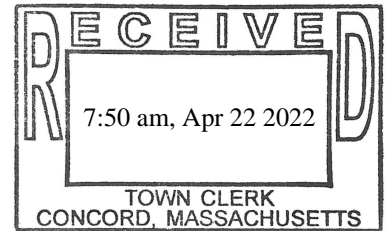


Concord COA Board Meeting minutes  
March 15, 2022



The Board Meeting took place using Zoom and was called to order at 4:36 p.m.

The meeting was recorded.

**Attendance:**

Kristin Nelson	present	Susan Bates	present
Teri Stokes	present	Ginger Quarles	present
Carol Ann Hannan (c)	present	Michael Rudd	present

Because a quorum was not present, the minutes will be approved at the board's next meeting. A guest, Karlen Reed joined the meeting.

**Director's Report: Ginger Quarles**

Ginger reported on the start-up activities that are in place.

- As of three weeks ago, masks are optional for individuals who can prove they are fully vaccinated and boosted. This is the same policy that as was in place last August and has been well received. Some individuals still wear a mask and so the COA makes an effort to let folks know that this too is ok.
- The coffee bar started up yesterday.
- They are planning to restart Wednesday lunches. There will be two in April and two in May. They will start small, at half capacity. There will be 12 tables but each will be limited to 4 people. They will still offer the drive-through lunch if there is enough interest on the alternate weeks. If this goes well, they will move to weekly in June.
- They are planning their first in-person event which will be the annual tea party at the end of April. Again, to limit the number of people in the room at once, they will have two seatings: one at 1 pm and 3 pm.
- Trips will be restarted in June, assuming COVID numbers stay as they are or drop further.
- They have recruited enough seniors for the pen pal program. First letters will be arriving this week from the students.
- Teri and Kristin took the UCLA memory training program and can now assist the COA staff as trainers in the 4-week program. There is one training scheduled and there are already 15 people on the list for next training which will be in May.
- The IT department is deploying laptops to each COA staff member to assist with at-home work (for COVID, snow day or other reasons). Laptops will have VPN access which provides easy access to documents from home. The laptops will also allow staff to call clients through their computer, instead of having to use their cell phone, which will protect their privacy.
- Patient navigator materials have been sent out to doctor's offices to promote the program. There will be another training of volunteers soon which will mean a total of 9 will have been trained. If you know anyone who would like to be trained as a patient navigator, please get in touch with Ginger.
- Ginger's invitation to speak at the Disability Committee meeting was again postponed. She will report back after it happens.

- Ginger noted that Minuteman needs volunteers to deliver meals on wheels. If you know anyone who might be interested in volunteering, please pass along the information.
- There was a discussion about the email sent to some COA Board members from Kaari regarding Conflict of Interest. Ginger will forward the email to everyone to make sure that they can comply as necessary. Carol Ann noted that perhaps some did not receive the email because they are not due for the training again.
- There has been a request for improved signage at the Harvey Wheeler Center to indicate the presence of the building, that the COA is within it, and which other town offices are within it. There is a bit of a challenge with signage because it is in the historic district but Ginger said staff are working on this. She mentioned that it might be helpful at some point if the COA board wrote a letter to the Historic Commission explaining the importance of good signage.

***Transportation meeting:***

There was a discussion about the transportation meeting that was held and attended by several members of the COA Board. There are many worthy projects discussed at the meeting but one thing that became clear is that, without adding any new services, there is significant money already being spent on the town's transportation and infrastructure needs. The town already spends \$34M over five years just to maintain the current projects so it may be hard to add new ones (i.e., improved sidewalks, bike paths, connectivity to other towns, etc).

It was suggested that perhaps the town could repurpose town vehicles in their off-hours (for example, using the COA or school buses for other needs when they are not in use). While this may seem like a smart use of resources, there are problems with this: For example, one of the COA vans is restricted in its use and can only be used for seniors. In addition, this would lead to considerable wear and tear, and as a result, a van purchased for one department would wear out much sooner than planned if it were shared with another program. The Select Board will consider the options discussed and will try to be shovel ready for some projects in case infrastructure money or grants become available.

There was also discussion of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail by the Club Car Café. When the Route 2 bridge of the trail is fully opened, there may be a considerable increase in traffic on the trail in general and there is a concern for how this will play out at Junction Park (the Club Car Café area) which is already challenged by the flow, particularly for pedestrians and people with mobility issues. The Select Board has asked the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail to address the concerns.

**Liaison Reports:**

***Susan:***

There will be a Patriots' Day parade this year on Monday April 18, with a dawn salute on the 19<sup>th</sup>. The week before, there will be exercises at Meriam's Corner. All the information will be listed on the town's website. The parade will not be as extensive as usual because the announcement has come quite late and it may be hard for people to prepare in time, but it should still have a decent number of participants.

Town meeting will be held on Sunday, May 1 in the CCHS gym (and auditorium and café if necessary). The meeting will continue into Monday and Tuesday if necessary.

Ginger suggested that the COA Board may be able to begin to meet in person. This will be discussed at next month's meeting.

***COA Board Vacancies:***

Membership for the COA will soon be a problem as we may be losing 4 members this year which will result in a lack of a quorum. Susan noted that 5 committees have been added to Concord which is straining membership. Because of the increased need for volunteers, the town has decided that it is okay to serve on more than one committee as long as they do not conflict. When seeking new COA board members, Susan always emphasizes that, unlike some of the other boards, the COA board is not a big lift.

Karlen Reed, a visitor, joined the meeting and noted that she is interested in joining the COA board but wondered if there was a conflict given her role with PEG access. It was suggested that this would not be a conflict, but Carol Ann and Karlen will speak separately.

***ARPA funding:***

Similar to last month, Susan gave a description about the ARPA program and the town's interest in recommendations for use of upcoming funding. Carol Ann reviewed the recommendations that were discussed last month (that were included in the minutes) and said that she has submitted them to Teri as was suggested last month.

***Comments from guests:***

Karlen commented that she watches several town meetings and appreciates the work of the COA Board and, in particular, the work and activities of the COA which, she noted, affect a sizeable part of town.

***Concord after 60***

With their upcoming meeting focussed on 'Downsizing', Teri noted that the COA gift shop may see an increase in donations.

Motion to adjourn. The motion to adjourn was made by Teri. Michael seconded. The motion was approved by a roll call vote.

Kristin Nelson: Yes

Carol Ann Hannan: Yes

Teri Stokes: Yes

Michael Rudd: Yes

Meeting was adjourned at 5:30

## **LIAISON REPORTS FOR MARCH 2022 COA BOARD MEETING**

### **Minuteman Senior Services. (Margaret Hoag)**

The Board met on March 2, 2022. Minuteman Senior Services (MSS) has decided to institute a vaccination/testing requirement for employees and volunteers. We have also decided to reduce our meetings from 2 hours to 90 minutes (or at least try to keep them shorter) based on Board feedback. We still have openings for members in Boxborough, Burlington, Harvard, Stow, Wilmington, and Woburn.

We heard a report from Peg Sullivan, Director of Client Services. Her areas include the State Home Care program, Protective Services, Nursing/Clinical Assessment & Eligibility, Supportive Housing (Drake Village in Arlington), SCO/One Care and Contracts Management. Covid has had a very large impact on this area of MSS.

The Executor Director Report focused on public health issues. MSS is requiring masks at this time in all communities and in the offices. Employees are being phased into a return to the office. Will provide test kits for home care workers in our area as part of a program by the Department of Public Health. As part of the Needs Assessment, MSS discovered that 61% of our consumers feel isolated. We are trying to provide more friendly visitors, robotic pets, and Claris Companion. The robotic pets have been very well received. The Claris Companion technology is a tablet designed by seniors for seniors. The goal is to help seniors with technology. The tablets are pre-set for apps and websites of interest to the particular senior owner. The access is with one touch. Piloting it with 10 consumers.

MSS and other ASAPS to launch a public service campaign promoting booster shots. Focus is currently on Woburn, Burlington, Wilmington, Harvard and Lincoln which have the lowest booster rates. [www.getboostedboston.org](http://www.getboostedboston.org).

The meals on wheels program celebrates its 50th anniversary! Volunteer drivers are needed in Concord.

### **Board of Health (Patty Keane)**

After two public hearings were discussed and granted, the Board focused on Covid and specifically on mask mandates. Because of dramatically falling numbers of Covid cases and of new infections, it was ultimately decided that the mask mandate in town would be rescinded at midnight that night (February 15).

It was also mentioned that the Department of Public Health strongly recommended mask wearing for non-vaccinated people; however no mandate was applied.

Finally, for schools, (each school decides on its own regarding mask wearing), the recommendation by the Board of Health was that each school lift the mask mandate either on February 28 or March 7, depending on how the school feels regarding to what extent the upcoming school vacation might affect case numbers.

Following up on earlier discussions about “refilling returnables” at stores such as Deborah’s Natural Foods, the Board agreed to send the final draft letter to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to consider changing Massachusetts Food Code 10 CMR 590 section 3.304.17 “Refilling Returnables” for bulk dry foods.

Finally, the Board mentioned that interviews are ongoing for filling the Public Health Director position.

### **PEG Access (Carole Cushing)**

The meeting on 3/3/2022 mainly concerned their budget included in Town Meeting article 44.

Mark Pauley, Production Manager of MMN, said he was organizing playlists for COA Board meetings and events. If you type minuteman.media in the address field of your browser you will get to the MMN web site. Select YouTube Channel and then Playlists. You can watch COA board meetings from 2020 on and watch certain COA programs from 2018 on.

I asked if the Transportation committee meetings were easily available and was told that the Transportation Advisory Committee has their own Playlist at

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1TTzrWEKOOmKn38pCz3z4UePprm9Yaoj>

For those who can’t make this meeting in person or on Zoom, they should be able to view it shortly afterward on this playlist site.

### **Concord After 60. (Teri Stokes)**

February was a busy month for CA60. A major effort was put forth to create ByLaws for the CA60 group. A working group developed the first draft of ByLaws for Select Committee intensive review and editing on Feb. 19th. Extensive discussion continued at meeting on March 8th. Further edits were submitted and final vote postponed until future meeting. Non profit corporation status was not seen as a necessity at this time.

Feb. 28th monthly group meeting was a successful Zoom session in Trivial Pursuit game fashion. Tom Rarich hosted the online game. Participants want to see it repeated as a future Games Night event.

March 8th Steering Committee considering future in-person monthly meeting venue to become West Concord Union Church at 1317 Main Street, Concord.

### **Concord Housing Development Corp. (Michael Rudd)**

There has been no further progress on Christopher Heights.

### **Concord Housing Authority meeting [March 3, 2022] (Rod Riedel)**

- COA will make a presentation to CHA Residents about its services on March 24 at Peter Bulkeley Terrace.
- CHA has issued a “request for proposal” (RFP) for the development of a parcel at 365 Commonwealth Avenue, including a two bedroom affordable housing unit. The RFP is comprehensive, informative – it also includes blueprints and plot plans. Furthermore, this document provides definitive evidence of the enormous effort by CHA board and staff members to add one additional unit to the Town’s affordable housing inventory. Here is a link to the document:  
<http://www.concordha.org/documents/commAveRFP.pdf>

**Public Works Commission meeting [March 1, 2022] (Rod Riedel)**

- No news relevant to COA to report