



Town of Concord
Concord Finance Committee
AGENDA

Thursday, June 26, 2025, at 6:30 PM
Concord Town House

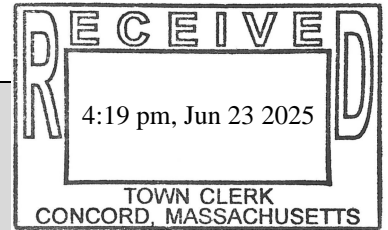
22 Monument Sq., 2nd Fl. Select Board Conference Room

Notice of public meeting as required by M.G.L. Chpt.30A §18-28

HYBRID IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM

Join the meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81161845853?pwd=PVZNHjShxeBJvboGijrQm6lgbo9Fvx.1>

Meeting ID: 811 6184 5853 Passcode: 230551 Dial in Toll-Free: 833-548-0282



*Please be advised that this open meeting is being broadcast live via Zoom and MMN and recorded for playback online, video-on-demand viewing at <https://concordma.gov/2409/Government>. The listings of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours before said meeting, which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may be addressed. Items may be taken out of order and at times differ from those listed below. Other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law. **Video or call will be muted upon joining meeting please use the "raise your hand" feature in the zoom meeting to ask to speak. ATTENDEES ARE REMINDED THAT BY ATTENDING THIS MEETING THAT YOU CONSENT TO YOUR LIKENESS AND AUDIO BEING USED AND REBROADCAST BY MMN.***

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 6:30 PM | 1. Call to Order |
| 6:30 PM | 2. Public Comment <ul style="list-style-type: none">Public Comment is limited to up to 10 minutes, with no more than 2 minutes allocated to any one speaker. Public Comment is limited to items that are not on the agenda. |
| 6:40 PM | 3. Correspondence <ul style="list-style-type: none">Review and discussion of any correspondence received since previous meeting |
| 6:45 PM | 4. Meeting Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none">Discuss and potentially approve the minutes of May 22, 2025, June 2, 2025, and June 3, 2025 |
| 6:50 PM | 5. Finance Committee goals and priorities for 2025-2026 |
| 7:15 PM | 6. Annual Town Meeting Debrief <ul style="list-style-type: none">Town Moderator Carmen Reiss will join |
| 7:30 PM | 7. Liaison assignments for 2025-2026 and liaison reports |
| 7:45 PM | 8. Coordination of reserve fund and other financial policy discussions with the Select Board and Finance Department |
| 8:00 PM | 9. Review of tentative meeting schedule through May 2026 and confirmation of dates for meetings in July and August 2025 |
| 8:30 PM | 10. Recap of Action Items and Adjourn |



Concord Finance Committee
AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

June 26, 2025

1

Call to Order

Requested by: FC Chair

Action Sought: Open Meeting

Proposed Motion(s)

None anticipated.

Additional Information

Board Action

<i>Motion</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>In favor</i>	<i>Opposed</i>	<i>Disposition</i>



Concord Finance Committee
AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

June 26, 2025

2

Public Comment

Requested by: FC Chair

Action Sought: Public Comment

Proposed Motion(s)

None anticipated.

Additional Information

Public Comment is limited to up to 10 minutes, with no more than 2 minutes allocated to any one speaker. Public Comment is limited to items that are not on the agenda.

Board Action

<i>Motion</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>In favor</i>	<i>Opposed</i>	<i>Disposition</i>



Concord Finance Committee
AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

June 26, 2025

3

Correspondence

Mail, letters, emails, presentations, etc.

Requested by: FC Chair

Action Sought: review correspondence

Proposed Motion(s)

None anticipated.

Additional Information

Attached are all the emails that have been sent to the Finance Committee email (finance@concordma.gov), since the meeting on May 22, 2025.

Board Action

<i>Motion</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>In favor</i>	<i>Opposed</i>	<i>Disposition</i>

From: [Miguel Echavarri](#)
To: [Kerry Lafleur](#)
Cc: bill.kemeza@gmail.com; cdenaro74x@gmail.com; [Mark Howell](#); [Wendy Rovelli](#); cameronmckennitt@gmail.com; [Paul Boehl](#); [Terri Ackerman](#); [Mary Hartman](#); [Anthony Ansaldi](#); [Alyssa Sandoval](#); [finance mail](#); ["Kath, Ryan \(NBCUniversal\)"](#); ["Polk, Justin \(AGO\)"](#); [Megan Zammuto](#)
Subject: RE: Investigate the Division of Natural Resources and the WP Dredge Design and RFP
Date: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 10:34:39 AM

Dear Kerry,

My last email wasn't just a follow-up. I provided you with four **examples** of town staff directly misleading the public, town committees and MCI officials – and I specifically **asked** whether you approved or condoned this bad behavior. These were reasonable questions and taxpayers deserved an answer.

Based on your last reply, I **interpret** your unwillingness to address these misrepresentations to mean you **condone** this conduct. I personally find it astonishing that a Concord Town Manager would find such actions acceptable and I have to wonder whether ignoring them will eventually undermine our **trust** (and the trust of state officials and rating companies) in the Town's ability to develop MCI land.

Miguel Echavarri

Homeowner – 255 Commonwealth Ave

From: Kerry Lafleur <klafleur@concordma.gov>
Sent: Monday, June 2, 2025 2:01 PM
To: Miguel Echavarri <miguele@intelimapinc.com>
Cc: bill.kemeza@gmail.com; cdenaro74x@gmail.com; [Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>](mailto:markhowell@concordma.gov); [Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>](mailto:wrovelli@concordma.gov); cameronmckennitt@gmail.com; [Paul Boehl <pauldboehm@gmail.com>](mailto:pauldboehm@gmail.com); [Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>](mailto:tackerman@concordma.gov); [Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>](mailto:mhartman@concordma.gov); [Anthony Ansaldi <aansaldi@concordma.gov>](mailto:aansaldi@concordma.gov); [Alyssa Sandoval <asandoval@concordma.gov>](mailto:asandoval@concordma.gov); [finance mail <finance@concordma.gov>](mailto:finance@concordma.gov); 'Kath, Ryan (NBCUniversal)' <Ryan.Kath@nbcuni.com>; 'Polk, Justin (AGO)' <Justin.Polk@mass.gov>; 'Anderson, Deborah (AGO)' <deborah.anderson@mass.gov>; Kerry Lafleur <klafleur@concordma.gov>; [Megan Zammuto <mzammuto@concordma.gov>](mailto:mzammuto@concordma.gov)
Subject: RE: Investigate the Division of Natural Resources and the WP Dredge Design and RFP

Miguel-

Thank you for your follow-up. I have noted your concerns and will ensure that your message is shared with the appropriate parties, including the Natural Resources Commission.

Kerry

From: Miguel Echavarri <miguele@intelimapinc.com>

Sent: Saturday, May 31, 2025 2:45 PM

To: Kerry Lafleur <klafleur@concordma.gov>

Cc: bill.kemeza@gmail.com; cdenaro74x@gmail.com; Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; cameronmckennitt@gmail.com; Paul Boehl <pauldboehm@gmail.com>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Anthony Ansaldi <aansaldi@concordma.gov>; Alyssa Sandoval <asandoval@concordma.gov>; finance mail <finance@concordma.gov>; 'Kath, Ryan (NBCUniversal)' <Ryan.Kath@nbcuni.com>; 'Polk, Justin (AGO)' <Justin.Polk@mass.gov>; 'Anderson, Deborah (AGO)' <deborah.anderson@mass.gov>; Megan Zammuto <mzammuto@concordma.gov>

Subject: RE: Investigate the Division of Natural Resources and the WP Dredge Design and RFP

Dear Kerry,

While I thank you for your response, it **didn't address** the fact that town staff **misled** the public, MCI and town committees about the composition of pond sediment. You stated that the public trust is paramount in overseeing town operations and managing public funds and I fully agree with that statement.

But **words** matter, as does **truth**, and when they don't coincide the public **trust** suffers. **How** can we trust your office to oversee upcoming projects, such as development of MCI land, when town staff can't be relied upon to **truthfully** relay basic facts and your office looks the other way? For example, it's an important fact that pond sediment is mostly sand but town staff told us it was "muck", "compost", "good soil" and even "fertilizer". None of these descriptions are true.

You've indicated that you're **unwilling** to investigate this matter further. This is unfortunate because it green lights this bad behavior and allows staff to act with **impunity**. If you're unwilling to address this matter, will you at least **answer** some basic, simple questions? These are straightforward and I hope your answers will be delivered in a similar fashion.

Can you forward this email to the NRC? Also, please note the **links** supporting the first four questions.

Caveat: to restate a **key fact**, two sets of laboratory tests, instructions to contractors bidding the RFP, town consultants, staff at DNR and yourself have all confirmed that the **sediment is sand**.

Question 1) Town staff **misled** the public by specifically telling them the sediment was "...not sands or gravel...". **Does** your office approve and condone this misrepresentation? Link below.

- [League of Women Voters, Warner's Pond Update, December 8, 2023](#)

Question 2) Town staff **allowed** MCI officials to believe they were receiving compost for their

farm operations. This resulted in MCI allowing staff (on paper) to place a sediment disposal site on restricted prison property. Restrictions associated with the site ultimately killed the project. Notwithstanding the implications associated with these actions, **does** your office approve and condone the misleading of MCI officials? **And** do you suppose this may impact future discussions with the state regarding MCI land should they learn of these misrepresentation? Link below.

- [Warners Pond Restoration Community Meeting, March 2, 2023](#)

Question 3) Town staff **mised** the NRC when they told members the prison would accept the sediment as compost. Staff with DNR are funded by our tax dollars to support the NRC and I find it troubling that DNR would mislead them on this matter. **Does** your office approve and condone of staff misleading the NRC who they're hired to support? **And** do administrators routinely mislead town committees? Link below.

- [Warners Pond Restoration Community Meeting, March 2, 2023](#)

Question 4) Town staff **told** the CPC that MCI agreed to accept sediment as compost for their fields because it was fertilizer. **Does** your office approve of staff misleading the CPC? Or **does** it actually believe sand is fertilizer? Link below.

- [CPC meeting, December 1, 2021](#)

Question 5) Town staff have **represented** that they didn't know about restrictions related to the MCI prison site. But in 2017, they were warned about restrictions. And eleven months prior to the RFP, their consultants underwent rigorous security measures to inspect the site. **Does** your office truly believe they didn't know the site came with security measures? **Considering** the misrepresentations staff made about pond sediment, the public has a right to question the veracity of their claims.

I urge you to help us understand **why** staff misled us on the sediment and **how** this was done in the public interest. And since they were allowed to make these misrepresentations with impunity, **should** MCI and state officials really trust your administration moving forward?

I look forward to your response.

Miguel Echavarri
Homeowner – 255 Commonwealth Ave

From: Kerry Lafleur <klafleur@concordma.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, May 28, 2025 11:12 PM
To: Miguel Echavarri <miguele@intelimapinc.com>

Cc: bill.kemeza@gmail.com; cdenaro74x@gmail.com; Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; cameronmckennitt@gmail.com; Paul Boehl <pauldboehm@gmail.com>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Anthony Ansaldi <aansaldi@concordma.gov>; Alyssa Sandoval <asandoval@concordma.gov>; finance mail <finance@concordma.gov>; 'Kath, Ryan (NBCUniversal)' <Ryan.Kath@nbcuni.com>; 'Polk, Justin (AGO)' <Justin.Polk@mass.gov>; 'Anderson, Deborah (AGO)' <deborah.anderson@mass.gov>; Kerry Lafleur <klafleur@concordma.gov>; Megan Zammuto <mzammuto@concordma.gov>

Subject: RE: Investigate the Division of Natural Resources and the WP Dredge Design and RFP

Miguel,

Thank you for your detailed correspondence and for taking the time to compile and share your concerns regarding the Warner's Pond dredge design. I appreciate your thoughtful engagement and your clear commitment to ensuring transparency, accountability, and responsible stewardship of public resources—values I share deeply in my role as Town Manager.

I have reviewed your letter and the supporting documentation. While I understand your concern that a project of this scale did not move forward as anticipated, many of the conclusions you draw appear to rely on assumptions that may not fully account for the complex technical, regulatory, and operational realities that shaped the project over time.

To clarify, the Warner's Pond Restoration Project was informed by multiple stages of professional review, public process, and inter-agency coordination. Sediment composition was evaluated through core sampling and laboratory testing in both 2012 and 2018. These findings—which confirmed that the majority of the material consisted of fine to coarse sand—were included in consultant reports, discussed in public forums, and formally clarified through the procurement process. Access and security requirements related to the proposed sediment disposal site at MCI-Concord were also the subject of communication between Town staff, contracted engineers, and the Department of Correction, and relevant site constraints were communicated to bidders during the RFP process.

With respect to the concern regarding potential misuse of public funds, I would note that the project expenditures in question—approximately \$154,000—were used to procure environmental engineering services to inform the design, permitting, and feasibility assessment of a publicly authorized project. These activities fall within the scope of eligible uses for the Community Preservation Act funds allocated to the initiative. Based on the available information, there is no indication that the funds were used for any purpose other than that for which they were appropriated. While questions about project planning and communication are fair and important, it is equally important to distinguish between dissatisfaction with a project outcome and an allegation of financial misconduct, which requires a far higher threshold of evidence.

While you raise serious concerns regarding communication and project management, it is also necessary to distinguish between deliberate misrepresentation and the kinds of evolving conditions that often arise in multi-agency environmental projects. Without a formal fact-finding process—which I am not committing to undertake—it would not be appropriate to draw conclusions regarding intent, negligence, or misuse of funds.

That said, I want to be clear that the public's trust in how we manage both process and resources is paramount. Town staff are entrusted with making thoughtful, informed decisions on behalf of the community, and that trust includes a responsibility to communicate clearly, manage funds responsibly, and learn from experience. Where opportunities exist to improve how we approach and communicate about complex projects, we take that responsibility seriously. I will ensure that your letter and the materials you've provided are shared with the appropriate staff for review, and I welcome your continued engagement in the Town's work.

Thank you again for bringing your concerns forward in such a detailed and constructive manner.

Sincerely,

Kerry A. Lafleur

Town Manager

From: Miguel Echavarri <miguele@intelimapinc.com>

Sent: Saturday, May 17, 2025 11:26 AM

To: Kerry Lafleur <klafleur@concordma.gov>

Cc: bill.kemeza@gmail.com; cdenaro74x@gmail.com; Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; cameronmckennitt@gmail.com; Paul Boehl <pauldboehm@gmail.com>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Anthony Ansaldi <aansaldi@concordma.gov>; Alyssa Sandoval <asandoval@concordma.gov>; finance mail <finance@concordma.gov>; 'Kath, Ryan (NBCUniversal)' <Ryan.Kath@nbcuni.com>; 'Polk, Justin (AGO)' <Justin.Polk@mass.gov>; 'Anderson, Deborah (AGO)' <deborah.anderson@mass.gov>

Subject: Investigate the Division of Natural Resources and the WP Dredge Design and RFP

Dear Kerry,

Please **refer** to the attached letter.

The letter asks your office to **investigate** the conduct of our Division of Natural Resources (DNR) as pertains to the Warner's Pond dredge design and RFP. Specifically, was their **conduct** appropriate, did they **waste** \$154K of taxpayer funds and worse, did they **misuse** those funds by designing an **unusable** and unworkable dredge design that was destined to fail and in the process **misled** town committees, the public and MCI? **Finally**, was this intentional or just an epic case of poor project management? Either way, there should be **accountability** because Concord taxpayers entrusted DNR with \$154K of public funds and those funds were wasted.

I understand that these are **serious questions** and they're not asked lightly. But as you'll see by the attached letter and footnotes, it appears DNR may have **misled** MCI into accepting pond sediment as compost for their prison farm (the sediment was sand) which then **allowed**

DNR to place a sediment disposal site on a restricted part of the prison. DNR then **failed** to ask about security restrictions associated with accessing the site and this raised disposal costs by \$4.5M (on a \$3M project) effectively killing the project. They later **claimed** they didn't know about the restrictions but these claims are **simply not credible** because [1] eleven months prior to the RFP, engineers hired by DNR had to undergo rigorous security checks just to inspect the site and [2] in 2017, MCI specifically told DNR about restrictions. So it's **implausible** DNR didn't know about the restrictions.

Please be sure to **view the video links** shown in the footnotes which provide specific examples of DNR telling the public and town committees that MCI would accept the sediment as compost for their farm, omitting any mention that the sediment was sand. There's also a link of DNR directly telling the public the sediment wasn't sand but muck.

I've reposted that link below – **why** would DNR make this statement unless they meant to purposefully mislead the public? **Why** would they want to mislead the public and **why** are my tax dollars being used to fund departments that are being **dishonest** with the public? At this point it's fair to ask, **what** was their endgame in making these misrepresentations?

[League of Women Voters, Warner's Pond Update, December 8, 2023](#)

Would you please forward this email and letter to the NRC and the CPC?

Sincerely,

Miguel Echavarri

Homeowner – 255 Commonwealth Ave

From: [Gina Stark](#)
To: [Justin Richardson](#)
Cc: [finance mail](#); [Kerry Lafleur](#); [Elizabeth Hughes](#); [Megan Zammuto](#); [Steve Dookran](#); [Ron Holsinger](#)
Subject: Re: Pedestrian Safety
Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 10:11:51 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

Caution: This is an external email and has a suspicious subject or content. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments. When in doubt, contact the IT Department (support@concordma.gov).

What are the minor improvements and on what timeline? An entire school year has just passed us.

Gina
952-240-8374

On Tue, Jun 17, 2025, 10:07 AM Justin Richardson <jrichardson@concordma.gov> wrote:

Gina,

We have heard your concerns, but we are still waiting on the Stantec's Comprehensive Transportation Study recommendations and prioritization process through available resources.

As previously mentioned, CPW Engineering will do what is in our power and resources to make minor improvements in the interim.

Thank you.

Justin Richardson, PE | Assistant Town Engineer

Office: (978) 318-3210 | direct (978) 318-3213

[**jrichardson@concordma.gov**](mailto:jrichardson@concordma.gov)

From: Gina Stark <ginasborella@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 10:59 AM

To: Justin Richardson <jrichardson@concordma.gov>

Cc: finance mail <finance@concordma.gov>; Kerry Lafleur <klafleur@concordma.gov>; Elizabeth Hughes <ehughes@concordma.gov>; Megan Zammuto <mzammuto@concordma.gov>; Steve

Dookran <sdookran@concordma.gov>; Ron Holsinger <rholsinger@concordma.gov>

Subject: Re: Pedestrian Safety

Caution: This is an external email and has a suspicious subject or content. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments. When in doubt, contact the IT Department (support@concordma.gov).

Justin,

Thanks for the response, yet again. I want to be clear that we, as residents, want to be part of the solution.

1. I understand the 85% data. However, it is my understanding that it is a bylaw that can be changed at any time if CPW or CPD requests it. Plus, this is being used out of context. It is irrelevant that the cars are speeding only 15 % of the time. The speed of that road is now too fast for the ratio of volume of cars to that of pedestrians. Where is the study or the statistics that take into consideration the speed, number of cars and number of pedestrians? In another state when this became an issue, there was a study that measured every metric I mentioned above (counting car volume to commercial vehicles, pedestrian and bike volume, times of day, direction of travel and speed etc etc) to determine appropriate and safe traffic patterns so I know this can be done.

2. This is great! When is CPD planning on reviewing this? It seems like there has been sufficient time to review the walk audit and make a decision. What other metrics have been gathered to determine if the speed is SAFE for non-motorists. If it is not safe then what is the timeline for lowering the speed limit and/or implementing road calming measures, both short and long term? Have we looked into additional resources like non-profit Vision Zero which Cambridge and Somerville have used?

3. I appreciate things always take longer than anticipated. However, the town has been talking about Santec and a Comprehensive Transportation Study for a long time. Years in fact. I see a number of items on the town's website dating back to 2019. At some point a perfectly imperfect plan needs to be made and executed before the data is no longer relevant. And again, in the meantime, there are low cost ways to substantially increase safety even if they are not a permanent solution. And there IS money for that per TAC. How do we put it to use?

4. I feel like we are going around and around here. I am sorry that the town is struggling to come up with attainable solutions and execution plans. That said, I am so happy that Article 8 was passed last night! However, I am extremely concerned because Art 8 does NOT cover new infrastructure and fear that pedestrian safety improvements will get gobbled up by road repair projects. We have to make sure AT THE VERY LEAST getting our children safely to and from school is IMMEDIATELY addressed.

All that said, I will say again, many neighbors, parents and residents want to be part of the solution. We would like to offer our support and help. Any insight on how we can be part of the solution would be appreciated and passed on. Thanks for working on this important safety solution. I look forward to a specific resolution.

Gina (Borella) Stark

952-240-8374

On Thu, May 29, 2025 at 7:37 AM Justin Richardson <jrichardson@concordma.gov> wrote:

Gina,

I wanted to follow up on Ron's most recent response to you with additional information:

1. In the event that there is misunderstanding of the use of the 85th percentile data, I want to give a further explanation. The measuring of the 85th percentile speed is commonly used for agencies like MassDOT to set the regulatory posted speed limit as the safe and efficient vehicle travel speed on that section of road. Likewise, if the 85th percentile is the same as the posted speed limit like it is here on Thoreau St, then the conclusion is that speeding does not appear to be an issue.
2. In addition to CPD's plan to continue to monitor traffic in the area, CPW plans to review the area to determine if a reduction in lane width is applicable. If deemed applicable, the reduction in lane width will be implemented by moving the fog line (white edge line) closer to the roadway centerline and thus providing a larger roadway shoulder. Generally, the reduction in lane width has a traffic calming effect by causing vehicles to travel slower.
3. CPW in conjunction with the Department of Planning Land Management (DPLM) has been working with a consultant, Stantec on a Comprehensive Transportation Study, and part of this study is to help the Town prioritize safety improvement projects based on

projects already identified (for example, those on the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan, etc.) and requested projects brought to the attention of the TMG. It is my understanding that the safety projects priorities will be determined through a number of factors that include but are not limited to location, volume of use, proximity to schools, proximity to public transit, etc. I anticipate the Walk Audit for the Alcott Elementary School will be leveraged similarly to how the Walk Audit for the Thoreau Elementary School was used to request and receive a Safe Routes To School - Signs and Lines Grant. This grant was requested by DPLM with CPW providing technical support and construction estimates. The Walk Audits are requested by the Schools and typically, without CPW Engineering's knowledge, so a timeline for implementation is difficult to predict as the funding for the improvements were not incorporated into CPW capital funding requests and grant funding can only be applied for when grants are available.

4. CPW asks for your patience as it always accepts inquiries and strives to respond to the myriad of requests in a timely manner. Regarding the TMG, this is a group made up of staff from Town departments to facilitate review of resident inquiries on traffic and parking related matters. The TMG puts requests for sidewalks, crosswalks, signs and the like on a list for discussion when they meet and this list is for internal (Town staff) tracking and recording only. The TMG has coordinated with the consultant, Stantec preparing the Comprehensive Transpiration Study regarding resident requests obtained. The group does not manage or have funding for projects, but only provides recommendations related to the request that are received. Similar to above, timeline for recommended projects is based on funding and is difficult to predict.

Thank you for helping us make our roads safer.

Justin Richardson, PE | Assistant Town Engineer

Office: (978) 318-3210 | direct (978) 318-3213

jrichardson@concordma.gov

From: Gina Stark <ginasborella@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, May 15, 2025 10:54 AM

To: Ron Holsinger <rholsinger@concordma.gov>

Cc: Justin Richardson <jrichardson@concordma.gov>; finance mail <finance@concordma.gov>;

Kerry Lafleur <klafleur@concordma.gov>; Elizabeth Hughes <ehughes@concordma.gov>;

Megan Zammuto <mzammuto@concordma.gov>; Steve Dookran <sdookran@concordma.gov>

Subject: Re: Pedestrian Safety

Thanks for the response, Ron. I know you have a big job and everyone is spread thin.

To recap, while there is certainly room for improvement per the Safe Route walk audit, I am not as concerned about the crossing of Laurel and Thoreau nor am I as concerned about the car crash data on Thoreau St, although the increase in car crash data as a whole does indicate safety for pedestrians is decreasing and I do not want a child to be a victim when they are just trying to get to school. Again, I am concerned about getting to a safe place to walk to school. Nobody coming from the east side of Thoreau and Walden Streets can get to a designated crossing point OR away from the vehicles. I want to emphasize that the 35 MPH speed limit is too fast for a highly pedestrian area. The speed limit should be reduced and enforced and there needs to be a separated pedestrian lane/area.

This response still does not outline what exactly the plan is. I do not know that this is a perceived issue as it is a real, objective issue. Is it actually safe for elementary age children or even high school kids to walk on the shoulder of the road that is a foot in width at best with 35mph traffic? Is that safe? I objectively know that it is not.

I am certain the town can come up with a solution. Per TAC there is money available for temporary solutions, maybe they should be consulted? What could be implemented immediately while the town navigates the available grants and funding they will be requesting?

I know we can do better. I look forward to a response and solution.

Gina (Borella) Stark

952-240-8374

On Wed, May 14, 2025 at 4:22 PM Ron Holsinger <rholsinger@concordma.gov> wrote:

Hi Gina,

CPD will continue to prioritize Thoreau Street and Walden Street for traffic enforcement, as we prioritize all school zone. Concord has six secondary schools, one middle school, and three elementary school with three patrol officers working per shift. We will continue to provide a crossing guard on Thoreau Street by Laurel Street during CCHS and Alcott arrival

times, and Alcott dismal. I believe Thoreau Street has benefitted from the new Hi-Viz MUTCD approved school zone signs installed. These signs have reflective speed boards that help remind and educate motorist regarding speed.

Moving forward, CPD will assist CPW to determine if Thoreau Street does have safety shortcomings. We can deploy our traffic data collector to obtain more accurate data than our message boards collect. Crash data from 2024 show Thoreau Street had relatively low number with seven crashes. As compared to Main Street – 45 MVCs, Sudbury Road – 29 MVCs, Elm Street – 22 MVCs, ORNAC – 21 MVCs, Commonwealth Ave. – 20 MVCs, Walden Street – 18 MVCs, Lowell Road – 12 MVCs.

It's very understandable that traffic concerns are very personal and are perceived as real and dangerous. I receive similar request almost daily. We do our best to look at the data and current standards to priorities where we put our limited resources.

Best

Ron

From: Gina Stark <ginasborella@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, May 9, 2025 11:32 AM

To: Justin Richardson <jrichardson@concordma.gov>

Cc: finance mail <finance@concordma.gov>; Kerry Lafleur <klafleur@concordma.gov>;

Elizabeth Hughes <ehughes@concordma.gov>; Megan Zammuto

<mzammuto@concordma.gov>; Steve Dookran <sdookran@concordma.gov>; Ron Holsinger

<rholsinger@concordma.gov>

Subject: Re: Pedestrian Safety

Thank you for your detailed response and for the updates regarding the ongoing and upcoming projects related to traffic enforcement and the Complete Streets Walden Street Sidewalk Project. I appreciate the efforts of CPW Engineering and CPD in addressing these concerns.

However, it remains evident that pedestrian safety improvements, particularly on Thoreau Street, require a more urgent, targeted and immediate approach. The data indicating the 85th percentile speed of 35.35 mph suggests that traffic continues to move at a pace that poses a significant risk to pedestrians, particularly in areas with school zones and high foot traffic WITHOUT ANY PEDESTRIAN designated lanes or area. What, specifically, is CPD putting into action? One account of a speed board does NOT constitute an action plan. I would be curious to know if

the stats would change if the speed board visual was left off and the data was simply counted. We need additional, specific calming measures. While the town figures out Art 8, what will be done for pedestrian safety on Thoreau St for the children trying to get to school? Current measures are not creating any sort of safer environment.

While Article 8 is a noted effort, the exact plan of execution remains unclear to the residents of Concord, and the continued delay increases the risk to pedestrians. It would be beneficial for residents to see a more clearly defined plan that outlines specific projects and their projected timelines because currently there is NO budget in the \$27.5M for any ADDITIONAL infrastructure. I believe the remark stating, 'this funding includes a budget for pedestrian safety improvements in town' is misleading. This would not cover additional areas near the schools unless additional grants came into play. And certainly not for other areas of town. Current infrastructure is obsolete. As we can see by the Complete Streets project, additional funding takes quite a while. Longer than we have to make getting to school safe.

Article 8: Proposed 5 Year Spend Down

Component	Pavement: \$7.5M/yr (2yr) Ped/Bike: \$750k/yr	Pavement: \$7.5M/yr (2yr) Ped/Bike: \$1.0M/yr	Pavement: \$7.5M/yr (2yr) Ped/Bike: \$1.2M/yr	Pavement: \$5.75M/yr (4yr) Ped/Bike: \$650k/yr	Pavement: \$5.75M/yr (4yr) Ped/Bike: \$1.0M/yr	Pavement: \$5.75M/yr (4yr) Ped/Bike: \$1.2M/yr
	Pavement	\$24.0M	\$24.0M	\$24.0M	\$25.0M	\$25.0M
Pedestrian & Bike Safety Improvements	\$3.75M	\$5.00M	\$6.00M	\$3.25M	\$5.00M	\$6.00M
New Sidewalks	\$0.00M	\$0.00M	\$0.00M	\$0.00M	\$0.00M	\$0.00M
TOTAL*	\$27.8M	\$29.0M	\$30.0M	\$28.3M	\$30.0M	\$31.0M
Tier III	\$18.8M	\$20.0M	\$21.0M	\$25.6M	\$27.5M	\$30.0M

Getting back to the items at hand, I would appreciate further clarification on the following points:

1. WHAT specifically is CPD's IMMEDIATE action plan?
2. Per the Alcott Elementary School Walk Assessment Report there is need

for **improvements** in areas identified as high-risk. How will the Alcott School Walk Assessment be leveraged to inform the prioritization of pedestrian safety projects, and what is the anticipated timeline for **improvements along with grant applications** based on this assessment? How will the **priority items outlined in the Alcott School Walk Assessment be prioritized exactly?** What is the anticipated timeline?

3. Regarding this “list” that the TMG has and talks about. Why can’t residents see it and the timelines? Based on my interaction, I feel the town is bothered by inquiries.

Thank you for your continued attention to these matters, and I look forward to **additonal responses and updates.**

Sincerely,

Gina (Borella) Stark

952-240-8374

On Fri, May 9, 2025 at 9:08 AM Justin Richardson <jrichardson@concordma.gov> wrote:

Hi Gina,

In response to your questions see the numbered answers below:

1. As mentioned in my previous email to you on 12/5/2024 “CPD will also continue their traffic enforcement on Thoreau Street.” Since the previous email, CPD deployed the speed board on Thoreau Street in close proximity to your area of concern, and the collected data indicates that the traveling speed on Thoreau Street shows that the 85th percentile is 35.35 mph which has been determined as reasonable for the roadway existing speed limit of 35 mph.

Additionally in the 12/5/2024 email, CPW Engineering committed to “review the area to determine if a reduction in lane width is applicable. If deemed applicable, the reduction in lane width will be implemented by moving the fog line (white edge line) closer to the roadway centerline and thus providing a larger roadway shoulder. Generally, the reduction in lane width has a traffic calming effect by causing vehicles to travel slower. Just to make you aware, if applicable, this will not be completed until the weather is conducive for pavement markings and CPW’s 2025 Pavement Markings contract has been executed with

the selected contractor.” This is still the plan and currently we are preparing the bid documents for CPW’s 2025 Pavement Markings contract.

2. CPW Engineering has received and reviewed the Alcott Elementary School Walk Assessment Report dated 2/24/2025.

3. The agreement for the Complete Streets Walden Street Sidewalk Project on Walden St has been executed. CPW Engineering has requested and received a proposal from a design firm to perform the design for this project. We are currently finalizing the scope and negotiating the fee with the design firm. We hope to have a contract in place soon.

Also, as mentioned in my previous 12/4/2024 email in response to your traffic calming request, “the project was added to a list of requested sidewalk and crosswalk locations that the TMG maintains as a result of several similar requests. This list is used by CPW as backup for our Pedestrian Safety and Bike Improvements capital funding requests. We also use projects from this list when applicable State and Federal grants become available for the Town to apply for.” The Alcott School Walk Assessment will help us in applying for these grants.

Additionally, at this year’s Annual Town meeting there is an article for the Town to borrow approximately 27.5 million dollars to be spent over the next 5 years to improve the Town’s roadways, and this funding includes a budget for pedestrian safety improvements in town. If the Town meeting vote is favorable for this article, CPW Engineering will then have some funding available for pedestrian safety improvements. At this time, priorities for the projects are still being determined, and it is difficult to say how Thoreau St will be ranked since it depends on the available budget. Your support would be valued for this article.

Please let me know if you have any other questions.

Thank you.

Justin Richardson, PE | Assistant Town Engineer

Office: (978) 318-3210 | direct (978) 318-3213

[***jrichardson@concordma.gov***](mailto:jrichardson@concordma.gov)

From: Gina Stark <ginasborella@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2025 1:19 PM

To: Justin Richardson <jrichardson@concordma.gov>

Cc: finance mail <finance@concordma.gov>; Kerry Lafleur <klafleur@concordma.gov>;

Elizabeth Hughes <ehughes@concordma.gov>; Megan Zammuto

<mzammuto@concordma.gov>; Steve Dookran <sdookran@concordma.gov>; Ron

Holsinger <rholsinger@concordma.gov>

Subject: Re: Pedestrian Safety

Hello,

I am hoping for an update on a few things here:

1. What else can be done more long term on Thoreau St. Speeding and unsafe pedestrian conditions have shown an increase with the more mild weather. The traffic board was ineffective once removed.
2. Has someone from the town reviewed the safety audit from Safe Routes to school?
3. What is the status of the MassDot agreement and contract work on Walden St?

Many thanks for the response.

Best,

Gina (Borella) Stark

952-240-8374

On Thu, Dec 5, 2024 at 7:18 AM Justin Richardson <jrichardson@concordma.gov> wrote:

Hi Gina,

For larger projects such as this, CPW Engineering will typically set up a webpage on the website specific to the project. We would typically do this after the construction contract has been awarded so that we can provide updates on the construction. When the webpage is set up, I will send you the link.

In discussions with Officer Holsinger, he has offered to move the speed board to that section of Thoreau Street in the next few days. The board collects traffic/speed data that will be used to determine if speeding is an issue. CPD will also continue their traffic enforcement on Thoreau Street. CPW Engineering will review the area to determine if a reduction in lane width is applicable. If deemed applicable, the reduction in lane width will be implemented by moving the fog line (white edge line) closer to the roadway centerline and thus providing a larger roadway shoulder. In some cases, the reduction in lane width has a traffic calming effect by causing vehicles to travel slower. Just to make you aware, if applicable, this will not be completed until the weather is conducive for pavement markings and CPW's 2025 Pavement Markings contract has been executed with the selected contractor.

The measures mentioned above will be implemented in the short term.

Thank you.

Justin Richardson, PE | Assistant Town Engineer

Office: (978) 318-3210 | direct (978) 318-3213

jrichardson@concordma.gov

From: Gina Stark <ginasborella@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 10:31 AM

To: Justin Richardson <jrichardson@concordma.gov>

Cc: finance mail <finance@concordma.gov>; Kerry Lafleur <klafleur@concordma.gov>;

Elizabeth Hughes <ehughes@concordma.gov>; Megan Zammuto

<mzammuto@concordma.gov>; Steve Dookran <sdookran@concordma.gov>; Ron

Holsinger <rholsinger@concordma.gov>

Subject: Re: Pedestrian Safety

Justin, Thanks for your response, also. I will update the neighborhood on the Walden project. Where do we see and get updated on this on the town website? When I search 'Complete Streets' or 'Walden Street' I get 1000 pages of nothing more recent than 2023 which appears to be the sidewalk improvement downtown.

Regarding Traffic Calming, I must not be communicating clearly. I know that Officer Holsinger responded to me and understand there is no immediate budget for sidewalk improvements on Thoreau St. However, Officer Holsinger was not given any other response or solution to the problem. My question, again, is what can be done in the meantime? As I have stated, it is increasingly hard for children and aging/elderly adults to maintain safety in their everyday lives. The traffic is too fast and there is no safe place to get off the road while walking to school, as example. I can think of at least 4 things that could be implemented and enforced easily at a minimal expense. What solutions will be considered?

Thanks again for the response.

Gina (Borella) Stark

952-240-8374

On Wed, Dec 4, 2024 at 9:07 AM Justin Richardson
<jrichardson@concordma.gov> wrote:

Hi Gina,

Below are the answers to your questions:

1. Your request was discussed at the 9/16/2024 Traffic Management Group (TMG) Meeting, and Ron Holsinger, a member of the TMG, responded to your request via email on 10/24/2024. The result of the discussion at the TMG was that this project was not a planned improvement that was on the Town's radar and was not included in the approved Complete Streets Prioritization Plan list. The project was added to a list of requested sidewalk and crosswalk locations that the TMG maintains as a result of several similar requests. This list is used to by CPW as backup for our Pedestrian Safety and Bike Improvements capital

funding requests, and we also use projects from this list when applicable State and Federal grants become available for the Town to apply for.

2. We are working on the agreement between MassDOT and the Town to have it executed within the next few weeks. We will then select a Design Consultant to perform the survey and prepare a design. If all goes according to plan, we may be able to have a bid out in late spring or summer of 2025. After the project is bid and a contractor selected, we hope to have construction start later in 2025.

I hope this answers your questions. Feel free to reach out to me if you have any other questions.

Thank you.

Justin Richardson, PE | Assistant Town Engineer

Office: (978) 318-3210 | direct (978) 318-3213

jrichardson@concordma.gov

From: Gina Stark <ginasborella@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 3:06 PM

To: Justin Richardson <jrichardson@concordma.gov>

Cc: finance mail <finance@concordma.gov>; Kerry Lafleur <klafleur@concordma.gov>; Elizabeth Hughes <ehughes@concordma.gov>; Megan Zammuto <mzammuto@concordma.gov>; Steve Dookran <sdookran@concordma.gov>

Subject: Re: Pedestrian Safety

Thanks for the response. Yes, this is good news. I do have some questions as I am sure the neighbors will, as well. Immediately the questions are:

1. Where is the traffic calming request I submitted? Has anyone seen it? Is it being considered? What else do you need from me and the neighborhood?
2. What is the timeline on the contract review and start of

construction?

Gina (Borella) Stark

952-240-8374

On Tue, Dec 3, 2024 at 1:40 PM Justin Richardson
<jrichardson@concordma.gov> wrote:

Ms. Stark,

You requested an update on the Town's Complete Street Grant application. CPW Engineering submitted an application requesting \$500,000.00 for the construction of an asphalt sidewalk on Walden Street from Magnolia Street to Brister's Hill Road, which was Item #4 on the Town's approved prioritization plan with MassDOT. I have attached a map that shows the scope of the work. We are excited because we were just informed by MassDOT that we will be awarded our requested amount.

Currently, the Town is reviewing the agreement with MassDOT. Once the agreement is executed, CPW Engineering will begin the process of finding a consultant to perform the design of the project.

Please let me know if you have any questions related to the Complete Streets Grant.

Thank you.

Justin Richardson, PE | Assistant Town Engineer

Office: (978) 318-3210 | direct (978) 318-3213

[***jrichardson@concordma.gov***](mailto:jrichardson@concordma.gov)

From: Gina Stark <ginasborella@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 10:47 AM
To: Megan Zammuto <mzammuto@concordma.gov>
Cc: finance mail <finance@concordma.gov>; Kerry Lafleur <klafleur@concordma.gov>; Elizabeth Hughes <ehughes@concordma.gov>; Steve Dookran <sdookran@concordma.gov>
Subject: Re: Pedestrian Safety

Some people who received this message don't often get email from ginasborella@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hi,

I have not heard from anyone. I am still hoping to get an update on the pending grant and what we can do in the meantime about keeping everyone safe. I have been reading through the Complete Streets Funding Guidelines. It seems the response time is pretty structured and the entire process is about 6 months?. Can someone provide an update regarding where are we at in the application process? Lastly, I would like to know what the options are for safety that can be implemented more immediately. I have yet to receive an update on the neighborhood request for 'Traffic Calming', as well. I look forward to your response.

Program Schedule and Milestones

The Complete Streets Funding Program deadlines are detailed in the graphic below. Tier 1 Complete Street policies may be submitted and reviewed by MassDOT at any time. Tier 2 Prioritization Plans may be submitted up to one month in advance of a Tier 3 funding round. MassDOT reviews Tier 3 applications and awards funds twice a year. All municipalities must move through the program sequentially, completing steps from the previous tier. A Municipality Requirements Checklist is provided in Appendix B.

FIGURE 3: PROGRAM DEADLINES

	TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3	TIER 3
	POLICY	PRIORITIZATION PLAN	CONSTRUCTION APPLICATION	NOTICE TO PROCEED
ROUND 1	Rolling	April 1	May 1	August
ROUND 2	Rolling	September 1	October 1	February
MASSDOT RESPONSE	3 weeks	4 weeks	3 months	2 months from award notification

Gina (Borella) Stark

952-240-8374

On Tue, Nov 19, 2024 at 10:09 PM Gina Stark <ginasborella@gmail.com> wrote:

Thanks for the response again. I have, indeed, filled out the form and have supplied signatures from the immediate neighbors plus some. I'm happy to keep going here and gather more. It was given to Officer Holzinger 6 weeks ago or more . Has it not been submitted for review or consideration? How do I confirm this is in front of the proper people at the proper time? I'm confused by the disconnect here and why it takes so long to obtain communication, information and feedback.

It would be great to hear from Steve as the need to solve this is urgent. A VW GTI passed over the double yellow line to over take another car on Thoreau Street last week. There has been no sign of the requested police speed enforcement, no sidewalk, no pedestrian lane and young children and aging citizens trying to safely use the road. There has been no response from the school safety office in response to the email I've send providing license plates and evidently no submittal of the traffic calming request I completed 6 weeks ago or more.

What am I missing? Please help.

Gina
952-240-8374

On Tue, Nov 19, 2024, 8:45 PM Megan Zammuto <mzammuto@concordma.gov> wrote:

Hello Ms. Stark,

Thank you for your reply. I will defer to my colleague **Steve** to connect you with the latest Complete Street materials for your review.

Traffic calming requests typically come to our [Traffic Management Group](#).

Our policy and form to report a problem can be found here. [Microsoft Word - 2022 Traffic Calming Policy\[100\].doc](#).

I recognize your concern about students traveling safety to and from school as a key priority. Members of our Transportation Advisory Committee have been strong advocates for the Safe Routes to School program, and we were recently awarded a grant to implement various signage and line painting modifications that were identified in a recent walk audit for the Thoreau School. I think our preference would be to expand this assessment to other schools in Town – and I will ask **Elizabeth** to follow up directly to share if there are any additional audits being planned at this time.

Thank you again for your comments and suggestions on this topic.

Megan J. Zammuto (she/her)

Deputy Town Manager

Town of Concord

[22 Monument Square](#)

[Concord, MA 01742](#)

978-318-3006

mzammuto@concordma.gov

From: Gina Stark <ginasborella@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, November 13, 2024 4:51 PM

To: Megan Zammuto <mzammuto@concordma.gov>

Cc: finance mail <finance@concordma.gov>; Kerry Lafleur

<klafleur@concordma.gov>; Elizabeth Hughes <ehughes@concordma.gov>;

Steve Dookran <sdookran@concordma.gov>

Subject: Re: Pedestrian Safety

Thanks for responding.

I understand that there is a 'transportation and mobility vision'

and a contract with Sentac. That part is clear to me. I have, indeed, looked through all the information online. It is pretty poorly outlined to be frank. There are many links to inconclusive and disjointed information. Where is the information on the Complete Streets grant and why is the complete loop for Thoreau and Walden not feasible? It seems like the addition to integrate both would be nominal. It is a small, yet key portion to our thriving downtown and historic attractions. Afterall, the train station is on Thoreau Street. The parking lot at Crosby's is used for commuter overflow. The tourists walk down Thoreau St. I know this because I stop people and ask. Obviously the study did not include any of this type of research.

That said, while we work on the sidewalks, there are other ways to keep pedestrians safe that do not require the finances of installing a sidewalk. We should maybe start there. I have suggestions, the first of which is reducing the speed limit and actually enforcing it. The second is that public works actually maintains the shoulders appropriately. There are 3 kids that live less than a half mile from school that have to walk on the road. Winter is upon us soon. What are the options here?

I am looking forward to more insight and getting this figured out. Thanks for your time.

Gina (Borella) Stark

952-240-8374

On Tue, Nov 12, 2024 at 8:36 PM Megan Zammuto
<mzammuto@concordma.gov> wrote:

Hello Ms. Stark,

My apologies for the delay in responding. Thank you for sharing your concerns about pedestrian safety along Thoreau Street and Walden Street. We recognize the importance of safe, accessible sidewalks to support Concord's residents and visitors and appreciate your proactive input.

Pedestrian improvements are central to Concord's **Transportation and Mobility Vision**, developed by our **Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)** to address Concord's diverse transit needs. This vision emphasizes creating a transportation system that prioritizes pedestrian safety and accessibility, with the goal of a more connected and walkable community.

Currently, our consultants at Stantec are focusing on the first action outlined in this plan, which involves assessing and managing our existing street and sidewalk infrastructure. Walden Street has been identified as a priority area based on feedback from recent public forums and surveys. The Town applied for a Complete Streets grant to support sidewalk construction here, and we are awaiting a decision from MassDOT.

Although Thoreau Street between the Concord-Carlisle High School driveways has not yet been specifically prioritized, we understand the importance of this corridor. This and other key areas may be considered in future plans to enhance pedestrian safety as we work toward the community's shared transportation vision.

Thank you again for your valuable input. Please feel free to reach out with any further questions or insights. For more details on the TAC's goals and the Transportation and Mobility Vision, you can also visit [this link](#).

Sincerely,

Megan J. Zammuto (she/her)

Deputy Town Manager

Town of Concord

[22 Monument Square](#)

[Concord, MA 01742](#)

978-318-3006

mzammuto@concordma.gov

From: Gina Stark <ginasborella@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, October 25, 2024 11:43 AM

To: finance mail <finance@concordma.gov>; Kerry Lafleur

<klafleur@concordma.gov>; Megan Zammuto
<mzammuto@concordma.gov>; Elizabeth Hughes
<ehughes@concordma.gov>

Subject: Pedestrian Safety

Some people who received this message don't often get email from ginasborella@gmail.com.
[Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Town of Concord Officials,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the safety of pedestrians in our town due to the lack of adequate sidewalks in many areas. As a resident of Concord, I have witnessed firsthand the risks faced by pedestrians, particularly children and the elderly, who are forced to share the road with vehicles.

The absence of sidewalks, particularly on Thoreau Street between the two CCHS driveway entrances and along Walden St up to Route 2 and Walden Pond, create a dangerous environment for pedestrians, increasing the likelihood of accidents and injuries. This is particularly troubling given the growing number of pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists sharing our roads.

It is my understanding that, in prior years, the need for sidewalks was determined by the automobile volume and the number of residences, rather than the volume of bike and foot traffic. Should a pedestrian audit be conducted, I am certain the findings will show the crucial need to shift our focus away from counting automobiles to counting pedestrians. Living on Thoreau Street, not only do we lack a safe way of getting children to school, we see a steady stream of pedestrian traffic all year long from the train station/Crosby's market towards Walden Pond. Therefore, I request that the town allocate funds to study pedestrian safety and mobility, which is equally, if not more important than automobile infrastructure. By investing in both, we can create a transportation system that is safe, accessible, and sustainable for all.

I urge the town of Concord to prioritize pedestrian safety and invest in the construction of sidewalks along major roadways and residential areas. This would not only improve the overall quality of life for our residents but also contribute to a more pedestrian-friendly community for tourists that help support the local economy.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to your prompt response and action on this urgent issue.

A series of vertical lines of varying heights and thicknesses, arranged in a row on the left side of the page.

Sincerely,

Gina (Borella) Stark

952-240-8374

From: [Naomi Rosenfeld](#)
To: [finance mail](#)
Subject: Thank you.
Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 11:09:17 AM

You don't often get email from naomi.rosenfeld@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

I am writing in appreciation of the reports that you supplied for the Town Warrant. I especially appreciated the list of how much each warrant would add to an average taxpayer's bill. I think this is the first time I've seen this in my many years of going to Town Meeting. I also found it very interesting to read the explanation of minority votes on articles that were not unanimously decided.

Thanks for the many hours of work you have all provided to keep our community functioning and our decision making informed.

Naomi Rosenfeld
389 Garfield Rd.

From: [Miguel Echavarri](#)
To: [Kerry Lafleur](#)
Cc: [bill.kemeza@gmail.com](#); [cdenaro74x@gmail.com](#); [Mark Howell](#); [Wendy Rovelli](#); [cameronmckennitt@gmail.com](#); [Paul Boehl](#); [Terri Ackerman](#); [Mary Hartman](#); [Anthony Ansaldi](#); [Alyssa Sandoval](#); [finance mail](#)
Subject: Why did EA use different dredge costs depending on the audience?
Date: Thursday, June 19, 2025 9:33:58 AM

Dear Kerry,

*Here's something else your office should look into – **did** EA apply and/or quote different cost estimates for dredging based on its audience? Please **note** the questions at the end of this email. Can you forward to NRC and CPC?*

- *For example, EA **quoted** \$45/cubic yard (CY) to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC). It even **confirmed** this cost with another engineering firm, SUMCO. But six months later, as part of its Alternatives Analysis Report (AAR), it appears that EA **doubled** the cost to \$95/CY. But they **told** the public it was \$60/CY. **Why** the inconsistency and **why** in just six months did EA double the actual (not the stated cost) of dredging? To reiterate, the \$45/CY was confirmed by a third party. Please note that the high cost of dredging cited in the AAR led to a dam removal recommendation.*

Consider the following.

Two months after the Warner's Pond (WP) dredge bid failed, the Town issued a **sole source contract** to EA Engineering to generate an Alternative Analysis Report (AAR) which was supposed to provide Concord residents with alternative plans for the pond, including options for dredging and dam removal.

But the report **failed** to provide a viable dredge option because the dredge footprint was too small and the cost deemed too high. It appears that EA overestimated the dredge option by \$485K. And because dredging was deemed unviable, EA recommended **dam removal** as the best option for the pond.

- Based on EA's detailed **cost breakdown** of dredging in Section C of the Alternatives Analysis Report, EA estimated \$1.3M for "Dredging/sediment placement". As noted in the footnotes of Table 4-3 of the report, this was based on \$60 per cubic yard (CY) to dredge 14K cubic yards. And herein lies the problem, the **numbers don't add up**; when \$60/CY is applied to 14K cubic yards the amount is \$840K, not \$1.3M. Thus, it appears EA **overestimated** dredging costs by \$485K. As an **aside**, the 14K cubic yard dredge area was deemed too small to be considered viable. One reason for the reduced footprint was supposedly due to the high cost of dredging. ([link to AAR](#), note the WPTF site is slow to load)

The **actual** cost EA used to generate the estimate appears to be \$95/CY*, not \$60/CY. **Why** would EA cite a lower number? (*Calculation: \$1,325,000 cost/ 14,000 CY dredge area = \$95/CY)

And only six months prior, EA provided cost estimates to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) based on \$45/CY to dredge a much larger footprint of 55K cubic yards. **Furthermore**, in an email with town staff, EA confirmed the \$45/CY dredging cost with another engineering firm, SUMCO. (CPC estimates and emails are available upon request)

Between the low cost of \$45/CY, and a large dredge area of 55K cubic yards, the option provided to the CPC was attractive and likely a **key reason** why CPC allowed a \$550K CPA grant application, that was written for dredging, to also be used for other options including dam removal.

Summary: To the **CPC**, EA provided a viable and attractive dredge plan that likely played a key role in convincing the CPC to free up monies for dam removal. To the **public**, EA provided an option that was too small for consideration, too expensive and ultimately led to a dam removal recommendation; EA would later be the **only bidder** on a \$215K DR design award, a contract that was funded by monies freed up by the CPC. Consider the points below.

1. To the **CPC** – EA’s option was to dredge **55K** cubic yards.
2. To the **Public** – EA’s option was to dredge **14K** cubic yards.

-
3. To the **CPC** – EA estimated dredge cost at **\$45/CY** .
 4. To **Town Staff** – EA **confirmed** the \$45/CY cost with a third party, SUMCO.
 5. To the **Public** – EA (via AAR) used **\$95/CY** to generate its dredge cost estimate.
 6. To the **Public** – EA erroneously told the public it was **\$60/CY**.

Questions:

- a. **Why** did EA tell the public the AAR dredge option was \$60/CY when it used \$95/CY?
- b. **How** did EA go from telling town staff and CPC that the cost was \$45/CY, to using \$95/CY in estimates to the public, especially after it verified \$45/CY with a third party (SUMCO)?
- c. **Under** what contract did EA get paid to provide cost estimates to the CPC?
- d. **How** did EA go from presenting a 55K cubic yard dredge area to the CPC, to only 14K cubic yards to the public? The former was attractive; the latter wasn’t viable.
- e. **Who** wrote the RFP for the dam removal design contract that resulted from EA’s AAR dam removal recommendation? **Was** it EA, if so was this appropriate?

There are **other issues** associated with this sole source contract. **For example**, most of the

key dam removal benefits that EA presented to the public were later debunked by EA itself, meaning that the benefits of DR were either overstated or untrue. While this brings up another set of questions, this email is strictly focused on inconsistencies with EA's dredge costs. This too should be looked into.

Sincerely,

Miguel Echavarri

Homeowner – 255 Commonwealth Ave



Concord Finance Committee
AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

June 26, 2025

4

Minutes

Requested by: Karlen Reed, Clerk

Action Sought: Seek Approval

Proposed Motion(s)

MOVE to approve the Finance Committee minutes for May 22, 2025, June 2, 2025, and June 3, 2025.

Additional Information

Attached are the minutes from the May 22, 2025, June 2, 2025, and June 3, 2025 meetings for review and potential approval.

Board Action

<i>Motion</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>In favor</i>	<i>Opposed</i>	<i>Disposition</i>

Town of Concord
Minutes of the May 22, 2025
Meeting of Finance Committee
Hybrid Meeting

Members Present: Kathy Cuocolo, Eric Dahlberg, Pat Geyer, Greg Guarriello, Don Kupka, Lyndsey Lis, Dee Ortner, Karlen Reed, Quazi Sadruzzaman, Sri Tupil (on line), Lois Wasoff.

Members Absent: Suresh Bhatia, Peggy Briggs, John Garofalo, Paul Rodriguez

Others Attending: Anthony Ansaldi (CFO), Ryan Ferrara (Asst. CFO), and members of the public.

1: Call to Order: of the Finance Committee Meeting at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Dahlberg. Materials are in the FinCom meeting packet.

2: Public Comment: None.

3: Minutes: Ms. Ortner moved and Ms. Wasoff seconded the approval of the May 1, 2025 minutes as presented. Vote: 10 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain. The motion passed.

4: Correspondence: Chair Dahlberg noted that FinCom received the May 16, 2025 MA Dept. of Revenue, Division of Local Services certification as of July 1, 2024 of our FY24 Free Cash (\$15,898,216). This report also certified the balance of the Swim & Fitness (Beede Center) Enterprise fund (\$4,344,017). Members expressed surprise at the free cash balance, as Mr. Ansaldi had estimated the balance at \$10.4M.

Mr. Ansaldi presented a slide deck explaining free cash. The FY23 certified free cash level was \$9.8M, and after 2024 Town Meeting ended the balance was \$9.3M. This amount then increased by \$139.9K excess state aid (Cherry Sheet receipts), \$2.89M excess local receipts (including \$1.9M in interest), \$3.48M unexpended appropriations, and \$83K in other adjustments, totaling \$15.898M. He calculated the free cash available after 2025 Annual Town Meeting would be \$13,784,726, assuming Articles 10, 18, 19, 25, and 33 are passed. FY24 certified free cash can be accessed now until June 30, 2025.

Mr. Kupka asked for a specific drill-down report on the higher-than-expected free cash level -- where the excess \$3M came from and what changes have been made to keep from being surprised like this in the future. Members questioned the reasons for the unexpected increase, whether these were one-time events, whether they all occurred in 2024, why the encumbrances were not spent, and whether there is too much cushion in free cash. The Committee also requested a detailed report on all options to use the excess free cash, including stabilization funds. Ms. Reed noted that the \$15.898M figure equates to 11% of the overall 2025 Town Budget (\$145M), a jump from the 6% target level described in the Finance Committee's Report to Town Meeting.

Mr. Ansaldi noted that the \$3.48M in unexpended appropriations primarily reflected unspent health insurance and salary reserves, unspent 2024 FinCom reserve fund, closed out old purchase orders, and a clean-up of converted accounts. He also observed that we still have unpaid COVID expenses and FEMA expenses, which will have a negative \$750K impact on free cash, and he recommended setting aside \$1M from free cash to cover them. This would bring the available free cash to \$12.78M. Mr. Ansaldi

recommended using a \$12M figure going forward and recommended putting the excess free cash in stabilization funds to earn interest for the Town. He has hired an accounting firm (CLA) to help clean up the Town accounts and reconcile free cash.

5: Liaison Reports: In addition to the reports in the meeting packet, Ms. Reed reported that the PEG Access Advisory Committee will present the final Comcast contract to the Select Board on June 30 for approval. Mr. Kupka noted that the MCI Concord Advisory Task Force will hold public outreach workshops on May 28 and May 29. Mr. Ansaldi introduced the new Assistant Chief Finance Officer, Ryan Ferrara, who worked with Mr. Ansaldi in Littleton and served on the Arlington Finance Committee. Chair Dahlberg sought comments on his draft letter to the Bridge regarding the Finance Committee Report.

6: Preparation for Annual Town Meeting: Chair Dahlberg reminded the Committee that Town Meeting starts June 2 at 6:30 p.m. and that attendance is important for a quorum. He will post an agenda for June 2 at 5:45 p.m. in the CCHS library to consider unfinished Town Meeting business, possibly a vote on Articles 18 and 19 (Stabilization funds). Committee members reviewed the possible speaking assignments per Article. FinCom is expected to speak on the Town and School budgets and will note the budgets met the FinCom guidelines. Members discussed whether Article 33 (\$250K appropriation for MCI Concord) should be moved, given the funding's inclusion in a pending Senate budget bill.

7: Finance Committee Schedule and Goals: Chair Dahlberg and the Committee reviewed the progress on the 2024-25 schedule, goals, and deliverables. They noted the development of financial policies, the capital planning process, asset lives, communication efforts, resident surveys, Minuteman Tech updates, written liaison reports, working with the Carlisle Finance Committee on Regional High School budgets, special education, other towns' experiences with commercial development, guidelines process, increasing the revenue base, economic vitality, land use planning task force, and FinCom schedules.

8: Finance Committee Officers for 2025-2026: The Committee considered a slate of officers for 2025-2026: Chair Lois Wasoff, Vice Chair Lyndsey Lis, Clerk Karlen Reed, Vice Clerk Pat Geyer, Guidelines Chair Don Kupka, and Guidelines Vice Chair Paul Rodriguez. Upon a motion by Mr. Tupil and second by Ms. Cuocolo, the Committee approved the slate. Vote: 11 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain. The motion passed. Their terms begin after Town Meeting adjourns.

9: Farewell to Departing Members: Ms. Ortner and Mr. Guarriello have both served six years as Finance Committee members. The Committee showed their deep appreciation for Ms. Ortner and Mr. Guarriello and wished them well in their next endeavors.

10: Adjournment of Finance Committee meeting: Chair Dahlberg will post the next agendas for Town Meeting, which are June 2 (5:45 p.m.), 3, and 4, 2025 (Annual Town Meeting). Ms. Wasoff, incoming Chair, set the next meeting as June 26, 6:30 p.m.; she will meet with other committee chairs and expressed her preference to schedule the following Committee meeting in early August. Mr. Ansaldi will provide additional information on the certified free cash increase and options for using free cash. Ms. Reed will post the approved minutes. Chair Dahlberg adjourned this meeting at 8:05 p.m.

YouTube: Ctrl+Click to follow link: [May 22, 2025 Finance Committee Public Hearing and Meeting video](#)

Meeting Documents Link: [May 22, 2025 Finance Committee Public Hearing and Meeting packet](#)

Town of Concord
Minutes of the June 2, 2025
Meeting of Finance Committee
Learning Commons, Room 241, CCRSD

Members Present: Suresh Bhatia, Peggy Briggs, Kathy Cuocolo, Eric Dahlberg, John Garofalo, Pat Geyer , Greg Guarriello, Don Kupka, Lyndsey Lis, Dee Ortner, Karlen Reed, Paul Rodriguez, Quazi Sadruzzaman, Sri Tupil, Lois Wasoff.

Members Absent: None.

Others Attending: Anthony Ansaldi (CFO), Ryan Ferrara (Asst. CFO), Zach Lamoureux, Senior Financial Analyst; Cynthia Rainey, Julie Viola, School Committee; and members of the public.

1: Call to Order: of the Finance Committee Meeting at 5:45 p.m. by Chair Dahlberg. He explained that the purpose of the meeting was to consider and vote on Articles 18 and 19.

2: Public Comment: None.

3: 2025 Annual Town Meeting – Finance Committee Business:

- Article 18, Capital and Debt Stabilization Funds – Members discussed whether to move Article 18 (create capital and debt stabilization funds), which is a FinCom Article. Chair Dahlberg noted the Select Board voted “no action” on Article 18 and Article 19 because the Select Board had not yet settled on a policy for Town reserve accounts. Mr. Ansaldi encouraged the FinCom to be concerned about possible future Town budget cuts due to loss of federal funds, and he opined the stabilization funds could be used to offset those losses. Members noted that, although the Select Board was not ready to act, the FinCom should offer its own opinion. There was little Member support for Article 18 at this time. Ms. Ortner moved and Mr. Rodriguez seconded a motion not to move Article 18. Vote: Unanimous support, so Article 18 will not be moved at Town Meeting.
- Article 19, General Stabilization Fund – Chair Dahlberg observed that Town Meeting will inquire about the unusual amount sought in FinCom’s Article 19 (increase existing general stabilization fund): \$1,093,584. Members asked whether the amount should be reduced to \$1M or increased given the newly certified free cash level. Mr. Ansaldi explained the rationale behind Article 19 and the calculation of the current number, and he urged the Committee to move Article 19 forward. He noted that Town Meeting can appropriate funds from a stabilization fund by a 2/3 vote at a Special Town Meeting, and that free cash cannot be used until it has been certified so stabilization funds can be accessed more quickly than free cash. He observed, in response to a public comment, that Articles which rely on borrowing (rather than being paid through free cash) can later be paid down using free cash, depending on the borrowing structure. Members noted that Article 19 would be a new direction for FinCom – placing excess free cash in stabilization funds, rather than paying down the annual tax bill. Members expressed general support for Article 19. Mr. Guarriello moved and Ms. Ortner seconded a motion to move and

recommend affirmative action on Article 19. Vote: Unanimous support, so Article 19 will be moved at Town Meeting with FinCom's recommendation of affirmative action.

Chair Dahlberg said that he would inform the Town Moderator of the Committee's votes.

4: Adjournment of Finance Committee meeting: The next FinCom meetings are June 3 and 4, 2025 (Annual Town Meeting) and June 26, 6:30 p.m. (Regular Meeting). Chair Dahlberg adjourned this meeting at 6:10 p.m.

YouTube: Ctrl+Click to follow link: This meeting was not videotaped.

Meeting Documents Link: [June 2, 2025 Finance Committee Meeting Agenda](#)

Town of Concord
Minutes of the June 3, 2025
Meeting of Finance Committee
Annual Town Meeting floor

Members Present: Suresh Bhatia, Peggy Briggs, Eric Dahlberg, John Garofalo, Don Kupka, Lyndsey Lis, Dee Ortner, Karlen Reed, Paul Rodriguez, Quazi Sadruzzaman, Sri Tupil, Lois Wasoff.

Members Absent: Kathy Cuocolo, Pat Geyer (Greg Guarriello later joined)

Others Attending: None

1: Call to Order: of the Finance Committee Meeting at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Dahlberg. This was an impromptu meeting of the Committee at the beginning of Town Meeting to discuss whether the Committee should reconsider and revote its position on Article 19 (increase the General Stabilization Fund by \$1,093,584).

2: 2025 Annual Town Meeting – Finance Committee Business: Chair Dahlberg reported that he received a request from the Select Board asking the Finance Committee to reconsider its June 2 vote to move Article 19 and recommend affirmative action because the Select Board had not started its policy review of Town reserve accounts. Mr. Kupka moved and Ms. Briggs seconded a motion to reconsider our June 2 vote on Article 19 and to not move Article 19. Members discussed the merits of reconsideration, with views expressed both in favor and against the Select Board’s request. As a result of a tie (6-6) vote, the motion to reconsider failed. The FinCom resumed its place at Town Meeting and moved Article 19, which ultimately passed by a majority vote of Town Meeting.

3: Adjournment of Finance Committee meeting: The next FinCom meetings are June 4, 2025 (Annual Town Meeting) and June 26, 6:30 p.m. Chair Dahlberg adjourned this meeting at 6:45 p.m.

YouTube: Ctrl+Click to follow link: The June 3, 2025 FinCom meeting was not videotaped.

Meeting Documents Link: [June 3, 2025 Finance Committee Agenda.](#)



Concord Finance Committee
AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

June 26, 2025

5

Finance Committee 2025-2026 Goals and Priorities

Discuss Finance Committee 2025-2026 goals and priorities

Requested by: FC Chair

Action Sought: discussion dependent

Proposed Motion(s)

None anticipated.

Additional Information

The Finance Committee Chair Eric Dahlberg has requested this agenda item. The Finance Committee will be reviewing goals and priorities for Operations, Capital Planning, Revenue, Financial Policies Liaisons and Communications.

Board Action

<i>Motion</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>In favor</i>	<i>Opposed</i>	<i>Disposition</i>

FINANCE COMMITTEE 2026 GOALS AND PRIORITIES

OPERATIONS

- Hit all target dates for key Finance Committee responsibilities (preliminary and final guidelines, 5-year tax projection, conduct of hearings, warrant article recommendations, annual report, etc.).
- Do we want to do more work through subcommittees or working groups addressing specific topics in depth, perhaps jointly with other town committees (such as the Select Board and Economic Vitality)?

CAPITAL PLANNING

- Support further development and refinement of unified long-term capital plan (Town and Schools), including holding joint hearings with SB and Schools, as scheduled by SB.
- Work with SB, Town and Schools to understand priorities among and anticipated scale of various projects.
- Review current debt obligations and current debt retirement schedules; discuss overall Town debt capacity considering state guidelines and other criteria,

REVENUE

- Work with key stakeholders (Select Board, Economic Vitality, MCI Task Force, Land Use Working Groups, Planning Board and others) to identify and prioritize opportunities for revenue generation from sources other than residential property tax.
- Support roll-out of PILOT program.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

- Work with Select Board and relevant town staff to review existing financial policies, including policies dealing with reserves, and to develop and recommend revisions or the implementation of new policies, where appropriate.

LIAISONS

- Prioritize areas flagged for additional attention, including those addressing possible revenue opportunities.
- Discuss and decide whether liaison assignments should be rotated to permit members to get broader experience or whether it is better to take advantage of

institutional memory that can be developed through keeping past liaison assignments in place.

- Collaborate with Carlisle Finance Committee (especially on CCRSD).

COMMUNICATIONS

- Make 5-year tax projection and annual report more interactive – allow taxpayers to adjust/estimate impacts.
- Identify and utilize channels that can be used for communication to residents, such as the new Minuteman Network town channel; increased interaction with the Concord Bridge; citizen surveys; other?



Concord Finance Committee
AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

June 26, 2025

6

Annual Town Meeting Debrief

Debrief with Town Moderator

Requested by: FC Chair

Action Sought: discussion dependent

Proposed Motion(s)

None anticipated.

Additional Information

The Finance Committee Chair Lois Wasoff has requested this agenda item. Town Moderator Carmin Reiss will join the Finance Committee for a discussion about the 2025 Annual Town Meeting.

Board Action

<i>Motion</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>In favor</i>	<i>Opposed</i>	<i>Disposition</i>



Concord Finance Committee
AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

June 26, 2025

7

Liaison Assignments

Committee Assignments for 2025-2026

Requested by: FC Chair

Action Sought: assign members

Proposed Motion(s)

None anticipated.

Additional Information

Attached is the Concord Finance Committee assignments for 2025-2026. Removed from last year's list: 2229 Main Street Advisory Task Force (final report completed); Warner Pond Task Force (scheduled to deliver final report on June 23, then disband); Concord Middle School Building Committee (expected to complete work in October 2025).

Board Action

<i>Motion</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>In favor</i>	<i>Opposed</i>	<i>Disposition</i>

Committee Assignments – 25/26

Board/Committee	Assigned Liaison(s)
Board of Assessors	
Community Preservation Committee	
Concord 250 th Committee*	
Concord Municipal Affordable Housing Trust	
Concord Municipal Light Plant	
Economic Vitality Committee	
Land Use Working Group (New for FY26)	
MCI Concord Advisory Board	
Minuteman Vocational Technical HS	
Planning Board	
Public Works Commission	
Recreation Commission	
Schools (CPS and CCRSD)**	
Select Board	Lois Wasoff

Removed from last year's list: 2229 Main Street Advisory Task Force (final report completed); Warner Pond Task Force (scheduled to deliver final report on June 23, then disband); Concord Middle School Building Committee (expected to complete work in October 2025).

*May be deleted from list, depending on extent of anticipated activities in 2025/26.

** Two observers to be assigned.



Concord Finance Committee
AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

June 26, 2025

8

Reserve Fund and Financial Policies

Coordination of reserve fund and other financial policy discussions with the Select Board and Finance Department

Requested by: FC Chair

Action Sought: discussion

Proposed Motion(s)

None anticipated.

Additional Information

Documents attached are for background reference only.

Board Action

<i>Motion</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>In favor</i>	<i>Opposed</i>	<i>Disposition</i>

MEMORANDUM

TO: Select Board, Town of Concord
Mary Hartman, Chair

FROM: Finance Committee, Town of Concord
Eric Dahlberg, Chair

DATE: 7 April 2025

RE: Proposed changes to town reserves policy – for review and discussion

Purpose and Summary

The purpose of this memorandum is to outline recommended changes to the Town of Concord’s policies on reserves. This is in follow-up to the Finance Committee presentation at the March 24th Select Board meeting and the subsequent discussion at the March 27th Finance Committee meeting.

The Finance Committee recommends that the Town consider revising its financial policies on reserves to more closely reflect guidance from the Commonwealth and to align the use of these funds with the Town’s long term needs.

Concord’s related policies are items 7.A, 7.C and 7.E. of [Town of Concord Financial Policies](#)¹.

Background from the Commonwealth Reserve Funds

In January the Massachusetts Department of Revenue issued a bulletin titled [Free Cash](#)² noting:

The Financial Management Resource Bureau (FMRB) recommends that communities understand the role free cash plays in sustaining a strong credit rating and encourages them to adopt policies on its use.

And

As a nonrecurring revenue source, free cash should be restricted to paying one-time expenditures, funding capital projects, or replenishing other reserves.

The Massachusetts Department of Revenue lists five types of reserve funds, including free cash, on its webpage: [Highly Recommended: Financial Reserves](#)³.

1. Annual Reserve Funds - [M.G.L. c. 40, §6](#), “...reserve funds appropriated as part of the annual budget, to provide for extraordinary or unforeseen expenditures.”
2. General Stabilization Funds - [M.G.L. c. 40, §5B](#) “provide emergency funds for use in a major or significant event, such as natural disaster, an uninsured loss, damage to a capital asset, or prolonged

¹ Financial Policies” February 2, 2017

Jonathan A. Harris, Budget and Purchasing Director, Finance Department, Town of Concord, Massachusetts
<https://concordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/24187/Town-of-Concord-Financial-Policies>

² “Free Cash” January 2025, Massachusetts Department of Revenue

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/the-importance-of-free-cash/download#:~:text=To%20do%20this%2C%20the%20community,fund%20equivalent%20of%20free%20cash.>

³ “Highly Recommended: Financial Reserves” November 17, 2022

Massachusetts Department of Revenue

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/highly-recommended-financial-reserves>

decrease in revenue.” and “A recommended goal is typically in the five to seven percent of the current operating budget range.”

3. *Special Purpose Stabilization Funds – “The most common special purpose stabilization fund is for funding capital related project, equipment, and maintenance. Other special purpose funds include vehicle replacement, technology upgrades, and road maintenance.”*
4. *Free Cash – “...we recommend that as much as practicable, communities limit their use of free cash to funding one-time expenditures (e.g., capital projects, snow and ice deficits, or emergencies), or use it to fund other reserves. Further, we recommend defining a target balance for free cash certification as a percentage of the general fund budget, such as five to seven percent, and striving to keep a targeted year-end unappropriated free cash balance to fund the next certification.*
5. *Other Continuing Balance Accounts – “These include the account for allowance for abatements and exemptions, known as the overlay, and accounts for future expenses for unemployment compensation, workers’ compensation, compensated absences, and retirement.”*

General and Special Purpose Stabilization funds will help achieve two key goals for the Town of Concord:

1. Maintain Level Services: General Stabilization Funds help to tide towns over in the event of a temporary shortfall in revenue during the fiscal year. Concord receives over \$6 million in aid annually. Approximately \$20 million of revenue is outside of the levy. These revenue sources are beyond our control and far exceed the headroom to our levy limit. We could not make up for them by raising property taxes. We need a contingency; either a reserve fund or a plan for reduced services, in case of an unexpected shortfall in revenue from these sources. A General Stabilization Fund will help achieve our objective of maintaining Town services during a temporary revenue shortfall.
2. Replacing Concord’s buildings, roads, and other capital assets: Special Purpose Stabilization Funds for planned capital projects reduce the resulting tax increase, bringing these objectives closer to realization. , Although it covered just 4.5% of the project cost, the Middle School Stabilization Fund is an example. Benefits include:
 - Reduces the magnitude of change in residential tax bills from one year to the next.
 - Helps maintain the Town’s AAA bond rating, helping minimize the cost of debt.
 - Helps fund and plan for “life-cycle” investments in the Town’s physical assets to minimize annual maintenance and operating expenses and maximize the useful life of the assets.

With this background and these points of rationale in mind, the Finance Committee recommends a “refresh” of reserves policy – to reflect that we will continue to prioritize meeting a healthy Free Cash target and designating remaining year-end balances to stabilization funds. We present a draft reserves policy for the Select Board’s consideration on the following page.

Proposed Changes to Concord FINANCIAL POLICIES

7. Reserves

A. *Free Cash*

1. *It is Town policy to maintain Free Cash, the General Fund's unassigned fund balance as certified by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR), at a level between 5% and 7% of the ensuing General Fund Budget with the following stipulations:*
 - a. *Free Cash shall be used only to the extent that it can reasonably be expected to be replenished within a one-year period.*
 - b. *Until the Stabilization Fund(s) have reached their target balance(s), Free Cash use is restricted to paying one-time expenditures, funding capital projects, replenishing other reserves, or filling Stabilization Funds.*
 - c. *Free Cash in excess of 7% of the ensuing General Fund Budget shall be allocated to the General Stabilization Fund and/or Special Purpose Stabilization Funds until those funds have reached their target balances.*
 - d. *When all Stabilization and Reserve Funds are fully funded, Free Cash in excess of 7% of the ensuing General Fund Budget shall be used to provide relief to Town taxpayers by allocating a portion of Free Cash that is in excess of 7% to reduce the tax levy.*
 - e. *If Free Cash falls below 5% of the ensuing General Fund Budget, Town Manager and the Finance Director shall develop a plan to bring Free Cash back up to the 5% level within the current fiscal year.*

C. *Stabilization Funds*

1. *It is Town policy that stabilization funds shall be created to set aside funds for General Stabilization and for specific purposes.*
2. *The Town shall maintain a General Stabilization Fund*
 - a. *Target balance of between 5% and 7% of the ensuing year's General Fund Budget*
 - b. *General Stabilization Fund expenditure shall be limited to emergency use in a major or significant event, such as natural disaster, an uninsured loss, damage to a capital asset, or prolonged (through end of current fiscal year) decrease in revenue outside of the Town's control.*
3. *Special Purpose Stabilization Funds*
 - a. *The Town shall create one or more Capital Stabilization Funds in coordination with the Town's Long Range Capital Plan, with the goal to prevent an unusually large increase in taxes caused by the project.*
 1. *Target balances for each fund to be proposed by the Town Manager, reviewed by the Finance Committee, and approved by the Select Board.*
 2. *Capital Stabilization Funds shall be expended for their stated purpose or transferred to other reserve funds.*

E. *Annual Reserve Fund*

1. *The Town Manager may include an Annual Reserve Fund in their proposed budget for anticipated expenses which cannot reasonably be known at the time the budget is prepared.*
2. *The Town Manager, with the certification as to fund balance by the Town Accountant, may request to the Finance Committee for a transfer from the Annual Reserve Fund to another appropriated account in the event that the account incurs an expenditure which is extraordinary or unforeseen, per M.G.L. 40 § 6. The Finance Committee shall have the sole authority to approve such a transfer.*



Informational Guideline Release

Bureau of Municipal Finance Law
Informational Guideline Release (IGR) No. 24-12
March 2024

Supersedes IGR 17-20 and Inconsistent Prior Written Statements

STABILIZATION FUNDS

([G.L. c. 40, § 5B](#) and [G.L. c. 59, § 21C\(g\)](#))

This Informational Guideline Release (IGR) informs local officials about changes made by [§ 8 of chapter 77 of the Acts of 2023](#) that distinguished general purpose stabilization funds and special purpose stabilization funds and amended the vote quantum requirement for appropriations from special purpose stabilization funds to a simple majority.

Supersedes IGR 17-20 and Inconsistent Prior Written Statements

STABILIZATION FUNDS
(G.L. c. 40, § 5B and G.L. c. 59, § 21C(g))

SUMMARY:

These guidelines inform local officials about [G.L. c. 40, § 5B](#), which establishes city, town and district stabilization funds.

Under [G.L. c. 40, § 5B](#), municipalities and districts may create one or more stabilization funds, which are special reserves into which monies may be appropriated and reserved for later appropriation for any lawful municipal purpose. [G.L. c. 40, § 5B](#) now distinguishes between a general purpose stabilization fund, which is created for the later appropriation of any lawful purpose, and a special purpose stabilization fund, created for the later appropriation of a more specific purpose or purposes. Voters may also approve a Proposition 2½ override in order to fund appropriations for a particular stabilization fund. Monies accumulated in a stabilization fund carry over from one fiscal year to another, and interest remains with that fund.

As a result of [§ 8 of chapter 77 of the Acts of 2023](#) and Municipal Modernization Act, [St. 2016, chapter 218, § 22](#), there have been significant changes to [G.L. c. 40, § 5B](#) in recent years. First, the caps on the amount that could be appropriated into the fund in any year and the aggregate balances of all stabilization funds were eliminated by the Municipal Modernization Act. Previously, municipalities and districts could not appropriate into a stabilization fund in any year an amount exceeding 10 percent of the prior year's tax levy, or a larger amount, without the approval of the Director of Accounts, and the total reserved in all funds could not exceed 10 percent of the equalized valuation of the municipality or district.

Second, as a result of the Municipal Modernization Act, appropriations made into either the general or special purpose stabilization fund are approved by a majority vote, instead of a two-thirds vote. Appropriations from a general purpose stabilization fund must be approved by a two-thirds vote, but per [§ 8 of chapter 77 of the Acts of 2023](#), appropriations from a special purpose stabilization fund must only be approved by a majority vote. A two-thirds vote is needed to create either stabilization fund or to change their purpose.

Third, the local treasurer has a broader range of investment options consistent with the 2014 amendments to municipal and district trust fund investments under [G.L. c. 44, § 54](#) and banking laws governing the Commissioner of Bank's authority to establish a list of sound investments for banking institutions. [St. 2014, c. 343](#). Finally, a local acceptance provision was added as part of the Municipal Modernization Act as the fourth paragraph of [G.L. c. 40, § 5B](#). If accepted, the local legislative body, by a two-thirds vote, may dedicate to a stabilization fund certain revenue streams, including revenue from fees and charges, except revenues already reserved by law for particular purposes and locally assessed taxes and excises.

These guidelines are in effect and supersede Informational Guideline Release No. 17-20 and any inconsistent prior written statements or documents.

GUIDELINES:

I. MULTIPLE STABILIZATION FUNDS

A. Creation of Funds

Stabilization funds may be created for one or more different purposes. [G.L. c. 40, § 5B](#). A fund may be created, broadly, for any lawful purpose. This type of stabilization fund is commonly known as a general purpose stabilization fund. Stabilization funds may also be created for a more specific category of spending purposes, like a capital budget purpose, purpose for which the community may borrow money or a specific purpose or project, for example, to acquire a new fire truck or undertake a particular school construction project. This type of stabilization fund is commonly known as a special purpose stabilization fund.

Creation of either type of stabilization fund requires a two-thirds vote of the legislative body of the city, town or district. The vote must clearly define the purpose(s) of the fund.

B. Changing Fund Purpose

The purpose of either a general purpose stabilization fund or a special purpose stabilization fund may be changed at any later time by a two-thirds vote of the legislative body. For example, if a community had established a fund in order to reserve monies to acquire a new fire truck and a balance remains after the purchase, the legislative body could vote to change the purpose to meet some new savings objective.

If the legislative body votes to change the purpose of a stabilization fund for which revenue has been dedicated, the vote should also state whether the dedication continues after the purpose changes. See Section II-C-1 below regarding the minimum period a dedication is effective.

If a Proposition 2½ levy limit override was approved for the purpose of funding the particular stabilization fund, however, the city or town must also follow the election procedure explained in Section III-C below to be able to change the fund purpose and then continue using the additional levy capacity resulting from that override in future years.

C. Appropriations into and from Stabilization Funds

1. General Purpose Stabilization Funds

Appropriations **into** a general purpose stabilization fund require a majority vote of the legislative body. Appropriations **from** a general purpose stabilization fund require a two-thirds vote of the legislative body.

2. Special Purpose Stabilization Funds

Appropriations **into** a special purpose stabilization fund require a majority vote of the legislative body. Appropriations **from** a special purpose stabilization fund require a majority vote of the legislative body.

D. Transfers

For both general purpose stabilization funds and special purpose stabilization funds, monies may also be transferred from one stabilization fund to another by two-thirds vote. When monies in the fund from which the transfer is made cannot be appropriated directly for the purpose of the fund receiving the transfer, for example, a transfer of \$50,000 from a fund for a particular school construction project to a fund to construct a new senior center, the vote also serves as a change in purpose to the extent of the amount appropriated.

E. Investment and Interest

The treasurer may deposit stabilization funds in (1) a trust company, co-operative bank, or savings bank, if the trust company or bank is organized or exists under either the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or of any other state, or may transact business in the Commonwealth, and has its main office or a branch office in the Commonwealth; and (2) a national bank, federal savings bank or federal savings and loan association, if the bank or association may transact business and has its main office or a branch office in the Commonwealth. Any state-chartered or federally-chartered bank used to deposit stabilization funds must be insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (or its successor).

The treasurer may also invest stabilization funds in (1) participation units under [G.L. c. 29, § 38A](#) (Massachusetts Municipal Depository Trust established by the State Treasurer); or (2) securities that are legal investments for savings banks under Massachusetts law. Savings banks may legally invest in securities included in the annual legal list of investments established by the Commissioner of Banks under [G.L. c. 167, §§ 15A-15K](#), and permitted by [G.L. c. 167F, § 3](#). All investments in securities that are legal investments for savings banks must still meet the investment standard in [G.L. c. 44, § 55B](#) governing a treasurer's investment of public funds generally, which means those investments must be prudent.

All interest earned on the deposit and investment of stabilization funds belongs to the funds. The treasurer may pool monies from all stabilization funds for investment purposes, but the accounting officer must account for them separately in the general ledger and allocate interest earned on the pooled monies proportionately to each stabilization fund.

II. DEDICATION OF REVENUES TO STABILIZATION FUND

A. Purpose

Cities, towns and districts that accept the fourth paragraph of [G.L. c. 40, § 5B](#) may dedicate, without further appropriation, all, or a percentage of not less than 25 percent, of

a particular fee, charge or other receipt to any stabilization fund established under [G.L. c. 40, § 5B](#).

B. Acceptance Procedure

Acceptance of the fourth paragraph of [G.L. c. 40, § 5B](#) is by majority vote of the legislative body of the city, town or district, subject to charter. [G.L. c. 4, § 4](#). (See attached sample acceptance vote.)

C. Dedication of Revenue Stream to a Stabilization Fund

1. Dedication Vote

After a city, town or district has accepted the fourth paragraph of [G.L. c. 40, § 5B](#), its legislative body may vote to dedicate a revenue source to a stabilization fund by a two-thirds vote. The vote must include the (1) specific revenue source being dedicated; (2) the percentage of that revenue source being dedicated, which must be at least 25 percent of the source; and (3) the fund into which the revenue source is being dedicated. A separate vote should be taken for each dedication. (See attached sample dedication vote.)

The vote must take place before July 1 of the fiscal year in which the dedication is to begin. A dedication may be terminated in the same manner, i.e., by a two-thirds vote of the legislative body, but cannot terminate unless it has been in effect for at least three fiscal years.

2. Dedicated Revenue Streams

Any fee, charge or other receipt may be dedicated to a stabilization fund, except:

a. Locally Assessed Taxes, Excises and Property Tax Surcharges

Real and personal property taxes, motor vehicle excises, boat excises, farm animal and machinery excises, classified forest, farm and recreational land and penalty taxes, community preservation surcharges and municipal water infrastructure surcharges cannot be dedicated to a stabilization fund.

b. Revenues Reserved by Law for Particular Purposes

Fees, charges or other receipts already reserved by law for expenditure for a particular purpose cannot be dedicated to a stabilization fund. This includes revenues dedicated by general laws or special acts and revenues dedicated because the city, town or district accepted a statute or otherwise acted under a statute to dedicate them.

For example, the legislative body could not dedicate those betterments and special assessment revenues reserved for debt service under [G.L. c. 44, § 53J](#), parking meter receipts reserved for certain parking related purposes if the city or town had accepted [G.L. c. 40, § 22A](#) or ambulance receipts if

the city or town was reserving them for appropriation under [G.L. c. 40, § 5F](#).

This exception means that the fees, charges or other receipts that may be dedicated are revenues that would belong to the general fund. [G.L. c. 44, § 53](#).

3. Dedicated Revenue Accounting

Upon receipt of dedicated revenue, the accounting officer must credit the voted percentage to the designated stabilization fund and the remaining percentage, if any, to the general fund. No appropriation or other action is required.

4. Balance Available for Appropriation

The stabilization fund balance available for appropriation includes only the amount of the dedicated revenue actually received and credited to the fund.

D. Revocation of Acceptance

Acceptance may be revoked, but the city, town or district must wait until at least three years after acceptance. [G.L. c. 4, § 4B](#). Revocation is also by vote of the legislative body of the city, town or district, subject to charter.

Revocation terminates all dedications at the end of the fiscal year in which the revocation takes effect. See II-E below.

E. Effective Date of Acceptance or Revocation

Acceptance or revocation of the fourth paragraph of [G.L. c. 40, § 5B](#) is effective for the fiscal year that begins the next July 1, unless a later fiscal year is designated in the acceptance or revocation vote.

III. STABILIZATION FUND OVERRIDES

A. Presentation and Approval of Override Ballot Question

Cities and towns may ask voters to approve a Proposition 2½ levy limit override ballot question for the purpose of funding any of the stabilization funds it establishes.

If approved, the additional levy capacity is earmarked for the same stabilization fund in the fiscal year the override is effective and subsequent years. [G.L. c. 59, § 21C\(g\)](#).

Therefore, the amount of any override for a stabilization fund must be clearly identified, preferably by presenting a separate override question for each stabilization fund being funded. For example:

Shall the city/town of _____ be allowed to assess an additional \$100,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of funding the municipal capital stabilization fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, ____?

Shall the city/town of _____ be allowed to assess an additional \$100,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of funding the school capital stabilization fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, ____?

If the amount is included in an override for multiple purposes, however, the exact amount allocated to the particular stabilization fund must be stated. For example:

Shall the city/town of _____ be allowed to assess an additional \$1,000,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of funding the town and school operating budgets, the municipal capital stabilization fund (\$100,000) and the school capital stabilization fund (\$100,000) for the fiscal year beginning July 1, ____?

B. Appropriation of Override in Future Years

1. Annual Appropriation Procedure

In the fiscal year the override is effective, the appropriation of the funds generated by the override into the particular stabilization fund is made by the usual appropriation procedure for stabilization funds under [G.L. c. 40, § 5B](#), i.e., a majority vote of the legislative body.

Each year thereafter, however, the selectboard, town council or city council, with the mayor's approval if required by law, must decide whether to "appropriate" any of the additional capacity resulting from the override for the same stabilization fund purpose. A two-thirds vote is required to make any subsequent fiscal year "appropriation" into a stabilization fund. [G.L. c. 59, § 21C\(g\)](#),

2. Appropriation Amount

All or some of the additional levy capacity may be "appropriated." In the first year after the override is effective, the additional levy capacity that may be appropriated is 102.5 percent of the override amount. In subsequent years, it is 102.5 percent of the amount of additional levy capacity appropriated in the last year it was appropriated.

Example

A \$100,000 override is approved for a school capital project stabilization fund for fiscal year 2023 and the legislative body appropriates the same amount from that year's tax levy for that purpose.

In FY2024, \$102,500 is available for "appropriation" by the selectmen, town council or city council, with the mayor's approval if required by law. That entire amount is "appropriated."

In FY2025, \$105,062 (1.025 x FY2024 appropriation of \$102,500) is available, but only \$80,000 is "appropriated."

The amount available in FY2026 now becomes \$82,000 (1.025 x FY2025 appropriation of \$80,000). However, no appropriation is made in FY2026.

The amount available in FY2027 is \$82,000 (1.025 x last appropriation made, i.e., FY2025 appropriation of \$80,000).

3. Tax Rate

The assessors must raise the amount "appropriated" in the tax rate. This "appropriation" is reported on page two of the tax rate recapitulation under "Other Amounts to Be Raised" and documented by a certified copy of the "appropriation" vote, as explained in the annual tax rate recapitulation instructions issued by the Bureau of Accounts.

4. Levy Limit Calculation

The municipality's levy limit for any year is increased by the amount of additional levy capacity that is appropriated for the stabilization fund purpose. The new limit must still be within overall levy ceiling of 2½ percent of the full and fair cash value of taxable property.

C. Change in Override Purpose

1. Presenting Ballot Question

The selectboard, town council or city council, with the mayor's approval if required by law, may ask the voters to approve a change in the purpose of the override. This change can result in the additional levy capacity being allocated to another stabilization fund or to any other municipal purpose. A two-thirds vote is required to place the ballot question before the voters.

2. Question Form

The following question form should be used to ask voters to change the override purpose:

Shall the city/town of _____ be allowed to change the purpose of a Proposition 2½ override question approved at an election held on _____, ____ for the (capital stabilization fund) to the following new purpose(s): _____ for the fiscal year beginning July 1, ____?

3. Question Approval

The question is approved if a majority of those voting on the question vote “yes.”

4. Appropriation in Future Years

If the purpose of the override is changed to another stabilization fund, or other purpose, the additional levy capacity would have to be “appropriated” to the new purpose each year or the levy limit would not be increased. See Section III-B above.

SAMPLES

(Samples should not be used without the advice of municipal or district counsel.)

DEDICATION OF REVENUES TO A STABILIZATION FUND

ACCEPTANCE

Legislative Body Vote

ARTICLE/ORDER. To see if the city/town/district will vote to accept the fourth paragraph of [Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 5B](#), which allows the dedication, without further appropriation, of all, or a percentage not less than 25 percent, of particular fees, charges or receipts to a stabilization fund established under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 5B, to be effective for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, _____, or take any other action relative thereto.

MOTION. Moved/ordered that the city/town/district accept the fourth paragraph of [Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 5B](#), which provides for the dedication, without further appropriation, of all, or a percentage not less than 25 percent, of particular fees, charges or receipts to a stabilization fund established under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 5B, to be effective for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, _____.

REVOCATION

Legislative Body Vote

ARTICLE/ORDER: To see if the city/town/district will vote to revoke its acceptance of the fourth paragraph of [Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 5B](#), which allows the dedication, without further appropriation, of all, or a percentage not less than 25 percent, of particular fees, charges or receipts to a stabilization fund established under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 5B, to be effective for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, _____, or take any other action relative thereto.

MOTION: Moved/ordered that the city/town/district revoke its acceptance of the fourth paragraph of [Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 5B](#), which provides for the dedication, without further appropriation, of all, or a percentage not less than 25 percent, of particular fees, charges or receipts to a stabilization fund established under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 5B, to be effective for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, _____.

REVENUE DEDICATION

Legislative Body Vote

ARTICLE/ORDER: To see if the city/town/district will dedicate all or a percentage, which may not be less than 25 percent, of the _____ to the _____ Stabilization Fund established under [Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 5B](#), effective for fiscal year _____ beginning on July 1, _____ or take any other action relative thereto.

MOTION: Moved/ordered that the city/town/district dedicate ____% of the _____ to the _____ Stabilization Fund established under [Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 5B](#), effective for the fiscal year _____ beginning on July 1, _____.

Example

ARTICLE/ORDER: To see if the city/town will dedicate all or a percentage, which may not be less than 25 percent, of the meals excise revenues collected under [Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 64L](#) to the Capital Purposes Stabilization Fund established under [Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 5B](#), effective for fiscal year 2025 beginning on July 1, 2024, or take any other action relative thereto.

MOTION: Moved/ordered that the city/town dedicate 50% of the meals excise revenues collected under [Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 64L](#) to the Capital Purposes Stabilization Fund established under [Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 5B](#), effective for fiscal year 2025 beginning on July 1, 2024.

For any municipality criticized for operating in perpetual crisis mode, allowing municipal assets to deteriorate, or being generally shortsighted, special purpose stabilization funds can provide an effective planning tool. Under [M.G.L. c. 40 § 5B](#), a city or town can create multiple stabilization funds and assign a different purpose to each. The community may also take advantage of a unique funding source available under [M.G.L. c. 59, § 21C\(g\)](#).

An example of a special purpose stabilization fund would be one created to supplement state reimbursements received under Chapter 90 to cover the costs of an ongoing street improvement program. A fund established solely to pay for building repair and maintenance would be another. A city or town might set up a fund to finance a vehicle replacement program. In this example, a community anticipating the need to purchase a \$400,000 fire truck in five years could reserve \$80,000 a year in such a fund and retain the interest earned.

A special purpose stabilization fund helps a community to:

- Think long term. Any program to replace vehicles, maintain buildings, or improve roads requires ongoing evaluation of the assets, management of a repair/replace schedule, and calculations of long-term projected costs.
- Save money. If a community purchases a \$400,000 fire truck by borrowing over 15 years instead of paying cash in full, interest payments could add about \$150,000 to the total cost, depending on rates. Even if this represents a nominal impact on the tax rate, the community can instead achieve a savings or expend the money elsewhere.
- Manage debt. A plan to accumulate cash over time and pay outright for a moderate-range capital expenditures helps preserve debt capacity for major, higher-dollar purchases or projects. An approach that balances debt with pay-as-you-go practices and protects against unforeseen costs is viewed in a positive light by credit rating agencies.
- Build resident confidence in government. Special purpose stabilization funds directly address resident concerns and provide assurance that money appropriated for a particular purpose will be used for that purpose and not be diverted.

The creation of a special purpose stabilization fund requires a two-thirds vote of a city or town council, town meeting, or district prudential (or similar) committee, and this vote must clearly define the purpose of the fund being established. As with a general stabilization fund, a city or town council, district committee, or town meeting may appropriate into a special stabilization fund by majority vote and may appropriate out of one by two-thirds vote.

There are three options for building up the balance in special purpose stabilization fund. One is as a traditional appropriation, presented either as a budget line item or in a separate article and sourced from within the levy or from other general fund revenues, such as a transfer of funds from another account. The second funding option is a unique type of Proposition 2½ override. Like a general override, additional tax revenue can be raised year after year without a communitywide ballot question beyond the year of inception. For this kind of override, however, the addition to the levy limit can be discontinued in a future year. Third, any fee, charge or other receipt may be dedicated to a stabilization fund, except locally assessed taxes, excises and property tax surcharges, or revenues reserved by law for a particular purpose, such as betterments that are dedicated to pay debt services.

In each succeeding year after a community has approved a stabilization fund override, the select board, city council or town council can continue the additional tax earmarked for the fund or may lower it, defer it, or resume a prior deferral solely through an annual two-thirds "appropriation" vote. The additional tax that can be appropriated for any year is limited to 102.5 percent of the amount when it was last appropriated.

For example, in FY2017, residents approve a \$100,000 override for a special purpose stabilization fund and town meeting appropriates that amount. In FY2018, \$102,500 (1.025 x \$100,000) is available for "appropriation" and that entire amount is "appropriated." For FY2019, \$105,062 is available (1.025 x \$102,500), but only \$80,000 is "appropriated." The amount available in FY2020 now becomes \$82,000 (1.025 x \$80,000), but the select board choose to make no appropriation. The amount available in FY2021 is \$82,000 (1.025 x last appropriation made, which was \$80,000 in FY2016).

Building up stabilization balances through an override unquestionably involves an increase to the tax levy but, as important, the creation of a special purpose stabilization fund provide a means for a municipality to respond to resident concerns about a lack of long-term planning. If considered thoughtfully and implemented prudently, these funds offer strategic mechanisms to help plan for future costs. Ultimately, they are most effective as a revenue source for anticipated expenditures, similar to a savings account. They work best when used to build moderate balances and pay midlevel expenditures the community will eventually need to make, like building maintenance, road repairs, and vehicle purchases.

For more information, please see the Information Guideline Release [2017-20 Stabilization Funds](#)

Free cash is a revenue source that results from the calculation, as of July 1, of a community's remaining, unrestricted funds from its operations of the previous fiscal year based on the balance sheet as of June 30. It typically includes actual receipts in excess of revenue estimates and unspent amounts in departmental budget line items for the year just ended, plus unexpended free cash from the previous year. Free cash is offset by property tax receivables and certain deficits, and as a result, can be a negative number.

Free cash is not available for use until after the accountant, auditor, or comptroller submits a prior-year balance sheet to the Division of Local Services (DLS) and the Director of Accounts certifies the free cash. The DLS certification protects communities from relying on free cash that might not materialize due to inaccurate local estimates.

The Financial Management Resource Bureau (FMRB) recommends that communities understand the role free cash plays in sustaining a strong credit rating and encourages them to adopt policies on its use. Under sound financial policies, a community strives to generate free cash in an amount equal to five to seven percent of its annual budget. This goal helps deter free cash from being depleted in any particular year, which enables the following year's calculation to begin with a positive balance. To do this, the community would orchestrate conservative revenue projections and departmental appropriations to produce excess income and departmental turn backs.

As a nonrecurring revenue source, free cash should be restricted to paying one-time expenditures, funding capital projects, or replenishing other reserves. If a community incorporates free cash into revenue source projections for next-year operational expenses, it is prudent to place a percentage restriction on the total free cash to be used.

Overall, FMRB recommends that communities adopt a free cash policy that avoids supplementing current-year departmental operations. By eliminating the expectation of additional resources later in the fiscal year to backfill budgets, department heads will produce more accurate and realistic annual appropriation requests.

Any free cash use requires an appropriation approved by the city council on the mayor's recommendation or by town council or by town meeting but only after DLS has certified the free cash total. The same rules apply to DLS's certification of retained earnings, which is the enterprise fund equivalent of free cash.



Concord Finance Committee
AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

June 26, 2025

9

Finance Committee 2025-2026 Tentative Calendar

Review of tentative meeting schedule through May 2026 and confirmation of dates for meetings in July and August 2025

Requested by: FC Chair

Action Sought: discussion

Proposed Motion(s)

None anticipated.

Additional Information

Board Action

<i>Motion</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>In favor</i>	<i>Opposed</i>	<i>Disposition</i>

FINANCE COMMITTEE 25 – 26 TENTATIVE CALENDAR

MONTH	TASKS/GOALS/DEADLINES	DATES	NOTES	FINANCE DEPT DELIVERABLES
			Meeting schedule and deadlines tentative, subject to SB decision on date of ATM	
June	ATM debrief (Town Moderator will join for this part of meeting); liaison assignments; discuss goals, priorities and schedule for year; discuss process for reviewing financial policies (including policies on reserves).	Th, June 26		Provide information about state templates for financial policies
July	Finalize major goals and key issues to monitor; get report on status of existing Town reserves and joint accounts (OPEB and Retirement funds); finalize meeting schedule; review of guidelines setting process and metrics used in prior year; prepare information requests to Town and Schools, to be sent in early August with reply due October 1	Th, July 31	Since ATM date will have been set by SB, can finalize deadlines and meeting schedules	Provide and present schedule of reserves and joint accounts
Aug	Establish shared calendar with Carlisle FinCom for review of regional school budget; review and approve metrics for FY27 guidelines and advise budgeting entities of metrics being used; presentation from Town’s outside financial advisers on Town’s debt rating and factors considered by rating agencies	Th, Aug 28	Carlisle FinCom to be advised of approved metrics	Arrange for attendance of financial advisers; provide data as requested to support development of metrics
Sept	Check on progress of financial policy revision work; review status of Town and School capital plans, with focus on prioritization and size of	Th, Sep 25	NOTE: JOINT HEARING WITH SB AND SCHOOLS TO	Provide schedule of current and approved but not yet issued debt; prepare and present updated

FINANCE COMMITTEE 25 – 26 TENTATIVE CALENDAR

	projects; review of Town’s current debt, anticipated debt retirement and debt capacity to inform capital planning process; schedule presentations in October from budgeting entities		REVIEW CAPITAL PLANNING TO BE SCHEDULED, PROBABLY IN ADDITION TO REGULAR FC MEETING	information describing capital plan and status of anticipated projects
Oct	Review information provided by Town and Schools; presentations from budgeting entities; prepare and send requests for additional information needed if any; approve FY27 preliminary guidelines and communicate to budget entities	<i>Th, Oct 16 Th, Oct 30</i>	Carlisle FinCom to be included in CCRSD presentation and advised of CCRSD final guideline	Provide revenue and fixed cost estimates for town departments and enterprise funds. Provide information (to be updated regularly) on anticipated expenses not subject to guidelines.
Nov	Review property tax impact of FY27 preliminary guidelines; further communications with budgeting entities about preliminary guidelines (sharing CCRSD responses with Carlisle FinCom)	<i>Th, Nov 20</i>	FINAL FY27 GUIDELINES TO BE APPROVED 5 WEEKS BEFORE WARRANT CLOSES	Prepare and present preliminary budgets for Town based on department
Dec	Approve final FY27 guidelines; review five-year revenue and cost projections; review property tax impact of final guidelines; begin planning for annual report	<i>Th, Dec 11 (or Th Dec 4 – depending on date that warrant closes)</i>	Advise Carlisle FinCom of final guideline for CCRSD; WARRANT WILL OPEN IN EARLY DECEMBER	Provide data as needed for five-year revenue and cost projections; update revenue and expense estimates as needed providing explanation of changes
Jan	Begin review of FinCom relevant warrant articles; review of status of capital plans; review of budgets	<i>Th Jan 15</i>	WARRANT WILL CLOSE IN EARLY JANUARY	Update revenue and cost projections, with explanations of any changes
Feb	Further review of budgets, with presentations; begin drafting annual report, assigning section owners and key dates	<i>Th Feb 12 (and/or 19)</i>		Update revenue and cost projections, with explanations of any changes

FINANCE COMMITTEE 25 – 26 TENTATIVE CALENDAR

March	Hold public hearings on dates set by SB on all finance-related articles; continue drafting annual report	TBD	VOTE ON FINCOM RECOMMENDATIONS ON RELEVANT WARRANT ARTICLES BY END OF MARCH	Provide data as requested for inclusion in annual report
April	Completion of annual report; review of status of other goals; ATM preparation	<i>Th Apr 16 (or 23)</i>	ANNUAL REPORT TO BE COMPLETED IN EARLY APRIL	Continue to provide data and support for annual report
May	TBD	TBD	ATM TO BEGIN: LAST MONDAY IN APRIL OR FIRST MONDAY IN MAY	

Additional Finance Department deliverables: Post all meeting dates on town calendar; for all meetings, post agendas at least 72 hours in advance and distribute packets at least 48 hours in advance; meet all deadlines for required submissions to Commonwealth; post town and enterprise fund budget books as required by statute; make presentations at hearings and ATM on town budget and related warrant articles.



Concord Finance Committee
AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

June 26, 2025

10

Recap of Action Items - Adjournment

Requested by: FC Chair

Action Sought: recap/adjourn

Proposed Motion(s)

None anticipated.

Additional Information

Board Action

<i>Motion</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>In favor</i>	<i>Opposed</i>	<i>Disposition</i>