

**TOWN OF CONCORD
SELECT BOARD MEETING
OCTOBER 28, 2022 | 12:00 PM**

VIA ZOOM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89302892617?pwd=MHAYQVFEBW52RnhvZm9CeTByME1rdz09>

Meeting ID: 893 0289 2617

Passcode: 287846

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AGENDA

#	Time*	Agenda Item
1.	12:00 PM	Call to Order
2.	12:05	Discussion of warrant article(s) for Special Town Meeting scheduled on January 19, 2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concord Middle School ○ Community Preservation Committee Appropriation Recommendation ○ Other articles, as needed
3.	12:35 PM	Order warrant for Special Town Meeting scheduled on January 19, 2023
4.	12:45 PM	Discuss amending Special Town Meeting Calendar to include a Select Board Hearing for Special Town Meeting scheduled on January 19, 2023
5.	12:55 PM	Adjourn

**Times are approximate and subject to change*

Current Board and Committee Vacancies
Agricultural Committee – Associate Member
Board of Health
Cemetery Committee
Commission on Disability
Comprehensive Sustainability and Energy Committee
Concord 2025 Executive Committee
Concord Housing Development Corporation (CHDC)
Conservation Restriction Stewardship Committee
Council on Aging
Historic Districts Commission – Associate Member
PEG Access Advisory Committee
Personnel Board
Planning Board
Pollinator Health Advisory Committee
Public Ceremonies and Celebrations Committee
Transportation Advisory Committee
Trustees of Donations
West Concord Advisory Committee
West Concord Junction Cultural District
Zoning Board of Appeals – Associate Member

CONCORD MIDDLE SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT

Article ____. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum not to exceed \$12,200,000 (Twelve Million Two Hundred Thousand Dollars), to be expended under the direction of the Town Manager, in consultation with the Concord Middle School Building Committee, for the additional costs to construct a new middle school, which amount shall be expended in addition to the amount of \$102,816,000 appropriated under Article 1 of the January 20, 2022 Special Town Meeting for a total appropriation for such project of \$115,016,000, to be located at 835 Old Marlboro Road, Concord, Massachusetts (present site of the Sanborn Middle School), including, without limitation, the costs of engineering, design, site preparation, construction, landscaping, paving, furnishing and equipping, demolishing the existing school, construction of recreational fields, driveways and parking lots, and all other costs incidental or related thereto; to determine whether this appropriation shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise; or to take any other action relative thereto.

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ARTICLE XX

**FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE-CONFIRM
AUTHORIZATION TO APPLY FOR PARTICAPTION IN
FOSSIL FUEL-FREE DEMONSTRATION PROJECT**

To determine whether the Town will vote to confirm that the Select Board is authorized to apply to participate in the Department of Energy Resources' municipal fossil fuel-free demonstration project as established in Section 84 of Chapter 179 of the Acts of 2022, and further that the Select Board apply to the demonstration project with legislation previously approved by Town Meeting as Article 31 of the 2021 Annual Town Meeting on June 13, 2021, with technical corrections to the Bylaw passed thereunder in substantially the form below (~~struck-through~~ text to be removed and underlined text to be added):

**PROHIBITION ON THE EXPANSION OF
FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTION FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION**

1. Purpose

This Bylaw is adopted by the Town of Concord to protect the health, safety and welfare of the inhabitants of the town from the effects of air pollution, including greenhouse gas emissions that are contributing to climate change, and from fuel leaks and explosions that threaten the Town and its inhabitants.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this bylaw, the following definitions shall apply:

“Building” shall have the same meaning as set forth in Section 1.3.4 of the Concord Zoning Bylaw, provided that the pertinent structure is or will be furnished with a heating or hot water system.

“Effective Date” shall mean ~~December 1, 2022, or~~ six months following the date by which the Town is authorized by the Massachusetts General Court Department of Energy Resources to regulate fossil fuel infrastructure, ~~whichever is later.~~

“New Building” shall mean any new construction that will require heating or cooling and that is associated with a valid building permit application on or after the effective date of this bylaw, including but not limited to, construction (a) on a vacant lot, (b) to replace a demolished building, or (c) of a new accessory building constructed on an existing residential or commercial property.

“On-Site Fossil Fuel Infrastructure” shall mean piping for coal, fuel gas, fuel oil, natural gas or other fuel hydrocarbons, including synthetic equivalents, or other fossil fuels that ~~is~~ are in a building, in connection with a building, or otherwise within the property lines of a premises,

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extending from a supply tank or from the point of delivery behind a gas meter (customer-side of a gas meter).

3. Applicability and Exemptions

3.1. On and after the Effective Date, no building permit shall be issued by the Town for the construction of New Buildings or that include the installation of new On-Site Fossil Fuel Infrastructure subject to this Chapter.

3.2. The provisions of this bylaw shall not apply to (i) the development of new affordable housing, as defined in Mass. Gen. Laws c. 184, § 26; (ii) to cooking stoves and ovens used in restaurants or commercial kitchens; (iii) any fossil fuel infrastructure the exclusive purpose of which is to fuel backup electrical generators; (iv) public utilities, their operations, or installations other than in the Buildings constructed by others; or (v) research laboratories for scientific or medical research, or to hospitals or medical offices regulated by the department of public health as a health care facility.

3.3. The requirements of this article shall not apply to the piping required to produce potable or domestic hot water from centralized hot water systems in buildings with building floor areas of at least 10,000 square feet, provided that the Engineer of Record certifies that no commercially available electric hot water heater exists that could meet the required hot water demand for less than 150% of installation or operational costs, compared to a conventional fossil-fuel hot water system.

4. Administration

4.1 . Enforcement

The Building and Inspections Department is hereby authorized to enforce the provisions of this bylaw.

5.2 Appeal

Any applicant who is aggrieved by a denial of a building permit, in whole or part, in connection with this bylaw, may appeal to the board or committee designated by the Town Manager to hear and resolve such appeals within 20 days from the date of denial.

6. Severability

Each provision of this bylaw shall be construed as separate to the extent that if any section, sentence, clause or phrase is held to be invalid for any reason, the remainder of the by-law shall continue in full force and effect.

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7. Reporting

The Town Manager, or the Town Manager's designee, shall provide data and other information on the impacts of this Bylaw on emissions, building costs, operating costs, the number of building permits issued, and other information as required or requested by the Department of Energy Resources and the Secretary of Housing and Economic Development.

**RE--AUTHORIZE SPECIAL LEGISLATION -- REAL ESTATE TRANSFER TAX FEE
FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

ARTICLE 3. To determine whether the Town will authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court for special legislation substantially in the form below, ~~which in lieu of the special legislation was approved by~~ under Article 25 of the 2019 Concord Annual Town Meeting with the adoption of Article 25, that ~~that~~ would impose a real estate transfer fee to be used by the Town for the purposes of acquiring, creating, preserving, rehabilitating, restoring and supporting affordable housing in the Town, or take any other action relative thereto:

“An act establishing a real estate transfer fee upon the transfer of property in the Town of Concord.”

SECTION 1. There is hereby imposed a real estate transfer fee, hereafter “the fee,” equal to 1 per cent of the portion of the purchase price exceeding \$~~1,06~~00,000 upon the transfer of (i) any real property interest in any residential property situated in the Town of Concord, or (ii) a controlling interest in a trust, limited liability company, or other entity that directly or indirectly holds an interest in any class of residential real property situated in the Town of Concord. The fee shall be the liability of the purchaser of such property interest, and any agreement between the purchaser and the seller or any other person with reference to the allocation of the liability for the fee shall not affect such liability of the purchaser to the Town. The Town may define by bylaw what constitutes a controlling interest and the calculation of the fee.

SECTION 2. The following transfers of real property interests shall be exempt from the fee established in Section 1:

- (i) ~~transfers to the federal government, the Commonwealth, the Town, and any of their instrumentalities, agencies or subdivisions, including the Concord Housing Authority~~ and the Concord Municipal Affordable Housing Trust;
- (ii) transfers to the Concord Housing Development Corporation;
- (iii) transfers of real property subject to an affordable housing restriction;
- (iv) ~~transfers made without additional consideration to confirm, correct, modify or supplement a transfer previously made;~~
- (v) transfers with consideration under \$100.00;
- (vi) transfers to a charitable organization, as defined in clause Third of section 5 of chapter 59 of the General Laws, or a religious organization, provided, however, that the real property interests so transferred will be held solely for public charitable or religious purposes; and
- (vii) ~~transfers between family members, including spouses, parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren, step-parents and step-children, siblings or step-siblings.~~

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SECTION 3. The fee shall be paid to the Town of Concord. The Town shall have such remedies to collect the fee as provided by law with respect to the collection of real property taxes. The Town may, by bylaw, adopt additional requirements, exemptions, and regulations to implement or enforce said fee, consistent with this act. The Town may not, by bylaw or otherwise, eliminate or reduce any exemption set forth in this act.

SECTION 4. All fees received pursuant to this act shall be deposited in the Concord [Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund](#) established pursuant to section 55C of chapter 44 of the General Laws [and used for affordable housing purposes](#) any purposes permitted thereunder.

~~SECTION 5.~~ SECTION 5. For the purposes of this act, "affordable housing" shall mean housing with an affordable housing restriction recorded with the Middlesex South Registrar of Deeds that requires the housing to be rented or owned by families and individuals whose income at initial occupancy is no more than 150 per cent of the area mean income as determined by the federal department of housing and urban development guidelines and adjusted for family size and that thereafter such units shall be rented or sold, subject to such restrictions on appreciation as determined by the municipality to be reasonably and necessary to maintain long term affordability, to families or individuals at incomes of no more than 150 per cent of the area mean income.

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SECTION 6. A copy of the deed or other instrument evidencing such transfer shall be provided to the Town and shall be accompanied by (i) an affidavit signed under oath or under the pains and penalties of perjury by the purchaser and seller attesting to the purchase price; (ii) the applicable fee owed or, if applicable, an affidavit of intent to seek one of the permissible exemptions, as described in Section 2, for that property by the purchaser; and (iii) the basis, if any, upon which the transfer is claimed to be exempt in whole or in part from said fee. Upon receipt of the transfer fee or satisfactory evidence of exemption, the Town or its designee shall promptly thereafter issue a certificate indicating that the fee has been paid or that the transfer is exempt from the fee. The Middlesex South Registrar of Deeds shall not record or register a deed unless the deed is accompanied by such certificate.

SECTION 67. The Town shall prepare and issue an annual report to that (i) identifies fee receipts; (ii) quantifies affordable housing programs funded, including type and purpose; and (iii) evaluates the impact of said affordable housing programs, including but not limited to, to the extent reasonably possible and permitted by applicable law, the number and demographics of individuals and families served as well as measures of housing stability and wealth generation in the community.

SECTION 78. Acceptance of this act by the Town of Concord shall be first by vote of approval at an annual [or special](#) Town Meeting, ~~to be followed by an affirmative vote of a majority of the voters at any regular or special election at which the question of acceptance is placed on the ballot.~~ Sections 1 to 67, inclusive shall take effect 30 days after such acceptance by the Town.

~~Previously approved by voters at the 2019 Annual Town Meeting, this updated home rule petition must be re-authorized by Town Meeting and refiled to be considered in the next State legislative session. If subsequently enacted, all funds collected will establish "predictable, sustainable funding for affordable homes" in Concord. Pursuing this legislation was one of the top four recommendations included in the Affordable Housing Funding Committee's 2018 report and has since gained traction with other Massachusetts towns and cities filing similar home rule petitions. (See <https://concordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16975/Affordable-Housing-Funding-Committee---Preliminary-Report-10-29-2018>)~~

Field Code Changed

~~The Town voted under Article 49 of the 2017 Annual Town Meeting to urge the Select Board to appoint a committee "...to study the affordable housing goals of the Town and recommend appropriate measures to fund those goals". In September of that year, the Select Board appointed the Affordable Housing Funding Committee, and in the fall of 2018, the committee issued its report. The report can be reviewed on the Town's website at (<https://concordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16975/Affordable-Housing-Funding-Committee---Preliminary-Report-10-29-2018>) Rather than funding affordable housing on an occasional basis, the Committee's report recommends that an affordable housing goal for Concord should be to establish "Predictable, Sustainable Funding for Affordable Homes". Seeking legislation to establish a real estate transfer tax is one of the Committee's top 4 recommendations to accomplish this goal. Thirty-five states including Massachusetts have established a real estate transfer tax. Massachusetts currently allows Cape Cod communities, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket to collect a real estate transfer tax to fund local projects.~~

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RE--AUTHORIZE SPECIAL LEGISLATION – BUILDING PERMIT FEE SURCHARGE FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

ARTICLE 4. ~~To determine whether the Town will authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court for special legislation substantially in the form below, in lieu of the special legislation approved under Article 26 of the 2019 Concord Annual Town Meeting. To determine whether the Town will authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court for special legislation substantially in the form below, which special legislation was originally approved by Concord Annual Town Meeting in 2019 with the adoption of Article 26,~~ that permits the Town to enact a bylaw charging a building permit surcharge to be used by the Town for the purposes of acquiring, creating, preserving, rehabilitating, restoring and supporting affordable housing in the Town, or take any other action relative thereto:

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“An act establishing a building permit surcharge in the Town of Concord.”

SECTION 1. The Town of Concord, hereafter referred to as “the Town,” may, by bylaw, require the payment of an affordable housing surcharge for any construction that (i) requires a building permit and (ii) exceeds a minimum construction value to be determined by the Select Board of the Town. The bylaw shall specify the amount of said affordable housing surcharge, the method by which the surcharge may be increased from time to time, and any types of construction or uses to which the affordable housing surcharge shall not apply.

SECTION 2. All fees received pursuant to this act shall be deposited into the Concord Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund established pursuant to section 55C of Chapter 44 of the General laws and used for affordable housing purposes any purposes permitted thereunder.

SECTION 3. For the purposes of this act, “affordable housing” shall mean housing with an affordable housing restriction recorded with the Middlesex South Registrar of Deeds that requires the housing to be rented or owned by families and individuals whose income at initial occupancy is no more than 150 per cent of the area mean income as determined by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development guidelines and adjusted for family size and that thereafter such units shall be rented or sold, subject to such restrictions on appreciation as determined by the municipality to be reasonable and necessary to maintain long term affordability, to families or individuals at incomes of no more than 150 per cent of the area mean income. ~~as defined under section 1 of chapter 60 of the General Laws.~~

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SECTION 4. Acceptance of this act by the Town of Concord shall be ~~first~~ by vote of approval at an annual or special Town Meeting, ~~to be followed by an affirmative vote of a majority of the voters at any regular or special election at which the question of acceptance is placed on the ballot.~~ Sections 1 to 3, inclusive shall take effect 30 days after such acceptance by the Town.

This home rule petition was originally approved by the 2019 Town Meeting and has now been updated for required re-authorization at this Town Meeting for purposes of creating a predictable and affordable funding source for affordable housing. Similar to Articles 24 and 25, Article 26 is a proposal recommended by the Affordable Housing Funding Committee as a means for the Town to achieve the goal of creating “predictable, sustainable funding for affordable homes.” This article requests that the Town authorize the Select Board to petition the Massachusetts Legislature to approve special legislation that would authorize Concord to charge a building permit fee surcharge with the revenues dedicated to fund affordable homes. The funds collected would be deposited into the Concord Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund a special revolving fund or similar account and would be used to develop, maintain, rehabilitate or otherwise support affordable housing.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT COMMUNITY HOUSING RESERVE FUND

ARTICLE 5. To determine whether the Town will vote to re-appropriate the sum of \$1,044,255.76 from the Community Preservation Fund, originally allocated at the 2015, 2017, 2018, and 2019 Annual Town Meetings for the Junction Village Assisted Living project, to the Community Housing Reserve Fund, in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44B, and amendments thereof and additions thereto; to be appropriated for Community Housing projects; or take any other action relative thereto.

This article proposes to re-appropriate a total of \$1,044,255.76 in Community Housing funds originally appropriated for the Junction Village Assisted Living project. That project is not moving forward and the funds will not be used. To meet this appropriation, Community Housing funds will be transferred to the Community Housing Reserve Fund. Below see the breakdown of the funds being reappropriated:

Warrant Article 30 from the April 12-15, 2015 Annual Town Meeting: \$44,255.76;
Warrant Article 30 from the April 24-27, 2017 Annual Town Meeting: \$350,000.00;
Warrant Article 26 from the April 9-12, 2018 Annual Town Meeting: \$350,000.00; and
Warrant Article 22 from the April 8-10, 2019 Annual Town Meeting: \$300,000.00.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE APPROPRIATION RECOMMENDATION

ARTICLE 6. To determine whether the Town will vote to reappropriate the sum of \$1,044,255.76, or any other sum, from the Community Housing Reserve Fund, in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 44B, to be expended under the direction of the Town Manager to support the Assabet River Bluff affordable housing project, or take any other action relative thereto.

This article authorizes the reappropriation of funds from the Community Housing Reserve Fund for the purpose of supporting the housing component of the Assabet River Bluff Project as allowed under the Community Preservation Act. These funds had previously been appropriated for affordable housing purposes in support of the Junction Village Assisted Living project; however, because that project is no longer moving forward, the funds are available for reappropriation. Town Meeting may reduce or reject but may not increase this appropriation from the Community Preservation Fund.

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2023 Special Town Meeting and Town Election Calendar

As of October 6, 2022

Town Election Schedule

Tuesday, November 8, 2022	State Election
Monday, January 30, 2023	Town Caucus
Friday, February 3, 2023	Select Board approves proponent/opponent statements from Town Counsel
Thursday, February 16, 2023	Mailing of Special Town Election ballot information
Friday, February 24, 2023	Special Town Election
Wednesday, March 18, 2023	Voter Registration Deadline for Annual Town Election
Tuesday, March 28, 2023	Annual Town Election

Special Town Meeting Schedule

Monday, October 17, 2022, 6:30PM	Warrant Opens
Friday, October 28, 2022, at 12:30PM at 3:00PM	Warrant Closes Warrant Review Meeting with Town Counsel
Monday, October 31, 2022, time TBD	Select Board Meeting: vote order of Warrant Articles
Wednesday, November 2, 2022	Deadline to submit Warrant to the printer
Thursday, November 3, 2022, 7:00PM	Joint Meeting of the Finance Committee and Concord Middle School Building Committee
Saturday, November 12, 2022	Warrant Posted and Mailed to Households
Thursday, November 17, 2022, 7:00PM	Finance Committee Public Hearing [to be confirmed with FinCom] [If inclement weather, by Zoom only]
Thursday, December 8, 2022, 10PM	Deadline for FinCom to submit report to the Town Manager's Office, including SB and FinCom Recommendations on Articles
Monday, December 12, 2022	Deadline to submit Finance Committee report to Printer
Monday, December 19, 2022	FinCom Report mailed to households
Monday, January 9, 2023 At 5PM	Voter Registration Deadline for Special Town Meeting Deadline for submission of draft Motions

Tuesday, January 10, 2023, 10AM	Motions Review Meeting with Town Counsel
Thursday, January 12, 2023, Time TBD	Moderator's Town Meeting Coordination Meeting (All Article Sponsors and Town Meeting Coordinator)
Friday, January 13, 2023 at 4PM	Moderator's Staff Meeting
at 5PM	Deadline to submit PowerPoint Presentations and Paper Handouts for review and approval (submit to TMSubmissions@concordma.gov)
Tuesday, January 17, 2023, 10AM	Motions posted
Thursday, January 19, 2023 at 7PM	Special Town Meeting at Concord Carlisle High School Select Board votes the special election language immediately following Special Town Meeting Subsequent Additional Days as needed to conclude Annual Town Meeting
Friday, January 20, 2023 at 7PM	Snow Date for Special Town Meeting

Relevant Holidays

November 11, 2022	Veterans' Day
November 24-25, 2022	Thanksgiving
December 18-26, 2022	Hanukkah
Sunday, December 25, 2022	Christmas Day
Sunday, January 1, 2023	New Year's Day
Monday, January 16, 2023	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Correspondence

Date:

1. 10/26/2022

From:

Louis Salemy

Subject:

Middle School Building Project

Members of the Select Board:

Last night, I addressed the Concord School Committee. My comments are included below.

As a former board member of the Concord Ed Fund, a six-year regional school committee member where I was Chair twice, the vice-chair of the CCHS building project, an advisor to CC at Play during the construction of the fields, and a recent member of the Concord Library Building Committee, I think it is fair to state that I am a huge supporter of the schools. I am appearing before you today because I am concerned about the fate of the middle school building project. Having lived through a building project that almost failed, I do not think any of you fully comprehend the precarious position that the project is currently in.

I have been following the middle school building project closely since it was formed and supported the initial decision to move forward with a new building. In fact, I spoke in favor of the project during the feasibility design town hearings. However, once schematic design began, I have been critical of many of the decisions that have been made and have been vocal in outlining these concerns. Unfortunately for the project, the building committee has ignored these concerns, and the project is now well over budget.

To be clear, the explanation by the committee for the project being over budget is a false narrative. The estimate that was used at Town Meeting did not properly reflect the true cost of the building. Every effort was made to keep the cost of the building in the \$100mm range, which was at the upper end of the range given prior to the feasibility study beginning. The project being over budget has nothing to do with the current state of the construction market. These issues were well known during the schematic design phase of the project while the estimate for town meeting was put together. The reason for the project being over budget was a conscious decision that was made by the project professionals and supported by the building committee leadership team to assume cost escalation that was well below the actual rate of construction inflation. This issue was raised in a public meeting and ignored. When construction inflation did not moderate, the cost estimate rose. Had the committee used an escalation estimate that was in line with construction inflation, you would not be looking at such a large budget deficit currently. Another issue that I raised was that the contingency embedded in the original estimate was too low. The Select Board agreed with me and added \$2mm in contingency to the project cost recommended by the building committee. Unfortunately, this is not enough, and the recommendation by the building committee leadership team to add an additional layer of contingency of \$6mm to the new budget is direct evidence of this. The \$115mm estimate for special town meeting is \$6mm above the most recent cost estimate. If the reserves are sufficient, why ask for more money.

This is all water under the bridge and not why I am here. The question is how does this project move forward and deliver a much needed building to the middle school students of Concord. As all of you know, there will be a special town meeting in January where the Town will be asked to support additional funds to bridge the difference between what was asked for originally and the final estimate. Both the Select Board and Fincom appear opposed to support

this warrant article and have repeatedly asked the building committee to engage in more value engineering. To date, only \$1.6mm in VE has been taken, which is tiny when compared to a \$110mm price tag. There are many ways to reduce the cost of the project without needing to cut the square footage of the gym or auditorium. For example, it is 30,000 square feet over the MSBA square footage guideline, has a complex design, an unnecessary glass connector bridge, and can be moved from to a flatter location that will not necessitate the need for expensive earthwork. Following the MSBA square footage guideline for educational space would save \$12mm alone. For clarification, excluding the second gym, the CCHS project followed the MSBA square footage guideline, and there has been no impact to educational outcomes.

It is clear that the building committee's strategy is to pack town meeting with parents and get a favorable result. From my perspective, this is not good public policy and is divisive. The two questions for the school committee are how can you be so confident in prevailing at town meeting with the Select Board and Fincom opposed and second, what will you do if you lose.

The degree of optimism on the part of the building committee is puzzling considering the following. The cost of the project for an average household in Concord has risen by 60% from \$1,000/year to \$1,600/year. By way of background, the CCHS project was \$450/year. You will need a 2/3's favorable vote at Town Meeting to prevail. In my view, with the Select Board and Fincom opposed, the cost of the project up 60%, and a 2/3 majority required, it stands a good chance of failing.

It will be the School Committee who will have to pick up the pieces if it fails. What needs to be understood is that the project will grind to a halt as it is redesigned to meet the original \$102mm estimate. Additionally, the architect and the OPM will require more money for additional services, which will add to the amount that needs to be value engineered. The longer you wait to undertake value engineering, the more expensive it becomes.

The School Committee should direct the building committee to meet the Select Board and Fincom halfway and increase the amount of value engineering. If the new estimate is \$115mm, cut \$8mm, and ask the Town to fund the difference. This shows a good faith effort on the part of the schools that it understands the tax impact of the project to Concord residents and is doing everything it can to mitigate cost increases. It will also send a positive message to the Select Board and Fincom that you are addressing their concerns, which could ensure their support. Again, if you lose at Town Meeting and the project cost is \$115mm, you will need to cut \$16mm+. If you meet the Town halfway, you will only need to cut \$8mm. To me, you are gambling the success of this project with the present course of action.