

TOWN MANAGER

For the Town of Concord, the year 2021 was a year of adaptation and innovation. Town citizens, staff and government officials continued to adjust and develop new means of engagement while continuing to ensure that service levels remained high for the community at large. Early in the year, the Town began to hit its stride in managing and adapting to the 'new normal' in the wake of the COVID-19 Global Pandemic. Town staff worked tirelessly to ensure the community had access to information and resources. Through new collaborations with neighboring communities, State Agencies and local Boards of Health, Concord was able to hold several large-scale vaccination clinics. By the end of the summer, Concord boasted a 95% vaccination rate for citizens over the age of 60 and was well over the 75% mark community-wide.

Operations, which were almost entirely remote in 2020, began to re-open to the public and while no Town Department is truly thought of as non-essential, town management would be remiss if we didn't take this opportunity to publicly thank our essential workers who remained on the front lines throughout the pandemic including the Police and Fire Departments, Public Works, Municipal Light Plant, Facilities Staff, and the Concord Council on Aging/Senior Services staff. These men and women came to work each day to provide services to the community at great personal risk to themselves and their families. It is this level of work ethic and commitment that Concord has come to know – both as an employer and as a community. On behalf of the Town Manager's Office, we thank you for your service and efforts which, particularly in the year 2021, went above and beyond the call of duty for the benefit of the Town.

The year 2021 also showed us how, as a community, we can work together to support local businesses, initiatives, and groups. The Economic Vitality and Tourism Division was further developed and was charged with the duties of supporting businesses and engaging stakeholders in a manner which works to 'promote' Town tourism and

businesses to a larger and more global audience. The Town's business partnership association hosted several virtual meetings to discuss how, as a community, we may partner to assist small businesses and other non-profit organizations stay afloat, or recover, from the economic impact the pandemic triggered.

Concord officials and board members worked hard to update meeting procedures and platforms to host virtual and hybrid meetings. Over the course of the year, more than 500 meetings were hosted and recorded on the Town's Zoom platforms. Participation in many of the meetings, forums, and hearings was at an all-time high as community members found the online opportunities beneficial and a more convenient way to engage. Minuteman Media Network catalogued and uploaded thousands of hours of meeting footage to the Town's YouTube channel providing increased transparency and access to government actions, discussions, and processes. The popularity of an online meeting platform became very apparent and while nothing can replace in-person discussions and collaboration, the idea of providing multiple ways for the community to engage with town staff and officials, even after the pandemic is over, is something positive this pandemic has afforded Concord.

On May 14, 2020, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts created the CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund – Municipal Program (CvRF-MP) to provide up to approximately \$502 million in federal funds for municipalities to address unanticipated costs incurred as a result of the public health emergency caused by COVID-19. From these funds, the State allocated \$1,693,790 to the Town. As of the close-out of CvRF-MP on December 31, 2021, the Town had used \$1,522,428 for eligible purposes and had returned the remaining amount to the State.

The Town House first floor renovation project which began in 2020, was completed in August and Town Staff moved back into their new spaces in

early September. The impetus behind the renovations was two-fold – ensuring a secure and functional area for the finance team to handle cash and other confidential transactions which often contains Personal Identifying Information (PII) and the ability to distinguish public areas from private workspaces allowing staff greater ability to focus on detailed work, and large-scale projects. A formal ribbon cutting ceremony was held September 7th, 2021 and included project architects, TBA Architects, Inc. of Concord, MA and the project’s contractor, Classic Construction, Inc. of Littleton, MA.



The ribbon cutting for the newly renovated Town House included Town staff, the architects, and Concord’s Honored Citizen gathering on the front steps for short speeches and ribbon cutting.



The newly renovated first floor of the Town House.

The Towns of Acton and Concord continued to make progress in the creation and administration of both Towns’ first Regional Emergency

Communications Center (RECC). Concord signed the Regional 911 Communications District Agreement on May 27, 2021 with a goal of establishing separate and distinct responsibilities and obligations for both communities. The Town of Acton, as the lead community in the RECC, received a \$900,000 development grant from the State in June of 2021 to help support the creation of the RECC.

Soon thereafter, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued inviting project management firms to submit their credentials relative to consulting work that would assist the Towns in the implementation of any necessary technology infrastructure improvements and outline various operational procedures which may be needed for the proposed RECC to be successful. At the RECC Board of Director’s Meeting in December, three RFPs were received and reviewed. The firm, CTA Consultants, LLC was chosen. CTA, based in Lynchburg, Virginia, has been actively engaged in communications consulting for public safety for over 32 years. Their core services include providing mission critical radio system assessments and design specifications and RFP development for RECCs, and supporting vendor selection and negotiation activities associated with the initial development of regional call centers.

The end of 2021 introduced an unfortunate surge in COVID-19 positive cases. Concord worked hard to reinvigorate its public campaigns regarding masking, social distancing and the benefits of vaccinations and availability of boosters. The Concord Board of Health re-implemented its indoor mask-mandate for public spaces and the Town Administration encouraged everyone to test themselves after any known exposures, or when symptoms became apparent, to help stop the spread. As we look forward to 2022, we are encouraged and inspired by Concord’s continued resiliency and our collective commitment to working together to ensure our community remains responsive, inclusive, healthy and safe.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Information Technology department's mission is to:

1. Provide both strategic technology vision and leadership to the Town of Concord
2. Provide secure, reliable information systems and technology to support all Town entities
3. Work with all departments and enterprises to support and improve business functions through the adoption and advancement of technology

In 2021, Concord saw waves of pandemic-fueled remote work periods, and the IT Department was ready to deploy equipment and leverage resources to support employees. Previous efforts, training, and remote support allowed everyone to keep working during this challenging time.

The Town of Concord maintains approximately 60 servers and 400 end-user devices in support of operations. We saw the replacement or retirement of over 20 servers in the last year, and the deployment of over 100 workstations (laptops, desktops, or all-in-one computers). The Information Systems Technicians have done a fantastic job supporting end users by providing equipment in a timely manner and supporting these devices throughout their lifecycles and when issues arise. The large number of deployments has lowered the average computer age in Concord from over 4 years at the beginning of 2022 to 2.4 years today. This results in fewer hardware issues for end users and a faster experience while they use the systems. Almost 4,200 tickets were managed by internal staff and our managed service provider partner, with the Town maintaining its own service board to track work by staff.

Security continues to be an area of supreme concern as malicious actors increasingly see state and local governments as easy targets for network penetration and ransomware. For the first time, Concord staff all participated in a year of cybersecurity awareness training, which both lowered our insurance liability and helped end users better identify threats they are facing. The Town also began the migration to Office 365, which, through data loss prevention tools and

other security policies, will better secure the Town's data and ensure resilience in the face of equipment failure or a cyber attack. In summer of 2020, the Town of Concord began a Risk Committee to assist with the prioritization of risks and the planning of mitigation strategies for both known and unknown risks.

Concord GIS (Geographic Information Systems) worked on an overhaul of the servers and software that provide this critical resource to Town departments and residents. Two new servers have been provisioned with the latest enterprise software and the fastest database available – a refresh that should last the Town between 3-5 years. GIS staff held numerous staff-only and public workshops and training sessions to help people better understand and utilize these resources, and they responded to many requests for maps and data in a timely manner. Concord Light Broadband worked closely with GIS team members on an effort to tie their information directly to the GIS data instead of relying on a third-party for access to this information. Additionally, 2020 was the year of the Census, a process that dominated GIS resource time for a few months of the year as we assisted with redistricting, reprecincting, and the data cleanup required when reconciling state and federal information with what the Town maintains. The work of the GIS staff is hugely appreciated by the IT Department and other Town staff.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Erin Stevens, Public Information and Communications Manager (PICM)

The Public Information Office is tasked with communicating with the public and helping to make information both easier to find and communicated in more useful ways for changing lifestyles.

The Public Information Office once again had a busy year as COVID-19 continued to change the way Concord operated as a community and as a municipality. The Public Information and Communications Manager worked with the

Concord Health Division, Town Manager's Office, Concord Emergency Management team, and our local and state partners to provide the best information to Concord as the COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect our daily lives.

In the beginning of 2021, Concord was able to host a first responder vaccination clinic which included surrounding towns and was the first of numerous vaccination clinics hosted in Concord during the course of 2021. While the number of cases and variants continued to rise throughout 2021, Concord was able to continuously provide information to keep people informed and assist with getting the community vaccinated.

More than ever, our communication channels through social media, news and notices, the Town website, Minuteman Media Network local cable, and robocalls were used to try and provide valuable information to the community who was looking for as much information as possible.

While the pandemic was the leading story of 2021, Concord was fortunate to have a town which came together to celebrate the people who live here and the community that has been built over time. In this same respect, the Ken Burn's documentary series *Honor Your Hometown* asked Concord to be a part of their series celebrating where we came from and the extraordinary stories of our hometown. Concord submitted two videos which were added to their website alongside big names such as Dolly



The Concord Minutemen speaking on their love of Concord and importance of history in Honor Your Hometown

Parton, General Colin Powell, and Astronaut Mark T. Vande Hei aboard the ISS. Concord's videos featured the Minuteman National Historical Park,



Maynard Forbes speaking on his life and business in Concord in Honor Your Hometown

the Concord Minutemen, and Concord residents and business owners Maynard Forbes, and Jan Turnquist.

The Public Information Office continues to work with various departments, boards and committees, and individuals to get information about the Concord community out to people in creative methods and using creative design.



PEG Services

Community access television, also known as PEG which stands for Public, Education Government, has been provided through Minuteman Media Network (MMN) since October of 2018. Since its inception, MMN has been working hard to provide quality coverage for community events, meetings, and more.

MMN shifted to processing zoom meetings for most of 2020 but was able to shift to working more with the community in person and in the creation of programming. In 2021 with newly acquired equipment, MMN was able to assist with live streaming from various venues in Town and is excited to have this feature to provide a new service to Concord and Carlisle.

The team at MMN worked with the High School Chorus in creating several music videos, one of which became a local sensation being viewed nearly 10,000 times. The video was a creation between MMN and the CCHS Chorus and the video, “You Raise Me Up,” was nominated for a local Emmy award.

Minuteman Media Network was once again instrumental in the creation of a successful outdoor Town meeting in June. The team experienced no technical difficulties and using new processes and equipment purchased during 2021, led to better sound and video quality provided a better viewer experience and recording.

With the creation of safety protocols and vaccines, staff were able to be back full time in the studio. After a small reorganization of the studio and personnel, MMN is excited to be up to full staff and continues to explore new ways to make PEG access better for Concord and Carlisle.

SUSTAINABILITY

Amanda Kohn, Sustainability Director

The Town of Concord has a long history of commitment to sustainability. We have ambitious sustainability goals as laid out in Sustainable Concord, the Town’s first comprehensive climate action and resilience plan. In addition, the Town is committed to reducing community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 80% by 2050 based on a 2008 baseline in alignment with the Paris Climate Accord and the Massachusetts Global Warming Solutions Act. Working with town departments, committees, residents, partners, and businesses, Concord’s Sustainability Division is responsible for developing and implementing programs, policies, and initiatives to achieve the Town’s climate and sustainability goals.

One of the most significant milestones of 2021 was the passage of Article 31, or The Home Rule Petition

and Bylaw Amendment to Prohibit the Expansion of Fossil Fuel Infrastructure for New Construction, at Town Meeting. More than 60% of Concord’s GHG emissions come from the energy used to power our buildings. Given CMLP’s commitment to eliminate the carbon footprint of our community’s electric supply, electrifying buildings is the best way to significantly reduce emissions to meet our goal. After the passage of Article 31, a Home Rule Petition was submitted to request authority from the Massachusetts Legislature for special authority to implement the bylaw. The Home Rule Petition has not yet been brought forth for a vote at the state level.

Concord has been a designated Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources Green Community since 2013. As a part of our commitment, the Town completes a Green Communities report to remain eligible for grant funding. This year Concord applied for a \$100,000 Green Communities grant to disconnect four classroom pods from the Ripley School and Administration Building’s main boiler and to install air source heat pumps for each pod. If awarded, the grant will be matched with \$50,000 from the Concord Public School’s Facilities Department and \$10,000 from Concord Municipal Light Plant’s rebate program. The project will cut natural gas consumption on the campus by 35% and reduce the footprint of one of the Town’s top energy usage facilities.

Sustainable landscaping is a win-win solution for Concord’s community and natural resources. After participating in the State’s Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Planning Grant program in late 2018, Concord was designated an MVP community in February 2019. This program provides resources for communities to identify climate hazards and potential actions to improve the community’s resilience to climate change. Following designation, communities are eligible to apply for MVP Action Grants to implement projects. Concord was awarded an MVP Action Grant in the summer of 2019 for tree reforestation and resiliency measures. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the project was put on hold and was finished in 2021. In collaboration with Concord Public Works, the project:

- Planted 159 new street and setback trees.
- Launched community engagement tools to identify locations for new tree plantings.
- Developed a Tree Guide for Concord residents.
- Distributed with 150 native tree seedlings through the Concord Public Free Library.

After the Select Board adopted an electric-first vehicle policy in December of 2020, the Town began a fleet electrification study for transitioning the municipal fleet in 2021. Numerous departments have been involved in the data gathering and evaluation of electric options that will ultimately inform a path forward. The Town also purchased several new electric and hybrid vehicles under the policy. The new electric school bus, that was purchased with VW settlement grant funding, arrived in 2021. Several MassEVIP grants for vehicles and chargers were submitted in 2021, but the awards have not been announced.

In 2021, the Sustainability Division continued to expand and enhance community outreach and communications around sustainability. The Division supported the release of the Electric Home Case Studies that were created in conjunction with the Comprehensive Sustainability and Energy Committee (CSEC) and distributed online. The Town also continued to utilize the Sustainable Concord dashboard (sustainableconcord.org). The dashboard is an interactive, online platform that allows residents to review priority actions in the climate action and resilience plan, see progress on those actions, and engage with Concord-specific climate data. The dashboard features blog posts about sustainability topics and complements the Division's newsletter and social media.

The Sustainability Division hosted a UNH Summer Sustainability Fellow, Hannah Lyons-Cavazos, to evaluate and recommend financing mechanisms for energy efficiency and electrification. The Energy Efficiency Financing Solutions Report synthesizes the results of in-depth research and stakeholder interviews, which sought to identify barriers to residential energy efficiency adoption in Concord and provide potential solutions to these barriers.

The Sustainability Division continued its partnership with Concord Free Public Library in

2021 by participating in the planning committee for the Library's sustainability plan. The Corporation Trustees endorsed the Concord Free Public Library Corporation Sustainability Plan in June 2021. The ten-year vision aligns with the Town of Concord's emissions reduction goals for 2050 and outlines a roadmap to climate neutrality and sustainability for the CFPL Corporation and its partners. The Library also curated programming for the Climate Preparedness Week in September for the third time. Climate Preparedness Week is a national effort to raise awareness of the impacts of climate change on communities. During the week, the Library hosted both in-person and virtual events, featuring a drawing contest, a seed-saving workshop, storytimes for children, webinars on heat pumps and sustainable landscapes, and more. The keynote speaker was New York Times Bestselling Author, David Pogue, discussing a practical path to addressing climate change.

On behalf of the Town, we thank our previous Director of Sustainability, Kate Hanley, for her commitment to Concord's sustainability efforts. Amanda Kohn, our new Sustainability Director, started in late October. Her focus is to move forward with the 22 climate actions following the detailed implementation blueprints in Sustainable Concord over the next several years. Since sustainability is a team effort, Amanda has been regularly collaborating and engaging with many town departments. She is the staff liaison to the Comprehensive Sustainability and Energy Committee and the Climate Action Advisory Board. She also serves on the Concord Middle School Building Committee, which has committed to designing and building a net zero energy and sustainable school. The Sustainability Division looks forward to continued collaboration in 2022 to create a more sustainable and resilient Concord.

FACILITIES DEPARTMENT

Ryan Orr, Director

Responsibilities

Facilities Management is responsible for maintaining, preserving, and improving the Town's buildings, open spaces, public bathing beach, and recreational playgrounds.

Facilities Management's goal is to maintain and improve upon the Town Government's twenty-one buildings and assists with other buildings in Town as needed. These include Town offices, parks and playgrounds, park facilities, the Town Visitor Center, and more.

Daily maintenance is performed on Town buildings, with upgrades and additional needs met by personnel specializing in landscaping, construction, HVAC, plumbing, electric, and project management. The dedicated team continues to grow and improve the Town's twenty-one buildings and various assets.

Accomplishments

Facilities Administration

Over the course of 2021, Facilities Administration coordinated several facilities related projects. These projects included:

- **Town House First Floor Renovations:**
Completed interior renovation to improve the private office space and the public service area. It also modified office density and employee circulation to meet social distancing guidelines.
- **Gerow Park Phase 1 Park Improvements:**
The scope of work of this project consisted of utility and drainage improvements and the installation of a new access drive and parking, new walking paths, and landscape plantings. The project also includes a timber picnic pavilion, a covered walkway, and restroom building.
- **White Pond Improvements:**
The goal of this project is to provide necessary site improvements and modifications for drainage and erosion control, stormwater management, and accessibility compliance to

the beach.

- **141 Keys Road HVAC:**
Facilities replaced existing HVAC system with ductless split systems with cassette evaporators and new condensers, air source heat pumps, and an energy recovery ventilator.
- **55 Church Street Renovation:**
Completed renovation of second floor 55 Church Street, creating two new offices and a conference room.
- **Fire Alarm Contract:**
Completed bid process for a new town-wide fire alarm and sprinkler testing contract. The 3-year contract was awarded to Fire Equipment, Inc. of Medford, MA.

Resource Sustainability

The Town contracted with Optony, Inc. to provide an assessment and recommendations for transitioning the Town's fleet to electric vehicles and installing the necessary charging infrastructure. The facilities team, working with the Sustainability Director and CMLP, began the study with data collection of existing vehicle inventory and locations and conducted in person interviews with each department.

Best practices suggest that an annual maintenance budget goal should be about 2% of a building's replacement value. All major building renovations include the addition of energy efficient and sustainable infrastructure. With the 2% funding goal in mind, departmental initiatives surround the Town's desire to develop strategies to respond to Concord's changing work environment and building needs. Utilizing the Comprehensive Facilities Master Plan completed in 2019, the Facilities Department works to implement innovative building programs to reduce energy consumption and develop environmentally effective alternatives.

The Department established an online database that assisted in the Town's efforts to reduce overall building operating costs by identifying outdated and/or potentially inefficient systems and infrastructure. This technology also helped Concord's Facilities Director to compile accurate building systems and utility data, which was incorporated into each renovation project and plan

to ensure the Town's sustainability goals were properly aligned with the relevant industry space standards for public buildings and office spaces. Moving forward, this online system and its data will be expanded upon to complete a Town-wide comprehensive building design and review process that further supports renovations and construction in a phased and more economically viable way.

Goals

- Ensure Town buildings are maintained in a manner that provides a safe working environment for staff and an accessible and inviting atmosphere for residents and guests to conduct business.
- Safeguard public recreational facilities by maintaining to the highest standard of care while ensuring equal access for all persons regardless of age and ability.
- Continue to assist with planning and implementation of the Green Communities Program to aid the Town in its energy reduction goals while incorporating greening initiatives and programs for new and retrofitted construction within historical buildings.
- Start work on improving resiliency by establishing strategic partnerships with

regulatory and other funding agencies.

- Support implementation of Sustainable Concord Action Plan.

Long-Term Plans

Facilities Administration

- Continue to maintain and improve the Town's existing public buildings, facilities, parks, and infrastructure at a level consistent with the Town's fiscal resources.
- Develop a funding strategy and redevelopment outline for new buildings related to Town services including but not limited to a new Police Fire Station and Public Works facility.
- Maintain the Town's sustainability goals by advocating for green energy projects and retrofits.
- Develop a strategy to anticipate certain property acquisitions including surplus properties owned by the State and Federal governments.
- Ensure that facilities planning and practices reflect the best practices identified through the municipal vulnerability plan.

| Buildings under Town Manager Jurisdiction Supported Fully or Partially from the General Fund | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Year Built | Latest Renovation | Building | Replacement Value | Budget Goal | Other Funds |
| 1826 | 2017 | 249 Harrington Ave | 309,839 | 6,197 | Revolving |
| 1851 | 2020 | Town House | 3,064,914 | 61,298 | |
| 1903 | 2018 | Harvey Wheeler Community Center | 5,911,245 | 118,225 | |
| 1904 | 2019 | 141 Keyes Road | 1,268,795 | 25,376 | |
| 1919 | 2018 | Marshall Farm House | 569,699 | 11,394 | Revolving |
| 1929 | 2002 | 105 Everett St. | 271,401 | 5,428 | MMN |
| 1932 | 1996 | West Concord Fire Station | 976,359 | 19,527 | |
| 1935 | 1987 | Hunt Recreation Center | 2,400,846 | 48,017 | Recreation |
| 1950 | | CPW Garage | 661,610 | 13,232 | |
| 1950 | | CPW Highway Dept. 133 Keyes Rd. | 348,824 | 6,976 | |
| 1950 | | CPW Office 133 Keyes Rd. | 2,763,837 | 55,277 | |
| 1950 | | CPW Water & Sewer Garage | 1,002,930 | 20,059 | |
| 1959 | | Planning and Land Management Shed | 11,317 | 226 | |
| 1959 | 2019 | Police/Fire Station (Walden) | 4,526,731 | 90,535 | |
| 1960 | | Gun House | 156,394 | 3,128 | |
| 1960 | | Police Dept. Storage 203 Walden Rd. | 105,525 | 2,111 | |
| 1992 | | 135 Keyes Road (CPW) | 2,442,236 | 48,845 | Water & Sewer |
| 1995 | 2019 | McGrath Farm House | 917,879 | 18,358 | Revolving |
| 1996 | 2020 | Field House (Lawsbrook) | 71,100 | 1,422 | |
| 1998 | 2019 | Municipal Light Plant | 5,218,502 | 104,370 | CMLP |