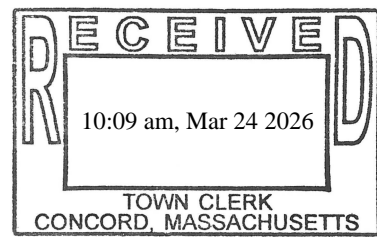


**Town of Concord
Select Board Meeting
Meeting Minutes
February 25, 2026**



Approved 03/23/26

Pursuant to notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, the Concord Select Board convened in person on Monday, February 25, 2026 at 5:00 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.

Executive Session

Upon a motion duly made by Ms. Rovelli and seconded it was UNANIMOUSLY **voted** to enter Executive Session at 5:03 PM under M.G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation; Archstone v HDC/ TOC (651 Lowell Road) and Hannon et al v MIG Corp/ TOC/ CMLP (1175 Elm Street), if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigation position of the body.

Mr. Boehm – Aye
Ms. Hartman – Aye
Mr. Howell – Aye
Mr. McKennitt – Aye
Ms. Rovelli – Aye

The Select Board returned to open session at 6:10 PM. All Select Board members were present.

Public Comment

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Tanya Gailus of 62 Prescott Rd. raised concerns regarding the lack of specificity included in the Land Use Working Group agendas and shared concerns that draft modifications may have been made by the Public Works Subcommittee outside of a posted meeting. Ms. Gailus also expressed concern about the procedure taken during the writing of the Select Board Proclamation *Affirming the Town's of Concord's Commitment to Opposing Antisemitism, Adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism, and Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Community*. Ms. Gailus would have preferred it if the Select Board had scheduled more discussion regarding the IHRA definition of antisemitism, noting that some documents (like the proclamation draft) were circulated among board members without being simultaneously posted for the public. She also expressed a desire for more discussion on the IHRA definition of antisemitism.

Ece Turnator of 168 Cambridge Turnpike expressed opposition to the Select Board's recent decision to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism and stated that the Select Board ignored the concerns of experts and residents. Ms. Turnator stated that there was an anonymous complaint made to the Concord Police Department labeling the documentary *No Other Land* as "one side and antisemitic" which resulted in the Library Director ordering a police detail for the screening of the film at the Fowler Library. Ms. Turnator stated that the screening of the film was nearly cancelled due to inflated claims of antisemitism.

Daniel Stapleton of 20 Conant St. stated that his comment comes following a letter that he submitted to the Select Board earlier in the week. Mr. Stapleton requested that the Select Board delay the bidding process for a cell tower at Rideout Park until due diligence studies are completed.

Mahreen Hoda of Carlisle criticized the Select Board's adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism, arguing that state level recommendations were misrepresented. Ms. Hoda also expressed concerns over suppression, citing letters from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and other experts. Ms. Hoda stated that IHRA examples are frequently weaponized to silence critics of Israel's policies and chill constitutionally protected speech. Ms. Hoda requested that the board hold an evidence based discussion to mitigate the harm caused by the proclamation.

Aris, a Concord Public Schools student, expressed anger in response to the Select Board's adoption of the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism. Aris stated that the 15- minute public comment period allotted during previous meetings was insufficient for the board to make an informed decision on the matter. Aris noted that there has been an uptick in anti-ICE signs around town that use quotes from Anne Frank and he questioned whether the board planned to condemn the signs as antisemitic under the newly adopted framework.

Cynthia Katz of 20 Conant St. praised the Select Board for the transparent and inclusive process used to address wireless issues in Concord Center, which included surveys and listening sessions. However, she argued that West Concord has not received the same level of transparency or due diligence. She criticized the rush to issue a request for proposals (RFP) for a cell tower at Rideout Park, asserting that there is no documented service problem or public urgency for a tower at that location

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Ms. Katz highlighted that Rideout Park is a beloved and well-used playground, and she requested that the board slow down the process and conduct a thorough analysis of alternative sites, such as the West Concord Fire Station.

Ruth Bryant of 21 Conant Street opposed the Rideout Park cell tower proposal due to health concerns and its proximity- less than 200 ft., to a playground. She argued the equipment would diminish limited recreational space and urged the board to consider alternative sites.

Consent Agenda

- a. Minutes for Approval: January 27, 2026, February 2, 2026
- b. Town Account Warrants: February 2, 2026, February 12, 2026, February 17, 2026, February 18, 2026
- c. One Day Liquor Licenses:
 - i. Wine & Malts Beverages only for Grace Bellavance for OARS for an Art Exhibit and Speaker Talk at Concord Art 37-37.5 Lexington Rd. on March 14, 2026 from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM
- d. 2026 Tour Guide License for Gayle Potter of 332 Russell St., Carlisle
- e. Select Board Nominations:
 - i. Laurie O'Neill of 4 Chestnut St. to the Concord Cultural Council for a term to expire May 31, 2029.
 - ii. Jack Megan of 106 Southfield Rd. to the Concord Cultural Council for a term to expire May 31, 2029.

Upon a motion duly made by Ms. Rovelli and seconded, it was UNANIMOUSLY **voted:** to approve the Consent Agenda without the removal of the January 27, 2026 meeting minutes.

Mr. McKennitt provided copies of written edits to the January 27, 2026 meeting minutes to each of the Select Board members. These edits will be reviewed by the Select Board and the January 27, 2026 minutes will be presented at the next Select Board meeting.

Select Board Appointments

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Upon a motion duly made by Ms. Rovelli and seconded, it was UNANIMOUSLY **voted:** to approve the re-appointment of Sue LaChance of 18 Studley Court to the West Concord Cultural District Committee for a term to expire on May 31, 2029 and the re-appointment of Susan Beck of 190 Prairie St. to the West Concord Cultural District Committee with a term to expire on May 31, 2029.

Chair's Report

Chair Howell noted possible community confusion regarding the board's recent proclamation on antisemitism and proposed scheduling a future meeting to clarify whether the town has formally "adopted" the IHRA definition or is merely using it as a reference tool. Chair Howell reported that the board received alleged open meeting law violation complaints related to the development of the January 27th proclamation and outlined a timeline for reviewing these complaints in open session and seeking legal guidance, tentatively scheduling a review for March 10th. Chair Howell shared an invitation from the Secretary of the Commonwealth for a March 11th event celebrating the 250th anniversary of the evacuation of Boston. He invited other board members to attend as he is unavailable.

Town Manager's Report

Ms. Lafleur presented the February monthly projects report, highlighting that the town is currently tracking approximately 50 projects across nine departments. She noted that many initiatives are successfully transitioning from the planning and design phases into execution, testing, and closeout. Key highlights from the report include- Project Spotlight: The Baker Avenue Culvert- the road repair is essentially complete, with traffic controls removed and sidewalk restoration remaining for the spring. Infrastructure; Utilities: The Light Plant has completed system-wide installation of advanced metering and is preparing for the April activation of time-of-day rates. Additionally, wastewater capacity planning and coordination with MCI are progressing to support long-term capital decisions; Public Safety: The Fire Department is continuing its transition to Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance service, with a target launch date of July 2026 meanwhile, the police department is moving forward with upgrades to its records management systems; Technology and Planning: Several long-term initiatives are underway, including cybersecurity enhancements, the Climate Action and Resilience Plan update, and the Re-imagine MCI Concord master planning initiative. Ms. Lafleur emphasized that the work for the remainder of fiscal year 2026 is being strictly aligned with the fiscal year 2027 capital plan, which is currently moving toward public hearings. She concluded by attributing the steady progress and the town's ability to maintain

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services during a difficult winter to disciplined execution and strong cross-departmental coordination.

The Town Manager's Monthly Project Report which can be found [HERE](#).

Questions and comments were as follows:

Gratitude was expressed by Chair Howell to the town staff for their work during the snowstorms, citing that there were no power outages. Suggestions were made for further formatting that could be made to the Town Manager's Project Report. Ms. Zammuto shared that there was one analysis of West Concord cell coverage that has been completed and the topic will be on a future agenda. Ms. Lafleur shared that there is a capital project that has been approved for a feasibility study to look at the potential expansion of the Harvey Wheeler kitchen. Ms. Hartman requested that Ms. Lafleur keep in mind future building use plans when making capital investments. Mr. McKennitt stated that the school district applied for a Green School Works grant to assist in funding the CMS solar project and shared with residents that the electric bill for the month of April, to be received in May, will have the time of day rates on it. Ms. Boehm stated that the Comprehensive Transportation Study will be presented to the Select Board in the next couple months.

Presentation and Vote: Public Art Proposal – Sidewalk Decals (“Art Loop”)

Presenter: Anne-Catherine Mauk and Sue LaChance, Chair of the West Concord Cultural Committee

Ms. Mauk provided the presentation stating that the decals were received positively last year by businesses and the community. The details of the project are consistent with Upon a motion duly made by Ms. Rovelli and seconded, it was **UNANIMOUSLY voted:** to approve the Public Art Proposal – Sidewalk Decals (“Art Loop”) as presented.

Presentation: Review of Local Initiative Program (LIP) Process for Affordable Housing and NOVO 40b.

Liz Rust, Co-director, Regional Housing Services Office reviewed the memo *RE: Review of LIP Process for Affordable Housing and NOVO*.

Questions and comments yielded the following information:

Ms. Rust stated that rent increases for affordable units, which are limited by the regulatory agreement and have been successfully negotiated in the past when income limits have increased by a large percentage, would be approved through the Planning Department by the same process that is utilized currently. Ms. Rust stated that the regulatory process for future LIP projects would allow the town to review and approve before the next approval at the state level and that MA Housing 40B is only used for towns that have less than 10% of their housing units designated as affordable on the

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Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). The monitoring fee is the responsibility of the town under the LIP process. Though, in this case, it is proposed that the developer pay this fee annually to the town. The town would benefit by allowing the NOVO developer to change the financing method because it will result in housing units being built as soon as possible, and the affordable units will remain affordable in perpetuity. Ms. Hartman suggested that these units would be needed following the 2030 census to keep the number of affordable housing units on the SHI above the 10% threshold. Ms. Rust stated that in comparison to the MA Housing option, the monthly rent for the two-bedroom units will stay the same while under LIP the 1-bedroom is slightly higher, and that all rents are regulated under 40B requirements.

Budget Update: Free Cash, FY '27 Final Recommendations (Joint Accounts)

Jennifer Barrett, Chief Financial Officer presented the slide deck *Fiscal Year 2027 Town Government Operating Budget*.

Questions and comments yielded the following information:

Chair Howell stated that the student enrollment shift at Concord Carlisle High School significantly worked against the Town of Carlisle this year. Mr. McKennitt challenged the assertion that the projected increase to the median property tax bill would be in the range of \$1700.00 per year, while Ms. Barrett replied that the rate set will depend on local revenues, state aid and other revenues. Ms. Lafleur and the finance team will review the calculations. Ms. Barrett stated that it is too early to refinance the Concord Middle School debt, however the finance team is meeting with an advisor to evaluate if other debts can be refinanced.

Presentation: Land Use Working Group – Preliminary Recommendations

Sven Weber, Co-chair, Land Use Working Group shared and reviewed the presentation *Land Use Working Group Select Board Presentation* February 23, 2026. Judith Long, Co-chair, Land Use Working Group, attended via Zoom and was available for questions.

Questions and comments yielded the following information:

Chair Howell emphasized that it is not optional to replace or make significant improvements to the Department of Public Works (DPW) and Public Safety Facility as they do not meet current needs. Additionally, Chair Howell added that the Ripley School is a failing building. Ms. Rovelli expressed appreciation for the amount of and quality of the work of the Land Use Working Group. Chair Howell stated that the

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document is planning information only, representing possible directions and that no decisions have been made. Mr. Weber added that the plan is a phased one that will not be done all at once and that abutters to the properties prefer non-industrial use. Mr. Boehm expressed the importance of capital planning and Ms. Hartman added that it is important for the Select Board to educate the residents about the conditions of the public works and public safety buildings. Ms. Hartman shared that the Town may benefit from use of consulting services to build a roadmap for community outreach on the topic. Mr. Weber stated that municipal consolidation would free up currently held properties, which could then be sold to generate a cash flow that could be used for municipal property investments and upgrades.

Public comments were as follows:

Mark Gailus of 62 Prescott Rd. expressed concern about lack of public engagement, citing that the group has not met the responsibility of the charge. Mr. Gailus stated that the agendas are lacking sufficient detail. Mr. Gailus shared information regarding a letter from the Agricultural Committee to the Land Use Working Group regarding environmentally rich areas and habitats which are cited as under consideration for development. Mr. Gailus states that the public has the right to be informed in meeting agenda which specific properties are at risk. Mr. Gailus noted that there are two Select Board members that are also members of the Land Use Working Group who are charged with advising the Select Board and questioned whether this would allow for appropriate layers of review and judgment. Lastly, Mr. Gailus stated that selling town property creates one time income but does not consider what the town will need in reserve for future use.

Mr. Weber, Ms. Hartman, Chair Howell and Mr. Boehm expressed that public engagement opportunities will increase now that the Land Use Working Group report is available.

Stephan Bader of 7 River St. asked why the MCI Concord parcel was ruled out as a future location for public safety and why the utilization of Concord center office buildings was not being considered, citing that a Concord center location could be convenient for residents. In response, Mr. Weber stated that the future rotary reconstruction and reconfiguration are of great concern to public safety and that the current West Concord location is considered well situated. Mr. Weber also stated that resident convenience and accessibility to municipal office space will be considered.

Jennifer Salt of 123 Peter Spring Rd. lives behind the 509 Bedford St. property that is being discussed. Ms. Salt stated that the property is useable for agriculture, is home to

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endangered species and is also the location of the Reformatory Branch Trail. Ms. Salt stated that there is a responsibility to preserve the area for those who wish to visit and that it is related to the Robbins House family, the Hutchin's family, Native American history and revolutionary reenactment. Ms. Salt stated that often residents are presented with large packages at Town Meeting and are unaware of smaller items that are contained within proposals. Ms. Salt requested the proposed location of new facilities be a separate item when it comes time to vote.

Tanya Gailus of 62 Prescott Rd. stated that the work of the Land Use Working Group (LUWG) was "predetermined work" and should not have occurred without initial public input and awareness of what was being discussed and that the agendas for the LUWG are not specific enough to be compliant with Open Meeting Law. Ms. Gailus stated that in public matters the public is the stakeholder, not individual committees. Ms. Gailus noted decisions that have been made regarding Warner's Pond, that took neighborhood opinion into account.

**Status Update: MCI Master Plan Procurement, Municipal Facilities Planning
Article #12**

Ms. Zammuto shared and reviewed the slide deck *Municipal Facilities Master Plan and Road Map 2026 Town Meeting Request*. Ms. Zammuto added that the four locations that are being studied for yield analysis are the Peabody School, Ripley School, Keyes Road Campus, and the Church St. Campus.

Questions and comments yielded the following information:

Mr. McKennitt noted that municipal planning goals should be inclusive of not only housing goals but financial, business and tax revenue goals and stated that some properties may lend themselves to meeting financial goals as they are in commercial districts. Chair Howell expressed the importance of carefully considering future town property needs prior to disposing of property, noting that two of the sites being discussed are former elementary school sites. Chair Howell, Mr. Boehm and Ms. Hartman discussed the advantage that zoning considerations can have in terms of optimizing the value and future use of parcels. Ms. Zammuto stated that the presentation was created in preparation for the March 10th Finance Committee hearing, where Chair Howell will be the presenter for the Select Board on Article #12. Ms. Hartman recommended that Ms. Zammuto include a sense of urgency and momentum in the tone of the presentation so that the community knows the importance of this step in the process of municipal planning. Additionally, Ms. Hartman recommended editing the 10–20-year roadmap

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timeline to a shorter timeline while Chair Howell pointed out the complexity of acquiring the parcels needed for municipal improvements. Ms. Zammuto stated that at last years Annual Town Meeting, funds were appropriated for MCI-Concord planning and that those funds are currently being utilized for the master plan and that this is an additional ask to be used for general planning across many sites. Mr. McKennitt and Mr. Howell both said that it is important for the residents to know that funds are needed for both planning for MCI Concord and for general municipal facilities planning as the two are a comingled solution to the large problem. Chair Howell and Mr. Boehm expressed that the money appropriated for planning should be spent aggressively over the next 12 months . Chair Howell stated that the planning that will be done will put the town in the best position to acquire an office building if an opportunity presents itself. Ms. Lafleur added that there are limited opportunities to bring items before the community for a vote and that appropriation of funds and acquisition of real estate are town meeting actions. Ms. Lafleur stated that there will be continued discussion on Article #12 next week.

Ms. Sandoval provided an update on the master planning for MCI Concord, stating that the request for proposals (RFP) submissions were due on February 19 and that two proposals have been received. Ms. Sandoval stated that the RFP review board has been meeting and reviewing the proposals and hopes to select a preferred consultant in the next couple of weeks. The project will kick off in early April. Chair Howell added that this project will propose a zoning amendment that would be presented at Town Meeting and a traffic circulation proposal that is amenable to the Town of Concord and the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM.) The Select Board will continue the discussion on this topic at the March 16 meeting.

Liaison Reports

Ms. Rovelli shared that she is planning a volunteer recruitment open house for board and committee vacancies. More information will follow. Ms. Rovelli stated that there is a presentation by the Tax Relief Evaluation Task Force scheduled for April 13. Mr. Boehm shared that the Bias and Hate Incident Reporting Working Group held a focus group that was open to the public and was advertised in multiple locations. There is a second focus group being held this Sunday. Mr. Boehm requested an extension to May 15 for the Bias and Hate Incident Reporting Working Group report to be completed. This will be placed on the Consent Agenda for the next meeting. Mr. Boehm noted the information regarding the February 17th Transportation Advisory Committee meeting and the Warner's Pond Management Committee meetings can be found in his Liaison report.

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Upon a motion duly made by Ms. Hartman and seconded, it was UNANIMOUSLY **voted:**
to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 PM.

[Meeting Packet](#)

[Meeting Recording](#)