



City of Concord

City Council

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Monday, January 13, 2025

7:00 PM

City Council Chambers
37 Green Street
Concord, NH 03301

Non-meeting in accordance with RSA 91-A:2, I (a), strategy and negotiations with respect to collective bargaining followed by a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A: 3, II (d) to discuss property acquisition to begin at 5:30 PM

Present: 15 - 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, Councilor Ali Sekou and Councilor Brent Todd

Mayor Champlin called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

Councilor Kretovic moved to enter a non-meeting in accordance with RSA 91-A:2, I (a), strategy and negotiations with respect to collective bargaining followed by a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II (d) to discuss property acquisition. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Kurtz and passed with no dissenting votes.

Councilor Brown was not present for the non-meeting with respect to collective bargaining.

At 6:43 PM, the non-meeting with respect to collective bargaining ended and the non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II (d) began.

At 6:49 PM, Councilor Kretovic moved to exit the non-public meeting. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Kurtz and passed with no dissenting votes.

In public session, Councilor Kretovic moved to seal the minutes of the non-public session. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Kurtz and passed with no dissenting votes.

At 6:50 PM, there being no additional Council business, Councilor Kretovic moved to recess the non-public session, continuing the non-public session following the regular City Council meeting. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Grady Sexton and passed with no dissenting votes.

1. Mayor Champlin called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.
2. Invocation.
3. Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Roll Call.

Present: 15 - 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, Councilor Ali Sekou, and Councilor Brent Todd

5. Approval of the Meeting Minutes.

December 9, 2024 City Council Draft Meeting Minutes.

Action: Councilor Grady Sexton moved approval of the December 9, 2024, Meeting Minutes. Councilor Kretovic seconded the motion.

Councilor Brown moved to amend page 13, item number 33, adding that a number of Councilors spoke in support of this project, which the Concord Skate Club Group has been advocating for since 2020. The motion as amended was duly seconded and passed with no dissenting votes.

6. Agenda overview by the Mayor.
- 6A. Proclamation of appreciation for Donald Brueggemann, manager of The Works Cafe.

Action: Mayor Champlin read the proclamation of appreciation for Donald Brueggemann, manager of the Works Cafe, thereby thanking him for his commitment in supporting the Community of Concord by generously providing bagels for election day staff.

****Consent Agenda Items****

Councilor Sekou moved approval of the consent agenda. Councilor Brown recused herself from voting on items 10, 20, and 21. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Grady Sexton and passed with no dissenting votes.

Referral to the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee

7. Communication from Andy Duncan, 16 Kimball Street, requesting PFAS test results of wastewater sewage sludge and its potential impact on the Russell-Shea Community Gardens.

Action: This communication was referred to the Solid Waste Advisory Committee, not the Energy & Environment Committee.

Items Tabled for February 10, 2025 Public Hearings

8. Ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances, Title V, Administrative Code; Chapter 35, Classification and Compensation Plan, Schedule D of Article 35-2, Class Specification Index, Wastewater Maintenance Manager; together with a report from the Director of Human Resources.
Action: This ordinance was moved to set for a public hearing.
9. Resolution appropriating the sum of \$35,000 for reimbursement of demolition costs associated with the Next Step Living, Inc project at 3 North State Street and accepting the sum of \$35,000 in grant proceeds from the New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs (BEA) Municipal Demolition Grant program for this purpose; together with a report from the Assistant Director of Community Development.
Action: This resolution was moved to set for a public hearing.
10. Resolution appropriating the sum of \$21,499 for law enforcement related programs and accepting the sum of \$21,499 in unmatched grant funds from the United States Department of Justice Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program for this purpose; together with a report from the Deputy Chief of Police.
Action: This resolution was moved to set for a public hearing.
11. Resolution accepting the terms of a Federal Fiscal Year 2024 Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) grant issued by the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) / Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), appropriating the sum of \$259,062 for the purchase of a modular vehicle barrier system, and accepting

the sum of \$259,062 from the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) / Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for this purpose; together with a report from the Fire Chief.

Action: This resolution was moved to set for a public hearing.

From the City Manager

12. Positive Citizen Comments.

Action: Positive comments were received and filed.

Consent Reports

13. Diminimus gifts and donations report from the Library Director requesting authorization to accept gifts and donations totaling \$4,167.55, as provided under the pre-authorization granted by City Council.

Action: This consent report was approved.

14. Diminimus gifts and donations report from the Human Services Director requesting authorization to accept a monetary gift totaling \$765, as provided under the pre-authorization granted by City Council.

Action: This consent report was approved.

15. Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Comprehensive Report (ACFR) from the Assistant Finance Director. (Pulled from consent by Councilor Brown.)

Action: Item was pulled from Consent for discussion.

16. Quarterly Current Use Change Tax Report from Director of Real Estate Assessments.

Action: This consent report was approved.

17. Report from the Deputy City Manager for Development recommending approval of a license agreement for an awning by Marathon Sports at 142 North Main Street which will be located within the City's highway rights-of-way.

Action: This consent report was approved.

18. Report from the City Solicitor's Office regarding a Tentative Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Concord and the City of Concord Municipal Employees Unit of Local #1580, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO ("AFSCME").

Action: This consent report was approved.

19. Report from the City Solicitor's Office regarding a Tentative Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Concord and Local 2322, International Union - United Automobile Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America ("UAW").

Action: This consent report was approved.

20. Report from the City Solicitor's Office regarding a Tentative Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Concord and the Concord Police Supervisor's Association ("CPSA").

Action: This consent report was approved. Councilor Brown recused from voting on this item as her husband works for the Police Department.

21. Report from the City Solicitor's Office regarding a Tentative Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Concord and the Concord Police Patrolmen's Association ("CPPA").

Action: This consent report was approved. Councilor Brown recused from voting on this item as her husband works for the Police Department.

Consent Resolutions

22. Resolution accepting the terms of an Emergency Management Performance grant, appropriating the sum of \$5,000 for providing technical assistance for the revision of the City's Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP), and accepting the sum of \$5,000 in NH Department of Safety, Homeland Security and Emergency Management Grant funding for this purpose; together with a report from the Fire Chief.

Action: This consent resolution was approved.

23. Resolution rescinding the appropriation of \$225,000 and de-authorizing the issuance of bonds and notes in the sum of \$225,000 in the Telephone System Replacement project (CIP #525) and repurposing the sum of \$204,251.86 from the Enterprise Resource Planning project (CIP #302) to the Telephone System Replacement project (CIP #525) from various funds; together with a report from the Deputy City Manager - Finance and the Information Technology Director.

Action: This consent resolution was approved.

24. Resolution authorizing the City Manager to apply to the NHDOT Transportation Alternates Program for funding to cover costs associated with designing, permitting, and constructing a portion of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail (CIP \$543); together with a report from the Director of Special Projects and Strategic Initiatives. (Revised Title; revised resolution submitted.)

Action: This consent resolution was approved.

25. Resolution repurposing the sum of \$29,091.10 in the Fire Facility Renovation project (CIP #252) for rehabilitation and restoration repairs to the Fire Administration heating system; together with a report from the Deputy Fire Chief.

Action: This consent resolution was approved.

End of Consent Agenda

Public Hearings

- 26A. Ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances, Title IV, Zoning Code; Chapter 28, Zoning Ordinance to further revise certain provisions, which were previously modified by Ordinance #3168 on August 12, 2024, pertaining to conditional use permits for obstruction of the State House Dome and maximum height limitations in certain portions of the Central Business Performance District and Opportunity Corridor Performance District, as well as to amend other additional sections of the Zoning Ordinance as recommended by the Planning Board; together with a report from the Deputy City Manager - Development.

Action: City Manager Aspell indicated that this proposed ordinance will allow the Planning Board to review and provide potential relief to the zoning requirements outlined via the conditional use permit. The change is beneficial as it will give the Planning Board the control and flexibility for design issues, rather than requiring applicants to seek relief through the Zoning Board of Adjustment. It will also give the Planning Board more control and reasonable flexibility over the design considerations, which will allow the City to review development applications in a more cohesive, holistic, and efficient manner.

Manager Aspell mentioned that at the conclusion of the November 2024, public hearing, the Planning Board unanimously recommended that City Council adopt these recommended changes. The Planning Board also voiced that the proposed amendments would be an improvement over previously adopted amendments in August, and that these recommended changes will provide reasonable opportunity for additional development in the City's Downtown and Opportunity Corridors,

while simultaneously providing reasonable safeguards to protect the historic, architectural, and cultural resources. The Planning Board also believes that these amendments address the concerns voiced at the August 12, 2024, public hearing. The Planning Board recommends the adoption of the proposed amendments as presented.

Mayor Champlin opened the public hearing.

Ari Pollack, Attorney with Gallagher, Callahan, and Gartrell, testified that he has worked with Mark Cibrowski to participate in and monitor the discussion relating to the zoning amendments for the Downtown and Central Business Districts. He indicated that they were part of the August hearing where the initial amendment was adopted, as well as being a part of the re-referral back to the Planning Board. He stated that they appreciated the discussions and he feels value was added. They are supportive of the measure before the City Council.

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

- 26B. Ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances, Title V, Administrative Code; Chapter 35, Classification and Compensation Plan, Article 35-2, Compensation Plan, Schedule D, Elections Specialist; together with a report from the Director of Human Resources.

Action: City Manager Aspell indicated that the City Clerk has requested the addition of an Election Specialist position, which will be a permanent part-time employee, working 24 hours per week. The desire to create a position to ensure that the City proactively, rather than reactively, addresses election related responsibilities while improving: ward official and staff training, research and implementation of election specific improvements, assurance of compliance to growing and evolving legal obligations, coordination of routine voter registration fairs throughout the city, and the ability to review and analyze pending legislation specific to the department, while greatly improving work life balance for the staff. He mentioned that when the City went through Covid, it was difficult because there were many retirements, which left the City understaffed and required hiring new staff, as well as training. Manager Aspell indicated that this request makes sense and has been needed for a number of years, complimenting City Clerk Bonenfant for her tireless efforts.

Councilor Sekou also complimented City Clerk Bonenfant and thanked her for her work on the elections.

Mayor Champlin opened the public hearing.

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

- 26C. Resolution appropriating the sum of \$17,265 to assist the Library's mission in providing a variety of equitable services to patrons at the Concord Public Library and accepting the sum of \$17,265 in donations from the Concord Public Library Foundation for this purpose; together with a report from the Library Director.

Action: City Manager Aspell indicated that the Concord Public Library Foundation generously provided this grant to cover: a Seed Library start up, Lit Kits (for visual learners), eleven new Library of Things items and a storage cabinet for them, display shelving for juvenile DVDs, LOTE4Kids (multilingual children's storybooks database), Creativebug website subscription (crafting demos with no wait times), and more!

Mayor Champlin opened the public hearing.

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

- 26D. Resolution authorizing the City Manager to submit an application for grant funds in the sum of \$750,000 to the Community Development Block Grant Fund program, appropriating the sum of \$750,000 to support CATCH Neighborhood Housing's redevelopment at 30 East Side Drive, and accepting the sum of \$750,000 in Community Development Block Grant Funds for this purpose; together with a report from the Assistant Director of Community Development. (Public testimony received.)

Action: The Mayor requested to combine public hearing items 26D and 26E because they are in tandem.

City Manager Aspell requested that Assistant Community Development Director Thompson present his report.

Assistant Community Development Director, Timothy Thompson addressed Council presenting his report: Community Development Block Grant funds are available to municipalities through the NH Community Development Finance Authority. Up to \$500,000 annually is available for economic development projects, up to \$500,000 for public facility projects, up to \$500,000 for housing projects, and up to \$500,000 for emergency activities. Up to \$25,000 is available per planning study grant. All projects must directly benefit a majority of low and

moderate income persons.

This is a proposed application to the Community Development Finance Authority for up to \$750,000 in CDBG Supportive Housing and/or up to \$500,000 in Housing Funds. Of the grant funds, up to \$40,000 will be retained by the City for administrative costs/labor compliance costs associated with the project, the remainder of the funds will be subgranted to CATCH. CATCH will, in turn, loan the funds to a single purpose entity to be formed that will be controlled by CATCH, to redevelop their existing parcel at 30 East Side Drive with a new structure and increase the affordable housing units from the existing 14 units to between 20 and 24 new affordable housing units to support independent living and housing opportunities, including services for adults with learning and developmental disabilities.

This project addresses a goal in Concord's Housing and Community Developments goal of assuring that housing is available for families and individuals of low and moderate income and for those with special needs.

Mr. Thompson then discussed the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan: This plan outlines measures, under the Uniform Relocation Act, required for CDBG projects that involve any displacement or relocation of persons (or businesses), if the City were to undertake a CDBG project which involved displacement or relocation they would follow this plan. The plan outlines the measures they would take to find comparable, suitable housing for persons (or businesses) displaced or relocated. In anticipation of this project, as units vacate they have not been rented out. Only a few tenants remain and CATCH will follow URA regulations on relocating them at the time of project implementation.

Mayor Champlin opened the public hearing.

Roy Schweiker, city resident testified, discussing his concerns about the expense of the units, especially given their size. He hopes they create the full 24 units. He is concerned that the City is missing a whole category of people. According to HUD, affordable housing is for people making \$64,500. He is concerned that the lower medium income residents would not be able to afford these units, such as a part-time employee at Market Basket. He feels the city needs smaller efficiency apartments and rooming houses.

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

26E. Resolution adopting an Anti-Displacement and Relocation Policy Statement and Procedures, in support of the City's Community Development Block Grant application to the New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority to support CATCH Neighborhood Housing's Redevelopment Project at 30 East Side Drive, increasing the affordable housing units from the existing 14 units to between 20 and 24 new affordable housing units to support independent living and housing opportunities, including services for adults with learning and developmental disabilities; together with a report from the Assistant Director of Community Development.

Action: The public hearing for Item 26E was heard with item 26D.

26F. Resolution appropriating the sum of \$3,049,000 as a transfer to reserves and authorizing the use of \$3,049,000 from Fiscal Year 2024 General Fund Assigned Fund Balance for this purpose; together with a report from the Deputy City Manager - Finance.

City Manager Aspell requested that Deputy City Manager LeBrun present his report.

Deputy City Manager LeBrun gave a summary of his report.

Councilor Brown asked Mr. LeBrun if he could explain the reserve funds, and how the numbers came about, such as \$400,000 for recreation, \$300,000 for economic development, where as the economic fund balance was \$100,000 last year. She also asked if a subcategory could be created in these reserves.

Mr. LeBrun explained that instead of a subcategory, he would probably just create a second reserve. He indicated that they are trying to look forward in order to help future budgets. This process is done on a regular basis, explaining that when they transfer funds to these accounts it helps with the following year's budget, because if they didn't have the funds transferred they may need to request the City Council to float bonds. They are trying to think ahead in order to have a steady stream of funds flowing in and out. He explained the purpose of some of the funds, such as equipment purchases like fire trucks, technology needs, etc. This helps to manage the potential spikes in the tax rate by mitigating future expenses.

Councilor Brown asked if there was a program that the Council felt would fit into one of the reserves, would that request still need to be brought to the council to appropriate those funds.

Mr. LeBrun indicated that any money that would come out of the reserve would need City Council approval.

Councilor Horn inquired about the significant revenue overages in ambulance charges.

Mr. LeBrun indicated that the biggest factor was an increase in calls, as well as pricing structure changes.

Councilor Sekou asked for clarification around the total funds between Resolutions 26F and 26G.

Mr. LeBrun explained that they are two separate resolutions, and combined it would total \$3,103,000, as they are part of the same report.

Councilor Fennessy asked for an explanation around the purpose of maintaining an unassigned fund balance, where it is at 20.5%.

Mr. LeBrun explained that there are a few factors, such as when the City goes out to bond the rating agencies look at the unassigned fund percentage, which is a major indicator of the financial health of the City. If the number increases, that is a sign of positive health, and if the number is declining they look at that in a negative light. He explained that the City is a half a point away from the best rating possible, which ultimately affects the interest rate on the bonds that the city borrows. He mentioned the state of affairs during the pandemic, where the City passed a budget with a 0% tax rate increase due to the fund balance. Ultimately, the City came out in a much better place. Having a healthy fund balance helps the City maneuver during difficult times.

Councilor Fennessy also inquired into the ambulance charges which was significantly more than the City had budgeted for, asking if it was due a change in the rates or the collection of fees.

Mr. LeBrun explained that there were more runs, along with better collection of fees, as well as some changes in the rates.

Councilor Keach mentioned that he is often asked why the City does not return the unassigned fund reserves back to the tax payers by way of reducing tax rates. He

asked Mr. LeBrun to speak to the delta between decreased tax rates and bond interest payments and how that is advantageous.

Mr. LeBrun explained that the City is no different than a business or resident, in that if the City took everything out of their savings account and spent it, while knowing that there will be ongoing expenses, the following year the City would be in a much tougher spot. For example, there were \$15 million in unassigned funds and the City used all of those funds to reduce the tax rate, that would be great for that particular year, however, the following year there would be a large tax rate increase, due to increases in expenses. Ultimately, managing an unassigned fund balance is a far better way to manage the funds on an ongoing basis, which ultimately helps to offset the tax rate.

Mayor Champlin commented that the City's Firefighters do far more than fight fires, as the majority of their calls are emergency service calls, at around 73%. He felt it was important for the public to understand that these ambulance/emergency calls take up a large amount of their time.

Manager Aspell further highlighted that by adding an ambulance company, the City does not cause more service needs, however, with a city that has a population of 45,000 at night and 90,000 during the day, it is important to have a mechanism to collect the dollars incurred for these calls. If the property tax payers were picking up all of those costs for all of the emergency services without the City owning the ambulance service, they would not be able to recoup the fees incurred for services by those not living in or paying taxes in the city. This also helps to keep the tax rate down. The revenues are important to support the ambulances.

Councilor Kretovic asked if the State Prison is the one area in the city that uses the ambulance service the most.

Manager Aspell and Mr. LeBrun agreed.

Councilor Foote complimented the efforts to mitigate future expenses. He asked if there was a state low and maximum rate recommended by the rate agencies.

Mr. LeBrun stated that the Government Officer's Association recommends a minimum of 8% and a maximum of 17.5%. The City feels that the 17.5% is a little low, especially in order to have a stronger bond rating.

Councilor Brown echoed Councilor's Foote's sentiments.

Mayor Champlin opened the public hearing.

Roy Schweiker, resident, testified. He discussed proposed legislation that the State was trying to pass around ambulance services. He was concerned about the costs, given that over half of the calls were under Medicare, which he stated vastly underpays for those services. He was concerned around the cost of maintaining the ambulances as well as the cost of the time of the firefighters.

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

- 26G. Resolution appropriating the sum of \$54,000 in the General Fund for furniture, equipment, and training; and authorizing the use of \$54,000 in Reserve Funds for this purpose.

Action: City Manager Aspell commented that it was the same report as 26F and that he would answer any questions.

Councilor Brown asked if they are using one supplier and was there any bidding for the office furniture.

Manager Aspell explained that the City has awarded a contract with a specific supplier for furniture and equipment. The training piece is related to funds that would be available for unbudgeted professional development opportunities for staff around the City.

Councilor Brown reminded Manager Aspell that the Council passed a similar request last year, asking what training took place.

Manager Aspell indicated that he did not have that information right at hand, however, any department can request to utilize those funds. Many departments are great at trying to use grants to be able to attend these conferences.

Mayor Champlin opened the hearing to the public.

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

- 26H. Resolution appropriating the sum of \$150,000 for the Concord Public Library chilling unit replacement subproject (CIP #551) and authorizing the issuance of bonds and notes in the amount of \$150,000 for this purpose; together with a report

from the General Services Director.

Action: City Manager Aspell indicated that in 2003, the Council approved air conditioning for the Concord Public Library. Those air conditioning units are reaching their end life cycle and these funds would be to repair the units, which would help them last three to five years longer. The Council could invest more dollars, however, if the Council has other plans for the library (such as improvements or expansions), it would not make sense to invest more at this time.

Councilor Sekou mentioned that the Library has been asking for a renovation and wanted to understand the cost implications of these funds.

Manager Aspell explained that if the City was to undertake an expansion or an addition, that it would take at least three years to get there, and repairing the units would give that time flexibility to get there.

Councilor Sekou wanted to point out that the Library has been doing amazing work, and if the Council allocates these funds, they are still aware of their expansion/addition requests.

Manager Aspell agreed, indicating that he felt it showed the Library that there is a stop gap measure so the community can make a decision in the next three years on how to support the Library's needs.

There being no discussion, Mayor Champlin opened the public hearing. There being no public testimony, the Mayor declared the hearing closed.

- 26I. Resolution appropriating the sum of \$40,000 for conducting illegal drug related investigations and accepting the sum of \$40,000 in grant funding from the New Hampshire Department of Safety - Law Enforcement Opioid Abuse Reduction Initiative grant for this purpose; together with a report from the Deputy Chief of Police.

Action: City Manager Aspell indicated that there is no requirement for matching funds.

There being no discussion, Mayor Champlin opened the public hearing. There being no public testimony, the Mayor declared the hearing closed.

- 26J. Resolution appropriating the sum of \$16,000 for the purchase of equipment to assist the Concord Police Department and the Central New Hampshire Special

Operations Unit in search and rescue operations and accepting the sum of \$16,000 in grant funds from the New Hampshire Department of Safety - State Homeland Security for this purpose; together with a report from the Deputy Chief of Police.

Action: City Manager Aspell indicated that there is no requirement for matching city funds for this grant.

There being no discussion, Mayor Champlin opened the public hearing. There being no public testimony, the Mayor declared the hearing closed.

- 26K. Resolution appropriating the sum of \$40,000 in the General Fund for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Belonging work and authorizing the use of \$40,000 from General Fund unassigned fund balance for this purpose; together with a report from the Deputy City Manager - Finance. (Public testimony received.)

City Manager Aspell indicated that the DEIJB Committee has started to work with a consultant and would like those services available to them. Phase I will cost \$25,000, and he would like to set aside \$15,000 for a potential phase II, if the Committee felt it was necessary.

Councilor Keach asked if the Committee decided phase II was necessary, would that come back to the Council for approval.

Manager Aspell explained that the RFQ was put out for \$25,000, however, he included an additional \$15,000 for flexibility. When the consultant submitted their proposal, they said phase II would cost \$15,000. However, the Committee would need to figure out if they wanted or needed a phase II, and what that would entail. This would provide them the funds without coming back to Council. If the Committee felt that they did not need a phase II, then the funds could go back to the fund balance. Conversely, he said that the Council could decide to approve phase I, have the Committee come back and give a report before approving the funds for phase II.

Councilor Keach mentioned his reservations after reviewing the "cash cow" website, however, he indicated that he is in favor of the DEI work, but wants to make sure it is done correctly. He mentioned that it appears the consultant has strengths in the field, but wanted to know the process of how he was selected.

Mayor Champlin indicated that the DEIJB Executive Committee which included Councilors Kretovic and Sekou, as well as himself, and city staff worked together on the process.

Manager Aspell explained that the committee received three proposals in the first round. The Mayor wanted to have a NH proposal and he agreed, so they sent out another RFQ, where they received a fourth proposal from a NH group. The core Committee reviewed the applications thoroughly, and narrowed it down to three proposals. The Committee, including City staff, interviewed the three groups. The core Committee then ranked the groups and ultimately chose the Racial Equity Group. Each proposal also included a separate financial proposal, which they did not open until they chose a finalist, to see if it would fit financially with the RFQ. Racial Equity Group's financial proposal was right in line with the RFQ. The Committee then reviewed the credentials of the group, which they felt were strong, as far as working with communities like Concord and even much larger organizations. When it came to the RFQ, the requirements were to have a strong background in DEIJB, to have a facilitator to do the listening sessions in order to draw the public out, and to have processes in place to work with larger groups as well as individuals. Once that was all in place, the Committee was ready to bring the resolution forward to the Council. The Committee is comprised of about 18 individuals, and they had a call with the consultant for an introduction and to discuss expectations and processes.

Councilor Grady Sexton asked if the Committee had the opportunity to fully vet the candidate and discuss the background, including the "cash cow" enterprise that the consultant has been publicizing.

Manager Aspell confirmed that the Committee asked him to vet the candidate, which he did, explaining that this group has done a tremendous amount of work in Massachusetts. He spoke with the Mass Municipal Association, as well as a few individual communities, whom were all very pleased.

Councilor Sekou was appreciative of the questions, explaining that the Committee did not take this lightly, and in fact wanted to ensure that they found the right person to do the work. Like in other committees, they trusted City staff to be diligent in vetting the group, and then to come back to give their recommendation. The Committee felt that this was the most qualified candidate, who has experience working with communities like ours doing the work they are looking for.

Councilor Brown asked the Manager Aspell if this was a role that the City Social Worker could take on, as they are embedded in the community, have connections, and the qualifications.

Manager Aspell explained that what they are really looking for is someone that can facilitate the work with all different groups, bringing out the experience that people have had. He then explained what the City would be receiving for the \$25,000, which included: foundational review with planning meetings, review of compliance reports, review of surveys and work done in the past, understanding of the current internal environment, review of general operations and strategic priorities, and to discuss the City's DEIJB vision. Step two would be to: facilitate foundational DEIJB foundational training sessions, conduct focus groups, report a summary, and the DEIJB Committee and the Select Board Committee would hold planning sessions. The consultant has suggested next steps for a possible phase II, however, the Committee would need to go through the process and determine next steps. Manager Aspell then read the RFQ requirements, and reviewed what a phase II would look like.

Councilor Brown asked after phase I and phase II, where would the money be allocated from in order to fulfill the recommendations.

Manager Aspell explained that in 2024, the Council appropriated \$140,000 for this work. Due to the long process, the funds were not spent and went back into the fund balance at the roll over of the fiscal year in June. So therefore, they came back to the Council with this recommendation to move forward now that they are ready. Alternatively, it could be added to the budget, or a special appropriation, but usually it is a fund balance item.

Councilor Kurtz asked for a clarification that either in the document that they were reading from or in the conversation that when they referenced the City, they were actually referring to the DEIJB Committee, as opposed to the work that City staff has already been doing for DEIJB work, and not connected to this consultant or proposal.

Manager Aspell agreed, and indicated that he would bring the work that City staff are doing internally, so that there is transparency and for the committee to be able to relate it to their work.

Councilor Kurtz then asked if there were details about the community wide listening session/focus groups and if there were any distinctions or specifics as to why they might want to fund this as opposed to what has been done in the past.

Mayor Champlin stated that there were listening sessions in the past, however they were not facilitated. This proposal would include a facilitator, as well as focus groups that includes individuals from various demographic groups across the community that can provide needed input. This would be synthesized into a report in order to understand the initiatives for the group.

Councilor Foote asked Manager Aspell if the City has any other boards or committees where they pay for a facilitator, or if any other city's in the state have paid for a facilitator.

Manager Aspell stated he was not aware. He then mentioned that he believed at one time some school districts might have hired a consultant, but he couldn't say for certain.

Councilor Kretovic asked Manager Aspell if the City hired a marketing consultant when they did Downtown Main Street.

Manager Aspell agreed that they hired a marketing consultant, however, he would not compare that to a facilitator. He did agree that they have hired plenty of consultants over the years for a variety of things.

Councilor Foote asked if this consultant would come to end at some point.

Manager Aspell indicated that he believed that there would be a report back to the City Council which would indicate what the Committee found and what they recommend, such as training sessions with City boards, etc. However, possibly a training module could be created instead of paying a consultant at that point. When the Council originally allocated the \$140,000, they envisioned it would take many months.

Mayor Champlin indicated that the intent has always been to give the DEIJB Committee the tools and expertise to eventually fly on its own, and continue the work and monitoring, and that there would be a date certain to discontinue the consultant.

Councilor Foote asked if the City continues to be an affirmative action employer.

Manager Aspell confirmed that was the case, and the City has been at the forefront in the state.

Councilor Schultz mentioned that possibly a lot of this discussion predates newer Council members.

Councilor Grady Sexton asked Manager Aspell if the staff has gone through extensive DEIJB training, questioning if they have the capability of training others.

Manager Aspell indicated that at this point it is a voluntary format for employees, where currently they are focusing on: women in the workplace, LGBTQ++, as well as a multicultural group, and whether there is enough interest. Then, they would like to have a neurodiversity group and a veterans group. They are looking to find out if the City is an employee centered workplace, along with being customer focused.

Councilor Grady Sexton asked why the Committee felt there was a need to spend money on foundational DEIJB when the City has it's own HR Department that has already gone through extensive training on the forefront of this work. The City has the DEIJB Committee that includes leaders in the field. She asked what she is not understanding and what the missing piece is.

Mayor Champlin explained that it is to get everyone on the same page. He agreed that City staff are extremely qualified, however, he was not sure if they would be able to fit that work into their busy schedule. This is a process of working with the facilitator, and ensuring that everyone's understandings are similar, while moving forward.

Councilor Grady Sexton asked if the consultant would then coordinate with the people who have trained City staff to ensure everyone is on the same page.

Manager Aspell stated that he is not sure what the differences are between what has already been learned by City staff and what the consultant will focus on, and there may be a lot of overlap.

Councilor Grady Sexton asked if there was any consideration given to the thought that the same people who trained City staff could head the facilitation for this DEIJB work.

Manager Aspell stated that there was interest, but there was not enough capacity. He felt that there was value for the City to be taking on this initiative. He felt that there was a mission and a vision for the boards.

Councilor Fennessy asked if the Mayor's expectation was that any sort of training would be voluntary for the boards and commissions.

Mayor Champlin explained that those boards and committees are already voluntary, and they are hopeful that they would be willing to participate, in order to provide tools and foundations moving forward.

Mayor Champlin opened the public hearing. He mentioned that the Council received four emails that are a part of their packet.

Ahni Malachi, Chair of the DEIJB Steering Committee, testified. She explained that the Committee has not been meeting yet, and some of the questions posed tonight will be on the forefront as they move forward. The Committee is made up of a variety of people including; new Americans, refugees, residents or family members of residents who have disabilities, seniors, etc. The hope is that the Committee comes together and agrees in one voice to help set the stage for the work. She is hopeful that a manual or training module can come from the collective work that can be utilized when individuals are selected and sworn in for their respective roles.

Councilor Kurtz asked Ms. Malachi to explain in her words why the facilitator would be useful and necessary, given the experience and knowledge brought to the table by the residents.

Ms. Malachi explained that having a facilitator is very important because it is helpful to have one person who's point of view is geared towards the work at hand, as well as guiding the committee so that they don't get off track. The Committee will have valuable input from all those participating, however, the end result has to be what they are trying to accomplish. There are experiences brought to the table and the Committee would not want to short circuit or discount someone's experience. The end goal is to have a product that the Steering Committee and the City Council would be in agreement with in order to move forward and represent the City.

Ms. Malachi mentioned that she did meet with Mr. Guess last week, as she missed the original meeting, and she felt very comfortable with him during their conversation. Ultimately, she is in full agreement that there should be a facilitator.

Councilor Brown mentioned that she was happy to hear from Ms. Malachi, given her experience, knowledge, and history working at the state level in this area. She

asked why Ms. Malachi felt the Committee could not do it without Mr. Guess.

Ms. Malachi mentioned that it's not because the Committee is unable to do it, moreover, she felt in order to have all of the elements necessary to formulate the reports etc., a facilitator is necessary because they have the knowledge on how to train, write up the information, and make sure that it can be shared. All of this would be a tremendous amount of work for a volunteer committee, which means that it would fall on the chair to facilitate. Having a facilitator whose primary job is to ensure the process is done correctly is paramount.

Councilor Keach asked Ms. Malachi to share a little bit of her biography.

Ms. Malachi explained that she works for the State of NH, as the Executive Director for the NH Commission for Human Rights, which enforces NH laws against discrimination. They focus on housing, employment, and public accommodations. She was also the Chair of the Governor's Advisory Council on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. She has also worked with the Department of Justice, as well as juvenile justice areas.

Mayor Champlin extended his deepest gratitude to Ms. Malachi for agreeing to Chair the Steering Committee.

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

Public Hearing Action

27. Ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances, Title IV, Zoning Code; Chapter 28, Zoning Ordinance to further revise certain provisions, which were previously modified by Ordinance #3168 on August 12, 2024, pertaining to conditional use permits for obstruction of the State House Dome and maximum height limitations in certain portions of the Central Business Performance District and Opportunity Corridor Performance District, as well as to amend other additional sections of the Zoning Ordinance as recommended by the Planning Board; together with a report from the Deputy City Manager - Development.

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

28. Ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances, Title V, Administrative Code; Chapter 35, Classification and Compensation Plan, Article 35-2, Compensation Plan, Schedule D, Elections Specialist; together with a report from the Director of

Human Resources.

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

29. Resolution appropriating the sum of \$17,265 to assist the Library's mission in providing a variety of equitable services to patrons at the Concord Public Library and accepting the sum of \$17,265 in donations from the Concord Public Library Foundation for this purpose; together with a report from the Library Director.

Action: Councilor Todd moved approval. Councilor Brown recused herself. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Kurtz and passed with no dissenting votes.

30. Resolution authorizing the City Manager to submit an application for grant funds in the sum of \$750,000 to the Community Development Block Grant Fund program, appropriating the sum of \$750,000 to support CATCH Neighborhood Housing's redevelopment at 30 East Side Drive, and accepting the sum of \$750,000 in Community Development Block Grant Funds for this purpose; together with a report from the Assistant Director of Community Development. (Public testimony received.)

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

31. Resolution adopting an Anti-Displacement and Relocation Policy Statement and Procedures, in support of the City's Community Development Block Grant application to the New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority to support CATCH Neighborhood Housing's Redevelopment Project at 30 East Side Drive, increasing the affordable housing units from the existing 14 units to between 20 and 24 new affordable housing units to support independent living and housing opportunities, including services for adults with learning and developmental disabilities; together with a report from the Assistant Director of Community Development.

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

32. Resolution appropriating the sum of \$3,049,000 as a transfer to reserves and authorizing the use of \$3,049,000 from Fiscal Year 2024 General Fund Assigned Fund Balance for this purpose; together with a report from the Deputy City Manager - Finance.

Action: Councilor Fennessy moved approval.

Councilor Brown requested to make an amendment that for the Economic Development Reserve, instead of it being \$300,000, that there be another reserve for a Workforce Development Reserve of \$100,000. Being that there was no second, the motion failed.

Mayor Champlin indicated that if Council so chooses, her goal would be accommodated by the existing Economic Development Reserve Fund, because he believed the money allocated in this motion could possibly be a source.

Councilor Keach felt it was important to leave broader, larger pots, which gives Council more flexibility.

Councilor Fennessy thanked the City staff for coming through with a surplus, which he recognized that it culminated from a lot of hard work. He also pointed out how the special revenue funds out performed and that the City should be proud of that work.

Mayor Champlin seconded Councilor Fennessy's comments.

The motion by Councilor Fennessy was duly seconded by Councilor Kurtz, and passed with no dissenting votes.

33. Resolution appropriating the sum of \$54,000 in the General Fund for furniture, equipment, and training; and authorizing the use of \$54,000 in Reserve Funds for this purpose.

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

34. Resolution appropriating the sum of \$150,000 for the Concord Public Library chilling unit replacement subproject (CIP #551) and authorizing the issuance of bonds and notes in the amount of \$150,000 for this purpose; together with a report from the General Services Director.

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

35. Resolution appropriating the sum of \$40,000 for conducting illegal drug related investigations and accepting the sum of \$40,000 in grant funding from the New

Hampshire Department of Safety - Law Enforcement Opioid Abuse Reduction Initiative grant for this purpose; together with a report from the Deputy Chief of Police.

Action: Councilor McNamara moved approval. Councilor Brown recused. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Kretovic and passed with no dissenting votes.

36. Resolution appropriating the sum of \$16,000 for the purchase of equipment to assist the Concord Police Department and the Central New Hampshire Special Operations Unit in search and rescue operations and accepting the sum of \$16,000 in grant funds from the New Hampshire Department of Safety - State Homeland Security for this purpose; together with a report from the Deputy Chief of Police.

Action: Councilor MacNamara moved approval. Councilor Brown recused. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Kurtz and passed with no dissenting votes.

37. Resolution appropriating the sum of \$40,000 in the General Fund for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Belonging work and authorizing the use of \$40,000 from General Fund unassigned fund balance for this purpose; together with a report from the Deputy City Manager - Finance. (Public testimony received.)

Action: Councilor Kretovic moved approval. Councilor Sekou duly seconded the motion.

Councilor Horne spoke about the importance of the DEIJB work, however, she stated that she is uncomfortable sending tax dollars to a Texas firm, and she is also concerned that a they might not understand the societal climate here compared to Texas.

Councilor Brown echoed Councilor Horne's sentiments, stating that Texas is very different than NH. She feels better knowing that Ms. Malakai has spoken with the consultant. She felt it would be difficult to have a facilitator in Texas, and would rather have the facilitator be from the Concord area, preferably the City Social Worker or another social worker who is affiliated with the City because it would be a continuation of the work of the Committee, while also doing outreach to the community. She was also concerned because the facilitator mentioned that it might be difficult to get people to speak, since they spoke over 20 months ago, and there was no concrete action taken. She mentioned that she would be in favor of having a local facilitator, as well as Mr. Guess to complete this work.

Councilor Grady Sexton commented that she too has some significant reservations with the plan and proposal. She mentioned that she does not support it as written. She feels DEIJB work is critical, however, she has spent the last two decades working to create more just and equitable communities, with extensive DEIJ training. She felt that facilitators and consultants have a difficult time moving the dial in this work, because communities look very different from one another. Consultants that do this work, often check the box instead of really doing the real work to help the communities. This committee of 18 extraordinary individuals, who are very qualified, are the key to doing this work, and not a \$25,000 out of state consultant. She urged the committee to continue this work, and commented that Ms. Malakia is very smart, and she has faith that she can continue to lead the effort with staff support.

Councilor MacNamara appreciates that there is a neutral party, not from NH, who can bring a larger breadth and clearer eyes. She appreciates the time and the interview process, and she is hearing that the Committee has said they could do it, but they need support.

Councilor Kretovic stated that in a perfect world they could hand pick the facilitator, however, they had to go through an RFP/RFQ process. The committee only had four proposals, which gave them a very small, narrow view. All of the processes are prescribed, based on state and federal law, and City policies. The Committee followed the process, with rankings, and this was the top consultant. Councilor Sekou says he supports this consultant 100%, and that is because all of the process was followed as prescribed. She is concerned about implicit bias. This is not an individual who will be doing this work, this is a team effort, who will dive together into all of the data, along with the facilitated conversations in the community, etc. This is about true representation on the boards and committees in the City.

Councilor Todd appreciated the comments provided, especially with regards to the HR Department. He can understand that there may be a tendency to go the route of utilizing the HR Department, however, there is a bandwidth issue with this process, and it will take a significant amount of time, which is not practical to put on that Department. He also mentioned that it is also not practical to ask the volunteers on the Committee either. He felt that having a consultant would benefit the end product. He puts a lot of weight on the recommendations of committees as it is their expertise. He also felt that out-of-state facilitators have an advantage because they have no preconceived notions, and they are forced to ask a lot of tough

questions, and delve in deeper, to get the end product. For this instance, and for this subject matter, that is what we are all looking for. Lastly, having a deliverable that will be permanent is really important going forward.

The motion to approve passed by a majority vote.

Reports

38. Presentation of State of New Hampshire Housing Champion Award.

Action: City Manager Aspell welcomed Deputy City Manager of Development, Matthew Walsh to come forward to present the State of NH Housing Champion Award.

Deputy City Manager Walsh presented the State of NH Housing Champion Award. He indicated that this was awarded to the City on December 17, 2024, reading "this prestigious award is a testament to your communities outstanding commitment to fostering an environment that supports innovative and sustainable solutions to address NH's housing needs. The City's efforts have demonstrated leadership and vision in pathways for creating housing developments that will positively impact residents and contribute to solving the state's housing crisis." He mentioned that there are 234 communities in NH, with 13 cities, and 22 towns. In the state's comprehensive application process, they chose 18 communities to earn this award, with 9 being cities. Concord and Boscawen were the only communities selected in central NH.

Mr. Walsh continued, indicating that the reason the application was successful was because the City complies with state law RSA 674:59, and the City was able to demonstrate that there are reasonable and ample opportunities to develop workforce housing. The City was also able to demonstrate that housing is welcomed and easy to develop, which is important, given that housing is available in 14 out of the 17 zoning districts in Concord. This equates to about 95% of Concord's land area. The City was also successful because we adopted innovative land use regulations, which includes a cluster sub-development ordinance, planned unit developments, mixed housing units, as well as conditional use permits. Concord also allows manufactured housing parks and subdivisions, along with mixed use development. The City was also chosen for the Council's unwavering commitment to make investments in our water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure, and for our complete street policy, which promotes walk-able neighborhoods.

Mr. Walsh also mentioned that the City has 2,352 new units of housing that are currently under development, pointing out that the City is a leader in the state of NH to this effect, as well as being a leader for affordable housing. Concord's population equates to about 36.5% of the total population of the region. Concord has just about 38% of the total housing stock as well. Concord has about 58% of the income restricted or affordable housing units in central NH. There are eight communities, out of the 20 in the region, with no income restricted units. Concord is well ahead of the curve in income restricted units.

Lastly, Mr. Walsh mentioned that with Concord accepting the funds of the Invest in NH grant, along with accepting the CATCH resolution tonight, the City is a leader in using all available tools to help get housing done through innovative and creative partnerships. Some of the tools used in reaching those goals include; selling City owned real estate for housing development, used the tax relief incentive program, used investments through the tax increment finance districts to foster housing projects, used the City's revolving loan fund program to make investments, and community development block grant. As a housing champion, the City will be eligible to apply for housing production municipal fund grants, and housing infrastructure municipal grant program funds, for a total of five million dollars between the two. In summary, this award recognizes the City's commitment to housing, the steps the city has taken to address the region's and state's housing needs. The City should take great pride in being recognized by the State of NH.

Councilor Schultz recognized the work of Mr. Walsh and all of the City staff in putting the application in.

Mayor Champlin also recognized the decision the Council has made, as well as the very hard work of Concord's City staff, Mr. Walsh, and the Community Development team.

Councilor Sekou reiterated the sentiments, and thanked the staff.

New Business

Unfinished Business

39. Resolution appropriating the sum of \$10,308,000 in the Beaver Meadow Golf Course Club House & Buildings Project (CIP #107) for the construction of a new facility and related improvements, and authorizing the issuance of bonds and notes in the sum of \$10,308,000 for this purpose; together with a report from the Deputy City Manager - Finance. (Presentation and proforma submitted.) (Public testimony

received.) (Revised presentation submitted.) (Additional public testimony received.)

Items pulled from the Consent Agenda for Discussion

15. Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Comprehensive Report (ACFR) from the Assistant Finance Director. (Pulled from consent by Councilor Brown.)

Action: Councilor Brown acknowledged Mr. LeBrun for the report, and for taking the time to help her understand the materials in the document. She mentioned that constituents have asked where the funds are going and why their taxes are increasing. She mentioned that there are misconceptions for example that some funds take in a lot of money. Through her conversations with Mr. LeBrun, he explained the City's general obligation bonds, which are on page 65 of the Annual Financial Report. There are quite a few of these that are dedicated to the golf course, and many people believe there is a surplus, but in fact there are general obligation bonds that do not mature almost 20 years. She requested that in the future that the public improvements bonds are listed with the title, so that people can see what outstanding bonds the City has.

Councilor Brown made a motion to accept the report.

City Manager Aspell asked for clarification if Councilor Brown's motion was to just accept the report.

Councilor Brown retracted her first motion. She made a second motion that the public improvements be listed for what the bonds actually are going forward in future Annual Financial Comprehensive Reports, rather than simply under the title of public improvements.

Mr. LeBrun explained that the document is prepared in accordance with the auditing standards, and the list of bonds are not the types of items that go into this particular document. The Annual Financial Comprehensive Report is used by rating agencies and other agencies. Mr. LeBrun indicated that the City could continue to provide a list of the bonds to Council, but it is inappropriate to be included in this particular document.

Councilor Brown retracted her second motion.

Councilor Brown made a motion to accept the report. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Schlosser, passing with no dissenting votes.

Comments, Requests by Mayor, City Councilors

Councilor Kretovic indicated that on February 2nd, Ski the Beav-Learn to ski program will be running at Beaver Meadow, with a rain/no snow date of February 9th. This includes a 5-K race, as well as kids races for children ages 3 through 8th grade. There will be two learn to ski sessions, and there will be free equipment available for these sessions, supported by S & W Sports, as well as other vendors who will be selling equipment. She gave a special thank you to David Gill, and the Concord Parks and Recreation Department for all that they do, as well as Dennis Murray, and Northeast Delta Dental who is sponsoring the event. Lastly, she congratulated and welcomed Emily Duclos, small business owner of the Broken Tee at Beaver Meadow.

Councilor McNamara indicated that the 22nd Annual Art & Bloom exhibit hosted by the Concord Garden Club will be held at the Kimball Jenkins Estate on Thursday, January 23rd, from 2 - 5 p.m., Friday 10-6 p.m., and Saturday 10 - 4 p.m.. The theme this year is centered around artwork from NH women artists. The suggested donation is \$10.00.

Councilor Brown highlighted the Ultimate Book Nerd Challenge from the Library, which is to read five books in categories that have been pre-selected. Councilor Brown participated last year and she commented that it was a fantastic program that opens the mind, and explores areas that one might not be familiar or comfortable with.

Councilor Kurtz highlighted the Concord Parks and Recreation program called the Sports, Play, Arts and Recreation Club (SPARC) which began this month, and is a free program for all youth residents taking place on Saturdays and Sundays, through the end of March. All ages are welcome, ages 10 and up can be unaccompanied, while younger youth will require an adult to be present. Parks and Recreation has done a wonderful job hiring some wonderful teen staff members.

Councilor Grady Sexton thanked Deputy Chief Moulton from the Concord Police Department, and Concord Police Department's Social Sorker Nicole, who were extraordinary in assisting an un-housed member of the community, commenting that she is very thankful for both of them.

Councilor Fennessy reminded everyone that "Annie" will be at the Capital Center for the Arts this Friday and Saturday, which is a professional performance that includes many members of the community. He also reminded everyone that all of

the ice skating areas through parks and recreation in the city are open.

Councilor Schlosser acknowledged Councilor Grady Sexton's comments with regard to the Police Department, as well as the Fire Department, supporting and taking special care of the homeless. He also noted that several of the social service agencies, the Friendly Kitchen, Belknap Merrimack CAP Agency, and the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness this week extended their hours so that our residents had a safe place to stay during the cold weather. He was appreciative of their work.

Councilor Sekou highlighted that Monday, January 20th is Martin Luther King Day, with many amazing events throughout Concord and the state. He highlighted that there is a great event taking place at Manchester's Memorial High School. He also expressed his gratitude for the complex work around DEI, mentioning that he is looking forward to the work that this DEIJB Committee will be doing, and that he appreciates the Committee's efforts.

Councilor Foote commented that he is very thankful that the Loudon bridge was repaved. He also echoed that he hoped everyone had a wonderful Martin Luther King Civil Rights Day. Lastly, the Ebenezer Eastman clock is finally functioning, with many thanks to the community for their efforts, specifically Chris Miller and Doug Feeney, as well as Parks and Recreation Director, David Gill. Lastly, he thanked City Manager Aspell for his outstanding effort to make this happen.

Mayor Champlin indicated that as part of the consent agenda, that the Council approved new contracts with four of the unions, pointing out that the negotiating team did an outstanding job, which helps to convey to the City's employees their worth. Also, this helps to competitively position the City to recruit and retain the best City employees possible. He showed gratitude for the team and the Council for this work.

Comments, Requests by the City Manager

Adjournment

At 9:31 PM, with there being no additional business, Councilor Kretovic moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Kurtz and passed with no dissenting votes.

At 9:38 PM Councilor Kretovic moved to re-enter the non-public session. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Kurtz and passed by roll call with no dissenting votes.

At 10:25 PM, Councilor Grady Sexton moved to exit the non-public meeting. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Kurtz and passed with no dissenting votes.

At 10:26 PM, there being no additional Council business, Councilor Grady Sexton moved to seal the minutes of the non-public session. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor McNamara and passed with no dissenting votes.

At 10:26 PM Councilor McNamara moved to adjourn the non-public session. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Kurtz and passed with no dissenting votes.

Information

Inf1 June 5, 2024 Heritage Sign Program Review Committee Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf2 November 6, 2024 Zoning Board of Adjustment Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf3 November 7, 2024 Heritage Commission Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf4 December 2, 2024 Concord Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf5 December 11, 2024 Ad-Hoc Beaver Meadow Building Committee Draft Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf6 December 12, 2024 Golf Course Advisory Committee Draft Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf7 December 16, 2024 Fiscal Policy Advisory Committee Draft Meeting Minutes

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf8 December 19, 2024 Airport Advisory Committee Draft Meeting Minutes

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf9 Correspondence from Xfinity regarding Price Changes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf10 December 19, 2024 Everett Arena Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

A true copy, I attest:

Deborah Tuite

Deputy City Clerk