

Concord COA Board Meeting minutes  
May 20, 2021

The Board Meeting took place using Zoom. The meeting was recorded.

Present: Patty Keane, Carole Cushing, Carol Ann Hannan (Chair), Teri Stokes, Michael Rudd, Rod Riedel, Christina Kendrick, Margaret Hoag, Ginger Quarles, Andrea Zall, and Susan Bates

Absent: Kristin Nelson

Guests: Alice Kauffman, Pamela Dritt, Andy Puchrik and Stephan Bader

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m. by a roll call vote.

Carole Cushing:	here
Michael Rudd:	here
Patty Keane:	here
Rod Riedel:	here
Carol Ann Hannan:	here

(Note: Terri and Christina arrived shortly aft the meeting was called to order)

Approval of Minutes. The minutes were approved without changes by a roll call vote.

Rod Riedel:	yes
Patty Keane:	yes
Carole Cushing:	yes
Michael Rudd:	yes
Carol Ann Hannan:	yes

Guest speaker: Alice Kauffman representing and Climate Action Advisory Board

Alice gave a brief presentation on the Climate Action Advisory Board's warrant article for Town Meeting (#31). The town of Concord has the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050. The town has developed a climate action and resiliency plan. Article 31 is one step in the process towards meeting the goals. To transition away from fossil fuels, the article requires new construction in Concord to be fossil fuel free. The technology is available and it is cheaper to build and maintain all-electric buildings. The article applies to all buildings including private homes and commercial buildings but excludes commercial kitchens and affordable housing. Backup generators would also be allowed. There are approximately 25 homes torn down per year. These could be replaced with fossil fuel free homes. The Article has two parts: to ask for a bylaw to be established and to implement it. Other towns have enacted similar plans or are in the planning stages. The legislature would have to approve by homerule petition.

Minuteman Report (Margaret Hoag)

The Ombudsman program in-person visits had been suspended for the past year. Volunteers are starting to visit the facilities again. Ombudsmen are primarily used to mediate disputes.

Friendly Connection – a new program came about because so many seniors are isolated. MSS is looking for volunteers for this program to visit, call or run errands. The program is only for towns that don't already have a visitor program and only for MSS clients.

Protective Services – Visits have continued during the pandemic but at a less frequent rate. Visits were outside when possible. Fewer reports may be due to the folks discontinuing homecare services and therefore fewer reports being made. The program is for individuals living in private homes and assisted living but not for nursing homes. There are no limits on assets to qualify for services. Issues include self-neglect (52%), abuse or neglect by another person (39%) and financial abuse (9%). MSS is required to investigate within 30 days. They bring in resources, perform legal work, referrals to COA or to the District Attorney. If a victim is competent, s/he may choose to live in an unsafe condition. People are allowed to make bad decisions.

Concord Housing Authority (Rod Riedel)

A new Executive Director, Jennifer Polito, has been hired.

The house to be built on Commonwealth Ave by Warner Pond will be all-electric. Site plan has been submitted to the NRC. It may be years before the house is built because of Gerow Park at Warners Pond. The only access to the park area is through the property. Builder must wait until trucks have finished their work on the park to avoid damage. The park will be a very nice area for West Concord.

The CHA approved an accommodation for service animals. There are no restrictions by State, Federal or Town agencies. Pets will have reasonable accommodations.

Disability Commission (Ginger Quarles)

No report. Meeting was postponed.

Concord after 60 (Teri Stokes)

Katharine Esty, author of Eightysomethings: A Practical Guide to Letting Go, Aging Well, and Finding Unexpected Happiness, gave a delightful presentation this month showing that life is good later in life. She or her book would be a fun program for the COA.

Concord Housing Development Corp (Michael Rudd)

No report

NMI/Starmet (Kristin Nelson)

No report

Board of Health (Patty Keane)

There will be summer camps for children this year! The Town will follow State mandates.

70% of Concord residents have been vaccinated. Homebound individuals have been well covered thanks to the COA. The Town has received a \$300K grant for shared resources.

Public Works (Rod Riedel)

Water and sewer rates are going up 10% and 2% respectively. Rate increases are due to rising treatment costs for Nagog Pond and PFAS monitoring and maintenance of distribution pipes. Currently the annual usage in Concord is 75 gallons/day/person. The State goal is 60 gallons per day. Exceeding the State's rate may cause the State to intervene.

Beavers have clogged the water inlet pipe at Nagog Pond. Public Works hopes to be back online by June.

PFAS – preliminary tests indicate the PFAS level in town water is well below the State standard. The level at the Hugh Cargill well is on the high side and will be monitored.

#### PEG Access (Carole Cushing)

The committee is looking for new members. A three day guide is available on the station during a break in programming. The Minuteman Network has an extensive You Tube library and playlists available. The recent High School production has been nominated for an Emmy.

The Boston Globe and the MIT Age Lab have been presenting articles titled “The Longevity Lab”. The objective is to make Boston a hub or center for new technology and ideas for its aging population.

#### Transportation

No report.

#### Director’s Report (Ginger Quarles)

FY22 Budget highlights – The hours for the Social Services Supervisor will be increased to 36 per week. All clinical staff (nurse and outreach coordinators) will report to the Social Services Supervisor. Ginger is working to increase the salaries of the outreach staff whose salaries are partially funded by grants.

Ginger attended a Concord Friends of the Aging meeting this month and provided information on services provided by the COA. There is potential for the Friends to fund some of the needs of seniors that Ginger identified.

The COA will have a soft opening on June 7. Planning two programs for the morning and two for the afternoon to start. A letter (attached) will be printed in the June newsletter outlining plans and requirements. Events will be in-person, virtual and drive-by.

Greater flexibility will be extended to employees with longer days on Monday through Thursday and a shorter day on Friday with programs ending at 2:30. It was suggested to use a trial period for the new schedule.

#### Finance Committee (Andrea Zall)

The Town financial report has been finalized and will be available for Town Meeting.

#### Select Board Report (Susan Bates)

Town Meeting will be held on June 13 at 1:00 p.m. on the Doug White Fields at the High School. Looking forward to good turn out.

#### Chair Report

There are three vacancies on the COA Board. The Select Board chair has requested the positions be filled before Town Meeting, if possible. Other Town Boards and Committees are looking for new members as well. Please pass this information on to anyone who might be interested in serving the Town.

Next month we will elect a new chair and a new secretary for the Board as these positions rotate annually.

Other Business

Concord Middle School Building Project and tax consequences (Margaret Hoag and Michael Rudd)  
The Middle School Building Committee has been planning the proposal for a new school. Meetings have been on Zoom which many seniors are not familiar/comfortable with. It is important to educate all members of the community regarding the plans for the new Middle School as it will have a significant impact on property taxes. The project has grown from 115,000 sq. ft. building at a cost of \$87M to 150,000 sq. ft. building at a cost of \$108M. State funding for the project is unlikely. Without State funding, there are few fiscal restraints.

The question is not whether to rebuild, but rather, how big? The tax burden is estimated to increase by \$1,000-\$1,2000 per year for the next 20 to 30 years.

It is important to learn about the project. The Middle School Building Committee meets every other Thursday at 7:30 am. The meetings are open to the public. The agenda and Zoom link are available on the Town website. Also, the meetings are recorded and available for viewing on the Town website.

There will be a special Town Meeting in September to vote on the proposal. The vote will be yes or no and must have a 2/3 majority to pass.

Motion to adjourn at 6:10 by Terri Stokes.

Carole	yes
Michael	yes
Christina	yes
Rod	yes
Carol Ann	yes