

## **Concord Select Board Citizen Correspondence Publication Policy**

Adopted: January 27, 2025

### **Purpose**

Letters from Concord citizens to the Select Board enhance participation in town government and sharpen the debate on current issues. Citizen correspondence complements other input, such as verbal public comment during Select Board and committee meetings, citizen feedback in public forums and informal discussions between members of the public and individual Select Board or committee members.

According to the Commonwealth's Division of Open Government, the manner that a public body chooses to receive and disseminate public comment is at its discretion. There is no requirement in the Open Meeting Law requiring distribution of the meeting packet in advance of a meeting. However, the Select Board has, in its discretion, decided to publish citizen correspondence to increase the transparency of government by sharing information used in Select Board and committee decision making.

**NOTE: The Town's publication of any letter is not an endorsement, implied or otherwise, of the views expressed therein.**

### **Scope**

Any letter or document sent to Select Board members or town staff in their capacity as municipal employees may be a public record. Public records law already allows anyone to request and review most correspondence to the Town. However, many citizen communications are not of general public interest. This policy clarifies when to publish letters addressed from members of the public to Select Board and supporting town staff.

Letters from Town Boards, Committees, Commissions, Task Forces and other Town of Concord groups will only be posted if the matter addressed in the letter is relevant to the group's primary charge.

While we welcome feedback from all, to be published, correspondence must be from a Concord resident or property owner and include the author's name and physical address.

Letters and emails should be addressed to:

- The Select Board by name,
- A quorum of Select Board members, or
- To a town staff person with an explicit request to distribute the letter to Select Board members.

The correspondence should also discuss matters related to a recent, current, or potential future agenda topic that is within the scope of the Select Board charge.

### **Process**

Correspondence will be posted to the Select Board's webpage on the Town website, which can be found here: <https://concordma.gov/3636/Select-Board-Correspondence>. Correspondence will be compiled and posted every Monday by 12:00 PM. The Select Board and Town staff will coordinate correspondence received to be posted online.

Paper-based correspondence will be scanned and shared online as image files. Messages will be printed in their entirety, including any typographical errors.

The maximum length for publication is two pages (800 words). Shorter letters are preferred and are usually more effective.

### **Exceptions**

Letters will not generally be published<sup>1</sup> that:

1. Do not relate to a recent, current or future agenda topic that is within the scope of the Select Board charge
2. Are sent to individual Select Board members who collectively form less than a quorum (three or more members) of the Select Board
3. Exceed 3 letters by the same individual on the same issue
4. Exceed 15 letters per year from the same individual
5. Are “form” letters sent by many individuals
6. Are sent to town staff, and do not include a request to distribute the letter to the Select Board
7. Contain personally identifiable information (PII) of individuals other than the writer
8. Make threats to the Select Board, town staff, or the town, or any other person
9. Relate to Executive Session matters, such as litigation or collective bargaining, or review of the reputation, character, physical condition, mental health or professional competence of an individual

The Select Board chair and/or the Town Manager may make the determination not to publish any letter when they fall into one or more of the above categories. In this case, the Select Board chair may inform the letter writer of the reason and invite resubmission of the letter without the disqualifying material if the author still desires its publication.

---

<sup>1</sup> Note, however, that these may still be public records.