herself, reminded everyone that budget cuts were needed in the past few years. We should now go back and try to restore some of those services. Also, any type of funding for the large Middle School project would be welcome.

Kate Yoder, Chair of the West Concord Junction Cultural District advocated for support of the Arts in West Concord.

Ms. Ackerman summarized the list of ideas presented tonight. (See list at the end of these minutes).

Ms. Fasser inquired about behavioral health support at the schools and whether ARPA funds could be utilized.

Lois Suarez commended the Fire Department for their extraordinary service during the pandemic. Ms. Ackerman clarified that Premium Pay for public safety employees includes the Fire Department. Stephan Bader inquired whether Public Health employees are included. Ms. Lafleur confirmed and added that some Public Works employees may also be included.

**Next Steps**

Ms. Lafleur inquired whether the Select Board has heard anything tonight that is definitely off the table. She suggested a possible citizen survey. Ms. Ackerman suggested that the list needs to be categorized by salary/expenses; operating/capital and dollar estimates be included.

Ms. Bates encouraged the public to add to the list in coming days. Ms. Ackerman asked that the list be posted online. Ms. Escobedo requested that all committees be asked if they wish to add to the list; Ms. Ackerman agreed to do so.

Ms. Escobedo and Ms. Gailus advocated more funding for senior services.

Ms. Ackerman thanked Ms. Lafleur, the Senior Management Team, and all the Committees who participated in tonight's meeting, for their energy and commitment to the Town.

**Public Comment**

Diane Proctor read a statement from the League of Women Voters concerning the upcoming Town election.

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**Adjourn**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was UNANIMOUSLY  
**VOTED:** to adjourn.

**Meeting Materials:** <https://concordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/34529/January-31-2022-final-packet-v2>

**Minuteman Media Network Coverage:** <https://youtu.be/TeervOSLxLk>

**List of ARPA ideas/projects suggested at Jan 31, 2022 Select Board meeting**

- 75 Mental Health/Subst Abuse
- 400 Lost Rev-Parking
- 500 Assasbet Bluff
- 500 Housing Trust
  - Add'l Afford. Housing projects
  - Premium Pay
  - Dir of Bus Devel
- 110 Assabet River Bridge
- 537 Ped & Bike Improvements
- 310 Pkg Lot Rehab
- 345 Beede Roof
  - BUSES: Cross Town Connect, Microtransit, 1st/Last Mile
  - Transp Planner
  - Complete Streets Design Phase
  - Seed Money to expand Broadband
  - Broadband Access

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Broadband for Low Income  
Expand Cell service  
Expand sewer treatment capacity  
Salary Catch Up for Non Union  
Salary Catchup for Special Positions  
Middle School  
Rainy Day Fund (indirectly)  
Sr Citizens  
Services for the Disabled  
Restore Services/ salaries cut during Covid  
School-Behavioral Health/Mental Health  
Cultural/Arts

2,777      TOTAL