



Town of Concord

Bi-Weekly Operations Report

2024 Volume 37/November 15th, 2024

Natural Resources

Walden Pond - Universal Access Improvements

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation is hosting an informational meeting and public listening session on Monday, November 18, 2024 at 7 PM via [Zoom](#) to update the public on a long-awaited project to increase accessibility and update the bathhouses at Walden Pond.

From the DCR, "The goal of the Walden Pond bathhouse project is to increase access to the main beach and

facilities by creating accessible pathways and a new, ADA-compliant bathhouse. These accessibility improvements will ensure that people of all abilities can enjoy the natural, recreational, and cultural resources of Walden Pond for years to come, from swimming and hiking to

simply experiencing the beautiful natural, recreational, and cultural resources like Henry David Thoreau did. Throughout the construction process, DCR will work closely with the contractor to minimize disruptions and maintain access as much as possible."



Above, the existing 1947 concrete block bathhouse, walkway, and concrete E-Ramp. Below, a rendering of the new bathhouse and accessible path.

The project proposal went before the Natural Resources Commission for review and approval in early 2020, as portions of the proposed work extend into the wetlands buffer zone. Proposed tree removals were mitigated at greater than a 1:1 ratio, and additional mitigation was provided for hardscape construction within the buffer zone.

The state project, which is funded through the American Rescue Plan (ARPA), was delayed to focus on other priorities, however the need for the bathhouse improvements has remained critical, and the project is now able to move forward thanks to the reallocation of ARPA funds. With this renewed funding, the DCR can continue with the project and ensure that it meets the needs of visitors for years to come.

Heywood Meadow

Invasive plant management work continues at Heywood Meadow on the north side of Mill Brook. This work is a continuation of several years of management; however, the Division is on year 4 of an aggressive focus to remove invasive plants around Mill Brook to help encourage native plants to re-establish. Staff, volunteers, and a contracted invasive plant management company are carrying out this work. Dozens of piles of invasive plants have been created as a result, lining the edge of the forested areas around Mill Brook which will be removed in the coming weeks by Natural Division staff and volunteers. Members of the Heywood Meadow Stewardship Committee and Division staff also planted 100 daffodil bulbs at the meadow in anticipation of the 250th celebration next year.



Punkatasset Preserve Kiosk

A new kiosk has been constructed and installed at Punkatasset Preserve at the trailhead off Monument Street. Staff and volunteers contributed to this project; however, Trails Committee Chair Bob White led the effort,



contributing over 60 hours of volunteer time. This kiosk features a new design which will be used moving forward at other conservation lands. The weather resistant lockable cork board will keep postings secure and out of the elements (not shown in the picture below but has since been installed). Moving forward, this design will be replicated in 2 sizes, one large (as seen below), and one small.



Concord Public Works

Complete Streets Grant Award

We are pleased to announce the award of a \$500,000 grant through the MassDOT Complete Streets Grant program to the Town of Concord. The funds will be used for a project that has long been on the town's priority list, a new sidewalk on Walden St. to improve the pedestrian connection to Alcott Elementary and Concord-Carlisle High School. The project brings the sidewalk to Brister's Hill and includes ADA compliant ramps, crosswalks, signage, and a pedestrian/bike path from Walden Street to the Alcott Elementary School. It does not go all the way to Route 2. This extension will be a future phase to this project.

Engineering

Pavement Improvement

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- The pavement on Davis Court was milled and is being prepared for repaving in the week of 11/18. This will complete the restoration of the street following National Grid's replacement of their old natural gas main earlier this year.
 - The deteriorated pavement on Channing Rd, Isaac Davis Rd, Temple Rd, Martin Rd, Bartlett Hill Rd, and Carr Rd was reclaimed and the streets were binder paved. They have been prepared for final paving on Monday 11/18 and Tuesday 11/19.
 - The pavement of one section of Westford Rd was reclaimed and binder paved and the other was milled. Both sections are to get final paving on Wednesday 11/20.

Crosswalk

The patterned crosswalks at the Main St/Walden St intersection are scheduled to be installed in the week of 11/18.

Water Main Replacement

Progress on replacing the existing water main, in the Silver Hill Neighborhood Water Main Replacement Phase 1 project has been hampered by the existence of underground ledge. At this time, it appears that reconstructing the streets within this project phase will be deferred to the spring. On Monday 11/18, water work will be occurring on Monument St which will involve a change to the traffic pattern, details of which are posted in News & Notices.

Community Services

Concord's Holiday Gift Card Program

Concord's Community Services invites you to donate a gift card to a local family in need this holiday season. Last year's program provided support to over 100 children. Gift card donations from any vendor are welcome! Some suggestions are local merchants, supermarkets, restaurants, or Amazon or VISA gift cards.



Donations may be mailed to Bonny Wilbur, Concord Community Services, 55 Church Street, Concord. Or you can drop your gift card at:

- The donation box in the lobby of the Town House at 22 Monument Square.
- The donation box is outside the entrance of 55 Church Street in West Concord.
- The Concord-Carlisle Foundation is located downtown, at 19 Main Street, Suite #2.

Donations are accepted until Friday, December 20th. Contact Bonny Wilbur at bwilbur@concordma.gov or 978-318-3034 with any questions or for more information. Thank you on behalf of your neighbors in need, and best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season!

Fire Department Calls for Service

Between November 1st and November 14th, the Fire Department responded to 171 calls for service.

Massachusetts is still experiencing drought conditions, and **open burning of any kind remains prohibited** until further notice. On November 13th, Lt. Rolfe, a member of the Fire District 14 Communications Unit, responded to a brush fire in North Andover as part of a task force.

Concord Fire responded to three brush fires over the past two weeks. All were controlled quickly by responding firefighters.

Community

On Veterans Day, Concord Firefighters participated in a ceremony at Sleepy Hollow Cemetery. Unfortunately, we could not conduct the usual flag retirement ceremony, which involves burning the flags due to the current weather conditions. Members of the Fire Department collected the flags, which will be



Photo by Maia Kennedy - Used with permission



Photo by Maia Kennedy - Used with permission

stored until conditions improve. A new date for the flag-burning ceremony will be scheduled in coordination with the celebrations committee.

Concord Firefighters participated in the Concord Recreation Department's annual Trunk or Treat event. It's hard to say who had more fun, the trunk or treaters or the Firefighters!



Fire Prevention

In the past two weeks, the fire prevention division conducted 25 inspections, mainly focusing on residential smoke detectors and Annual joint inspections with the building department for liquor licenses. The final fire alarm inspection for the new Dunkin' Donuts on Elm Street was completed successfully.

The new development on Rookery Lane, located on the Sudbury/Concord line, is approaching completion.

Fire Prevention continues weekly inspections of the new Concord Middle School to monitor construction site fire safety hazards and changes in the evolving fire protection systems.

Fourteen permits were issued, primarily for propane or home heating oil storage. Additionally, five plans were reviewed, notably for the Middlesex School Field House, which addressed fire department access issues with the property representative and town staff.

We recently held the third round of fire drills at public schools, Concord Academy, and Nashoba Brooks School, including both dorms and classrooms

Emergency Management

We received a Federal Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) totaling \$4,600, which is designated for the purchase of three new dry suits. These suits are critical to firefighter safety when performing cold water and ice rescues.

Police Department

Calls for Service

Thursday, November 7th through Wednesday, November 13th, 2024

- Log items: 660
- Traffic enforcement: 41

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- Motor vehicle stops: 69
 - Motor vehicle crashes and/or exchanges: 10
 - Arrests: 1
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- Officers assisted with the presidential election at all polling places on November 5th.
 - Officers assisted with the Civil War Monument Rededication Ceremony on November 9th in Monument Square.
 - On November 11th, Officers assisted with the annual Veteran’s Day Flag Retirement ceremony at Sleepy Hollow Cemetery
 - Officers assisted with the filming of a mobile video at This Old House on Virginia Road on November 12th.

Tourism

Mural

On Monday October 21st the Concord 250 Art Committee headed by Di Clymer along with Mimi Graney and Beth Williams installed the new mural map along the side of the Concord Visitor Center. Concord Artist Steve Bermundo created the artwork and Billy Crosby of Crosby Design created the frame installation. Follow us on social media to see visitors from all over the World enjoying and exploring it!



Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism MegaFam Host

On October 29th Joe Palumbo and Beth Williams hosted 14 journalists from Korea as part of a Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism MegaFam. The group will spend a total of 4 weeks in the US focused on American History.



Chanukah Celebration

Join Concord for a pre-Chanukah celebration on Wednesday, December 11th from 5-6 pm held at the Harvey Wheeler Community Center on 1276 Main Street. There will be holiday festivities, latkes, arts & crafts, and goody bags! For more information, please contact the Concord Visitor Center at visitors@concordma.gov or at 978-831-3056.

Broadband

Operations

We have an accepted offer for the position of our second Senior Network Engineer! We have had two Network Engineer positions on the books for years, but we have not had the positions filled simultaneously for quite some time. We are very encouraged by this candidate who also lives in Concord and is a current Concord Broadband customer!



We have signed a contract with an ISP for new service with guaranteed speeds of 10GB/s burstable up to 100GB/s. We are very excited about the possibility of this type of product that can scale up or down as needed. Above the 10GB/s speed, we only pay for what we use. We expect the service should be available within 90 days. We will likely transition away from one of our existing ISPs so we would keep 3 in total. The goal would be to have 10GB/s from 3 separate providers.

We are working on the procurement of new 100GB/s switches to accommodate the new burstable internet connection as well as the next generation XGS-PON equipment. The team has done a lot of research and investigation into the best possible design to be as resilient and secure as possible

Large Fiber Repair Scheduled (11/20/2024)

To proactively address potential fiber issues and improve network reliability, a planned maintenance window is scheduled for November 20, 2024, around midnight. This maintenance will involve the removal, inspection, and re-splicing of a 288-strand fiber.

By addressing this issue proactively, we aim to mitigate the risk of fiber failure during adverse weather conditions like high winds or storms. Additionally, this preventative measure will reduce potential repair time in the event of a fiber failure, avoiding extended service disruptions. By replacing compromised fibers, we strengthen the overall network infrastructure, enhancing network reliability. The case, when rebuilt, will be weather tight and should last 25-30 years (the typical warranted life of fiber).

We apologize for any inconvenience this maintenance may cause and appreciate your understanding. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at broadband@concordma.gov. Find our Maintenance Page here: <https://concordma.gov/3144/Broadband-Maintenance>

Town Network Issues

In early November, the Town's network experienced some issues due to hardware issues and VLAN incompatibilities. So why is this newsworthy? In the last few years, the Broadband team has been working to disentangle the Town's network from the Broadband network so that failure on one does not cascade to the other. For the first time with a failure of this type, we experienced absolutely no impact on the Broadband network! It's a small victory, but we are grateful for the time and effort staff expend to make small changes like this to limit the scope of impact and the overall risk to a critical system.

Municipal Light Plant

Organization, Transition, and Industry

There is a vacancy on the Light Board, which the Town Manager will fill with an appointment once a suitable candidate is located.

On Wednesday, November 6, 2024, Concord's Financial Audit Advisory Committee met to hear the auditors present the Calendar/Fiscal year 2023 audited financials.

On October 24, 2024, the Massachusetts Light Commissioners Association held a discussion on networked geothermal (and geothermal in general). It was a fantastic group of panelists speaking about the gap that networked geothermal fills, the current networked geothermal pilots in Massachusetts, and examples in Oklahoma of a public power entity

giving subsidies for non-networked geothermal and the positive impact that has had on transmission costs.

The Massachusetts state Senate has passed S.2967, which is titled “An Act promoting a clean energy grid, advancing equity and protecting ratepayers.” It was brought up in an informal session of the House, but after a quorum check, there were not enough members present for a vote, so it will need to be discussed and approved at a formal session. There is not a date set for that, but it is expected to happen once the dust settles from the election.

Eric Simms, the Sustainability Director, is working on holding another Sustainability Roundtable in December of 2024. We will circulate more information once we get confirmation of the date, time, and agenda.

The Town Manager is working a Town-wide effort to solidify goal setting for the entire organization. CMLP is involved in a few goals: updating climate targets set in the sustainability plan, working on the topic of CMLP’s governance structure, and better clarifying and allocating cost breakdowns between enterprise funds and between enterprise and general funds.

CMLP’s Director attended Energy New England’s annual strategic retreat in Foxborough in late October. Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy Chair Jeff Roy was in attendance both to talk about the Legislature’s attempts to move the clean energy bills forward as well as listen to the concerns of the MLPs in attendance.

Energy Management

As a follow up to the EV Showcase in September, CMLP’s Energy Efficiency & Electrification Coordinator submitted a letter to the Editor of The Concord Bridge. It was published in the October 25th edition of the newspaper and entitled: CMLP: Electric vehicles are more affordable than you might think.

CMLP staff are streamlining our Optional Air-Source and Ground-Source Heat Pump Rebate Pre-Approval Request Forms to save time for the installers who submit them. We’ve removed questions that we’ve found to be less useful in our heat pump rebate eligibility reviews.

We have added information to the “Rebates, Incentives and Equipment Eligibility Requirements” section of our Heat Pump Rebates for Your Home webpage about Massachusetts Alternative Energy Credits and federal tax credits that can help our customers offset the cost of installing heat pumps.

Energy Efficiency & Electrification Specialist Pamela Cady accomplished several tasks this month that will help our customers and our staff:

- Added Tooltips and links to the diagram on page 2 of our solar explainer, to help customers understand what topics are covered in the explainer, and to help them navigate quickly to the relevant pages.
- Created Excel pivot tables that will automatically break out rebate statistics by income-based rebate level (DriveEV and weatherization rebates), heating fuel (weatherization rebates) and prior water heating fuel (heat pump water heater rebates), for use in reporting to the state and to the community.

Battery Storage and Solar Project Updates

CMLP is excited to announce that they have selected a consultant to assist in the procurement of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) for the Middle School. This system will help to improve the school's energy efficiency and reduce costs. The consultant is currently working on developing the bid specifications for the BESS project. A draft of the Invitation for Bid (IFB) is expected to be released later this month.

CMLP asked AEGIS, our excess liability insurance main underwriter, to provide loss control recommendations to the school, Concord's Fire and Building departments, as well as CMLP operations staff. At least 15 attended the virtual event (separate from the host). The presentation given by AEGIS was comprehensive and informative. We will be incorporating their recommendations for battery safety into our BESS RFP. Given the proximity of the battery to the school, safety will be the driving consideration in our selection process.

Advanced Metering Project Updates

We have approximately 7,137 residential meters installed to date, or approximately 98.3%, with the help of the Hercules Electric contractor. We started installing commercial meters and have installed about 371 meters so far.

CMLP's electrician has installed approximately 325 load control relays for customers who participate in our load control programs (roughly 420 customers) including water heaters and electric thermal storage heaters.

To date, 33 customers with 35 meters have opted out of receiving a new AMI meter.

We are building a virtual gateway for the IP Link meters. Currently we are waiting for Calix, our broadband hardware vendor, to assist with troubleshooting communications issues between the server and the meters.

Engineering and Operations

CMLP is preparing for its annual inventory count and audit in late November/early December. We have also received new lights for the holiday tree and are preparing for installation. Finally, the Level 3 EV Chargers at the Rideout have been made accessible and are operating again.

Power Supply

CMLP met with Minuteman ARC and their consultant to facilitate their fleet electrification plans. There could be as many as 50 vehicles to be converted from ICE to electric. MMWEC visited CMLP's offices to provide an overview of their organization and their load management and rebate processing services.

Customer Service/Metering

Customer Service is assisting with the creation of an employee survey to take a snapshot of current sentiment so we can measure satisfaction over time and after several initiatives are launched.

The team is working with our old smart meter vendor to determine how best to capture the data as we migrate to a new AMS. We have identified tools and resources to assist customers with the transition to Time-of-Use (TOU) rates. We will collect these resources and make them available as a part of our customer education campaign for the TOU rollout.

National Customer Satisfaction Award

Concord Municipal Light Plant (CMLP) has been recognized by the American Public Power Association (APPA) for providing excellent service to the Town of Concord. CMLP was acknowledged with a Public Power Customer Satisfaction Award at the Customer Connections Conference in Louisville, Kentucky.

The award is the result of receiving high marks from their customers in Concord in the areas of:

- Customer service,
- Field personnel,
- Communication
- Reliability,
- Value,
- Outage response,
- Innovation, and
- Overall satisfaction.

“We are in the public power business to serve the people of Concord,” said Jason Bulger, CMLP Director. “To be recognized by the Concord community for our dedication to excellence in this service is incredibly gratifying. We have a great team here at CMLP.”

Winners of Public Power Customer Satisfaction Awards are chosen at gold, silver, and bronze levels based on responses to customer surveys. Concord Municipal Light Plant received a Silver-level award for an average rating greater than 90% across the eight categories listed above from 1,039 survey respondents. The complete survey results can be found at: <https://concordma.gov/3634/2024-CMLP-Customer-Survey-Results>.

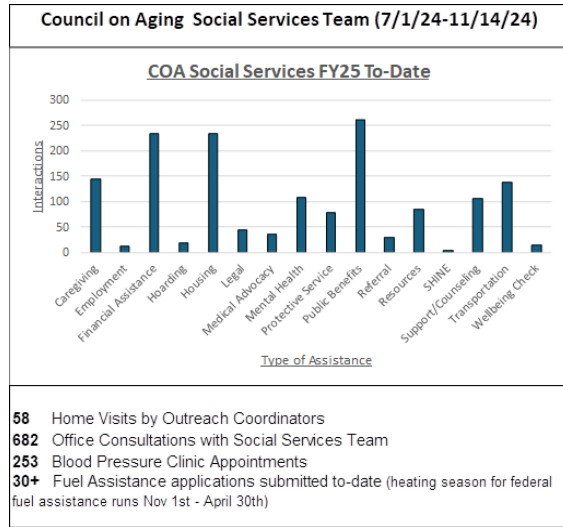
APPA is the voice of not-for-profit, community-owned utilities that power approximately 2,000 towns and cities nationwide. It represents public power before the federal government to protect the interests of the more than 54 million people that public power utilities serve, and the 96,000 people they employ. APPA advocates and advises on electricity policy, technology, trends, training, and operations.

For more information, visit <https://www.publicpower.org/>

Council on Aging

Social Services Chart

To the right is a chart of the types of assistance and number of interactions of the COA Social Services Team this year!



Veteran's Day Breakfast

Dan Petitt/COA director; emcee Bob Marquis/former marine captain, Jess Porter/Asst Town manager; Tina Close, COA program coordinator.

Keynote speaker, Gina Rada, Deputy Director of Operations, Mass Executive Office of Veterans Services



Jess Porter saluted all Concord veterans in attendance



Dick Krug, Concord Veterans Agent



The unflappable and Emerson nurse, Joann Dinardo

