



City of Concord

City Council

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Thursday, June 5, 2025

5:30 PM

City Council Chambers
37 Green Street
Concord, NH 03301

The City Council Meeting will begin immediately following the Finance Committee Work Session, which starts at 5:30 p.m.

1. Mayor Champlin called the meeting to order at 11:03 p.m.
2. Roll Call.

Present: 14 - Councilor Stacey Brown, Mayor Byron Champlin, Councilor Nathan Fennessy, Councilor Jeff Foote, Councilor Amanda Grady Sexton, Councilor Michele Horne, Councilor Fred Keach, Councilor Jennifer Kretovic, Councilor Judith Kurtz, Councilor Paula McLaughlin, Councilor Karen McNamara, Councilor Jim Schlosser, Councilor Kris Schultz, and Councilor Brent Todd

Excused: 1 - Councilor Ali Sekou

3. Agenda overview by the Mayor.

Action: Councilor Kretovic moved to suspend the rules and continue the meeting after 11:00 p.m. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor McNamara, and passed with one dissenting vote.

Public Hearings

- 4A. Resolution fixing and determining the amount of money to be appropriated by the City of Concord for the fiscal year 2026 ending June 30, 2026 for the General fund, Special Revenue funds, Enterprise funds, Debt Service funds, and diminimus accounts.

Action: Public hearings for items 4A through 4D were held together.

- 4B. Resolution for the annual capital closeout and repurposing of capital project funds; together with a report from the Senior Accountant.

Action: Public hearings for items 4A through 4D were held together.

- 4C. Resolution appropriating for Fiscal Year 2026 (July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026) the sum of \$31,620,250 for capital projects, authorizing the issuance of bonds and notes in the sum of \$26,415,000, authorizing the use of \$3,585,000 in reserve and impact fees, accepting the sum of \$480,000 in federal grant funds, and accepting the sum of \$250,000 in donations for various capital projects more specifically identified in the budget document.

Action: Public hearings for items 4A through 4D were held together.

- 4D. Ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances, Title I, General Code; Chapter 1, Government Organization; Article 1-5, Fees, Fines, and Penalties, Schedule I, by amending Chapter 9, Water, Section 9-1-6 Water Use Rates, Section 9-1-8 Water Fixed Charges, Section 9-3-8 Sewer Use Rates, and Section 9-3-8(a) Sewer Fixed Charges.

Action: Public hearings for items 4A through 4D were held together.

Fiscal Year 2026 budget public hearings were based on the following amendments to the proposed FY26 budget as acted upon during the Finance Committee Meeting that was held prior to this Council meeting.

General Fund Part 1- Motion to decrease the General Fund operating expenses by \$280,980 in various accounts, increase operating expenses by \$355,000, increase operating income by \$613,565 and resulting in a revised tax rate increase of 2.95% and an estimated tax rate of 10.13.

Details

A. General Fund Expense Reductions are:

Increase PD Attrition	\$100,000
PCR #219 Fire reduce Paramedic Tuition & Backfill by	3,655
City Manager Training	15,000
PCR #269 GS Public Properties eliminate Eagle Square Downlighting	10,000
PCR #274 Eliminate CDL Driver Training	17,500
PCR #13 Human Services reduce Special Program Rent	25,000
General Overhead reduce Concord Area Transit Funding	9,825
General Services reduce Transfer Out to Solid Waste	90,000
City Council reduce Orientation funding	5,000
Library reduce Library Books and Materials	5,000
Total Reductions	\$280,980

B. General Fund Expense Increase

PCR #82 Recreation Increase for Healey Park Cleanup	\$205,000
City Manager Increase Grants and Events	150,000
Total Expense Increase	\$355,000

C. General Fund Revenue Increase is:

Increase Investment Income	\$14,565
Increase Use of Community Improvement Reserve	205,000
Increase Use of Economic Development Reserve	150,000
Increase Use of Community Improvement Reserve	244,000
Total Revenue Increase	\$613,565

Golf Fund Part 2 - Motion to reduce the Golf Fund operating budget for Grounds and Horticultural by \$5,000.

General Capital Part 3 - Motion to Move Garrison Park Pool to FY27 \$701,132 reducing bonds \$680,000 and Capital Closeout \$21,132.

Mayor Champlin opened the public hearings.

Mark Stephens testified by reading a brief statement in support of the Beaver Meadow Golf Course project, highlighting the personal benefits he has experienced since childhood and emphasizing the importance of the new building for future golfers and outdoor enthusiasts alike.

Jessica Wheeler-Russell, a Ward 2 resident and Merrimack Valley School Board member, addressed Council on her behalf, acknowledging aspects of the budget she supports while expressing concern about inconsistencies in how various projects are funded. She reiterated previous concerns about the bonding process and emphasized the need for greater community engagement. Ms. Wheeler-Russell also noted that some residents who had shared their concerns at past budget meetings were met with dismissive attitudes or even hostility, which she found troubling. Additionally, she shared that her ongoing advocacy for safer city roads has resulted in hostile responses from a Councilor.

Council Schultz expressed regret over Ms. Russell-Wheeler's experience and

offered an apology.

Keith Duclos, owner of the Broken Tee, testified in support of the Beaver Meadow Golf Course and thanked the community for its warm welcome.

Allen Herschlag, a Ward 10 resident, testified to express his concerns about what he viewed as unnecessary spending when considering Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) more specifically in out years. He indicated that the City had spent over a million dollars in Master Plans, zoning and impact fee updates, and design guidelines. He further stated that the City spent seven years updating zoning with form-based code at a cost of \$200,000 and then threw it in the trash. The City spent \$200,000 on a deck park plan that in his words would never have been built due to cost limitations, and felt that the City should have known that it was infeasible. He expressed his appreciation that Healy Park will be cleaned up and requested that the City will provide more police patrol and that it is aggressively maintained. He raised further concerns regarding wastewater and water distribution, questioning whether the City should delay further development until the Hall Street wastewater upgrades are completed. He also asked whether new development had been factored into those improvements. Mr. Herschlag noted that many residents are confused about how the Beaver Meadow Golf Course is funded and expressed concerns about the project's costs, building design, parking, and the overall facility operations. While he acknowledged that the existing building is beyond repair and agreed that improvements are necessary, he emphasized the importance of community input in the process. He briefly addressed the responsibilities for the Golf Course Advisory Committee. He provided his views on closing the Concord Lumber Yard TIF District and the future improvements to Storrs Street. Finally, he raised concerns about the ratio of assessed home values compared to commercial properties, pointing out that the trend appears to place a greater financial burden on residential taxpayers.

Councilor Keach asked Mr. Herschlag how he would balance the need for additional housing with the concerns he had raised.

Mr. Herschlag advocated for incorporating a mix of low-income and market-rate housing in future development projects. He also emphasized the importance of monitoring both residential and commercial markets, suggesting that the pace of new projects be adjusted, if either slowed or accelerated, in order to maintain a healthy balance.

Mark Coen, a Ward 5 resident and longtime Concord resident of 54 years testified in support of the clubhouse project. He noted that many former City Councilors also support the project, recognizing that it has been delayed for many years. He commented that while a 0% tax increase may seem appealing, it can lead to greater financial burdens in the future. Drawing from his own experience as a former Councilor during a 0% tax rate period, he explained that residents are often confused when their overall tax bills still increase due to school, county, and state budget impacts. He emphasized that while Concord is a great place to live, and without making new investments or improvements, it could lead to a decline in the city's overall quality of life.

Robert Washburn, a Ward 8 resident testified, revisiting concerns with the Northeast Corridor. He argued that the TIF District should have been closed since the Storrs Street extension will not expand the tax base. He suggested that the balance of the TIF District funds could be applied to achieve a 0% base budget. He further explained that if the funds were used for a capital improvement rather than a bond, the City could save taxpayers around 3 to 4 million dollars, thereby reducing the overall tax burden.

Cathy Daniels, a resident of approximately 60 years testified that her grown sons still play golf at the course, and noted that many community members also enjoy skiing and skating there as well.

Mr. Herschlag testified again, sharing that he coached the cross-country ski team for many years and groomed the trails daily. He noted that in 1990, he was no longer permitted to groom the trails, and for approximately 25 years, skiing was not allowed on the course. However, in 2019, there was a shift in philosophy, recognizing that allowing skiing and skating could help build community support for the improvements to the clubhouse.

There being no further public testimony, the Mayor declared the hearing closed.

Public Hearing Action

5. Resolution fixing and determining the amount of money to be appropriated by the City of Concord for the fiscal year 2026 ending June 30, 2026 for the General fund, Special Revenue funds, Enterprise funds, Debt Service funds, and diminimus accounts.

Action: Councilor Kretovic moved to accept the revised resolution appropriating the sums as follows:

Section 1:	General Fund	\$86,976,113
Section 2:	Special Revenue Funds	
	Parking Fund	\$3,446,812
	Airport Fund	\$532,567
	Conservation Property Fund	\$145,688
	Housing Revolving Loan Fund	\$622,600
	Golf Fund	\$1,823,353
	Arena Fund	\$887,178
	Solid Waste Fund	\$5,189,528
Section 3:	Enterprise Funds	
	Water Fund	\$8,066,230
	Wastewater Fund	\$13,483,116
Section 4:	Debt Service Funds	
	North End Opportunity Corridor Tax Increment Financing District	\$251,088
	Sears Block Tax Increment Financing District	\$1,228,721
	Penacook Village Tax Increment Financing District	\$687,370
Section 5:	De minimis gifts and donations	\$150,000

The motion was duly seconded and passed with no dissenting votes.

6. Resolution for the annual capital closeout and repurposing of capital project funds; together with a report from the Senior Accountant.

Action: Councilor Keach moved approval. The motion was duly seconded and passed with no dissenting votes.

7. Resolution appropriating for Fiscal Year 2026 (July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026) the sum of \$31,620,250 for capital projects, authorizing the issuance of bonds and notes in the sum of \$26,415,000, authorizing the use of \$3,585,000 in reserve and impact fees, accepting the sum of \$480,000 in federal grant funds, and accepting the sum of \$250,000 in donations for various capital projects more specifically identified in the budget document.

Action: Councilor Fennessy moved to accept the revised resolution appropriating for FY2026 the sum of \$30,940,250 for Capital Projects, authorizing the issuance of bonds and notes in the sum of \$25,735,000, authorizing the use of \$3,585,000 in reserve and impact fees, accepting the sum of \$480,000 in Federal Grant funds, and accepting the sum of \$250,000 in donations for various Capital Projects more specifically identified in the budget document. The motion was duly seconded and passed by the required two-thirds vote.

Councilor Kretovic recused herself from items within the budget specific to NH Municipal Association dues and conference fees, as she is a member of NHMA's Board of Directors.

8. Ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances, Title I, General Code; Chapter 1, Government Organization; Article 1-5, Fees, Fines, and Penalties, Schedule I, by amending Chapter 9, Water, Section 9-1-6 Water Use Rates, Section 9-1-8 Water Fixed Charges, Section 9-3-8 Sewer Use Rates, and Section 9-3-8(a) Sewer Fixed Charges.

Action: Councilor Fennessy moved approval. The motion was duly seconded and passed with no dissenting votes.

Comments, Requests by Mayor, City Councilors

Action: Councilor Todd expressed his appreciation for the tireless efforts of City Manager Aspell, Deputy City Manager LeBrun, and City staff. He also highlighted that the Fund Balance Life Cycle information in the packet was very helpful.

Councilor McNamara expressed her appreciation to David Gill, Jonathan Smith, and The Friends of White Park, noting that the equipment has been ordered for the Monkey Around Playground with a total donation of over \$60,000.

Councilor Brown highlighted that the Woman's Club held their tax impact conversation. She mentioned that if residents are interested in City politics, please pay attention to their webpage for more events.

Mayor Champlin expressed his appreciation to the Council and City Staff for their productive efforts during this budget season.

Comments, Requests by the City Manager

Adjournment

Action: Councilor Kurtz moved to adjourn at 12:09 p.m. The motion was duly seconded and passed with no dissenting votes.

A true copy, I attest:

Deborah Tuite

Deputy City Clerk