

SELECT BOARD



Select Board Members from top left to bottom right: Terri Ackerman, Clerk Susan Bates, Matthew Johnson, Jane Hotchkiss, and Chair Linda Escobedo.

Linda Escobedo
Susan Bates
Jane Hotchkiss
Matthew Johnson
Terri Ackerman

Manager reports to and is annually evaluated by the Board.

Select Board Agenda and Goals

The Concord Select Board annually affirms its values and guiding principles to align its goals and objectives for improving government as it interacts with the Town Manager, committees, task forces, citizens and other units of government. In so doing, the Board aims to lead and establish strategic priorities, to provide support, guidance and encouragement where appropriate and to be collaborative, open and inclusive at all times.

Governance: Effective, Responsive and Transparent Governance

Public Health and Safety: Exemplary of Best Practices for the Safety of All

Financial Stability: Fiscal Responsibility and Financial Stability/Sustainability

Infrastructure: Sufficient and Sustainable, Well-maintained and reliable

Quality of Life: High Level Maintenance of Town Services for Town Citizens

Balance and Equity: Balance and Equity among divergent individual, neighborhood and town-wide interests.

Diversity: Conscious Decision Making to Support Economic and Social Diversity and Inclusion

General Business

The Select Board is the elected representative of Concord citizens. It is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of Town policy for all Town matters other than the management of the schools, for which the elected School Committee has the responsibility and those issues mandated by State laws for various Commissions. The Board appoints the Town Manager and works closely with him to set annual goals and objectives. The Board implements the decisions of Town Meeting, sponsors Town Meeting Warrant articles, and makes recommendations on Town Meeting Warrants. The Board makes appointments to Town boards, committees and task forces, acts as the authority for granting of numerous licenses, and reviews the development of the operating and capital budgets. It also represents the Town in a variety of roles with Federal, State, regional and other local government agencies, as well as being the official point of acknowledgment for the many gifts, grants, and recognitions Concord gratefully receives. The Town

Historical and Cultural Heritage: Preservation and Promotion of Historical Heritage

Agricultural and Natural Resources: Protection and Enhancement

Sustainability and Resilience: Sustainable Management of Energy Resources, Reduction of Carbon Emissions, and Regeneration of our Natural Environment

Economic Resilience: To Protect the Vitality of the Town and Businesses

Regional and State Interests: Advancement of Concord's Interest in the Region and the Commonwealth

The Board's goals and guiding principles help it maintain continuous and consistent progress while being mindful of the tax burden and expectations for Town services. Board actions are informed by the Town's long-range plan, Envision Concord: Bridge to 2030, among other important sources of information.

Communications

The Board changed its regular meetings from every other Monday at 7 p.m. to every Monday at 4 p.m. and from in person to remote meetings as a result of the pandemic. Additional meetings take place as required. To allow greater time for consideration of substantive matters, the Board employs a consent agenda for routine and non-controversial matters such as gift acceptances and special licenses. The Board strives for greater transparency on all matters of Town Policy.

Notices of Board meetings are posted with agenda items listed. Meetings are open to all interested Concord citizens and time is allotted for public comment. Copies of 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 Concord Journal (concord.wicked-local.com) and Concord Patch (patch.com/Massachusetts/concord) both regularly report on the meetings of the Board. Erin Stevens, 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.

Boards and Committees

A hallmark of Concord since its founding has been citizen participation. The Town has three elected boards: the Select Board, the School Committee and the Housing Authority. Citizens also annually elect the Town Moderator. The Town's elected officials, as well as citizen members of approximately 50 other boards, committees and commissions are all volunteers and demonstrate the extraordinary engagement town residents have with the democratic process of the Town. Volunteers indicate their interest in town committees by filling out a Green Card. Green Cards can be submitted in person at the Town Manager's Office in the Town House (when no pandemic restrictions apply) or online at the Town's website: concordma.gov/green-card. Over 270 citizens serve and annually donate hundreds of hours of personal time to benefit Concord. 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. To further engage citizens and to help ensure transparency, boards, committees and commissions hold public hearings and forums throughout the year on a variety of matters. When not constrained by pandemic conditions, the Town also hosts a number of public events and celebrations each year.

Board Membership

In September following town meeting, Linda Escobedo succeeded Mike Lawson as Chair and Susan Bates became Clerk. Matthew Johnson joined the Board for his first term having been elected in June. Jane Hotchkiss continued to serve her second term and Terri Ackerman continued in her first term. At the end of Annual Town Meeting in September, Mike Lawson concluded his second term

on the board with gratitude from Board members for his invaluable service to the town, serving as chair twice.

Notable Issues

COVID-19 appeared in February and caused a seismic shift in how Town business, and indeed all business, was conducted. The leadership of Public Safety departments, the Town Manager, the School Superintendent, the School Committee, and the Select Board developed new procedures for conducting Town business and new ways of communicating with each other and with citizens to ensure the safety of all. In March the Select Board began remote weekly meetings in compliance with State regulations which continued beyond the end of 2020. Agenda items were scheduled in response to evolving regulations, limiting public ceremonies and events, adjustments to scheduling Town Meeting and frequent updates from the Board of Health. Annual Town Meeting was held outdoors at Doug White Field on Sunday, September 13, 2020. 22 Articles were on the Consent Calendar, an additional 18 Articles were moved and 12 Articles were postponed. The Board has already adjusted the 2021 Annual Town Meeting calendar to reflect the continued pandemic.

Despite the circumstances, the Board continued to focus on the guidance of the long-range plan: Envision Concord: Bridge to 2030. Progress was made in several areas. The Transportation Advisory Committee was seated, the Junction Village Open Space Task Force is nearly complete, as is the Affordable Housing Trust Committee. A subcommittee of the Board reviewed and amended the green card process and the Board approved a Fleet Electrification Policy. The newly formed Economic Vitality Committee quickly became very active in the face of COVID and the threats posed to the local economy. The Town Manager and Chair filed special legislation for Senior Means-Tested Property Tax Exemption and for Additional Liquor Licenses following approval of these articles at Town Meeting.

The Board continued to follow legislation filed last year related to affordable housing as well as local developments related to the Gerow acquisition and White Pond improvements. Collaboration between

CHDC, Lowell Habitat for Humanity, and the Town resulted in the purchase of a Main Street property to develop into two affordable units. Junction Village/Christopher Heights ALE, an 83 unit affordable housing complex, has met most of the state and local statutory requirements and is expected to break ground in the next year.

Continuing land disputes over public access to the Estabrook Trail and challenged water rights for Nagog Pond are unfortunately still issues before the Town. The court ruled favorably in the Nagog Pond dispute but appeals are pending. The Town anticipates a trial date in June, 2021 for the Estabrook Trail issue.

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 2020: White Pond Associates, Inc. gift of \$1,692.03 to the White Pond Management Plan Gift Account; White Pond Associates, Inc. gift of \$201,690.00 to the White Pond Management Account; Concord Carousel Scholarship Fund Committee gift of \$6,649.68 to the Carousel Preschool Scholarship Fund; Middlesex Savings Bank gift of \$10,000 to the Concord Police Department; Middlesex Savings Bank gift of \$10,000 to the Concord Fire Department; Friends of the Concord Free Public Library gift of \$3,000 to the Library Staff Gift Account; David and Melissa Schoenfeld gift of a 2003 Volkswagen Jetta, valued at \$3,267.00, to the Fire Department; William & Maureen Kemeza gift of \$510.00 to the Memorial Trees Account; His Presence Christian Fellowship Inc. gift of \$1,000.00 to the Council on Aging Gift Account; Spaulding Management LLC, gift of a picnic table valued at \$898.00, to the Concord Visitor Center; Concord-Carlisle Community Chest gift of \$3,062.50 to the Volunteer Coordinator Account; Concord-Carlisle Community Chest gift of \$10,335.50 to the Outreach Worker Account; Concord-Carlisle Community Chest gift of \$4,427.00 to the Social Services Coordinator

Account; Mrs. Mariann H Goslovich gift of \$4,000.00 to the Council on Aging Account; Concord-Carlisle Youth Baseball gift of \$7,700.00 to the Ripley Baseball Field Gift Account; Concord Free Public Library gift of \$500.00 to the Library Gift Account; Milltarry Market LLC gift of \$22,392.00 to the Keyes Road Street Lights Account; The Boston Foundation gift of \$2,500.00 to the Nanae Gift Account; Middlesex School gift of \$50,000 for emergency equipment purchases; Concord-Carlisle Community Chest gift of \$3,062.50 to the Volunteer Coordinator Account; Concord-Carlisle Community Chest gift of \$10,335.50 to the Outreach Worker Account; Concord-Carlisle Community Chest gift of \$4,437.00 to the Social Services Coordinator Account; Concord-Carlisle Community Chest gift of \$7087.50 to the Community Services Coordinator Gift Account; Concord-Carlisle Community Chest gift of \$7087.50 to the Community Services Coordinator Gift Account; Eric Green and Carmin Reiss \$25,000 to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund; Mr. and Mrs. John J. Langan \$800 to the Council on Aging.

The Select Board wishes to thank Town Manager Stephen Crane, Deputy Town Manager Kate Hodges, Administrative Manager Chris Carmody, Senior Administrative Assistant Jeremy Romanul, Chief Financial Officer Kerry Lafleur, and all of the employees of the Town of Concord for their professionalism and dedication in serving the residents of Concord. 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.