



# CITY OF CONCORD

## Report to Mayor and City Council

**DATE:** September 6, 2022

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Byron Champlin, Fee Committee Chair  
Brian G. LeBrun, Deputy City Manager - Finance

**SUBJECT:** Fee Committee Report Summary

### **Recommendation**

Accept this report.

### **Background**

In March 2022, Mayor Bouley appointed an Ad-Hoc Committee to review City fees and their impact on citizens and businesses, and to provide recommendations.

### **Discussion**

The committee met nine times: March 10 and 21; April 4; May 2 and 25; June 27; July 18; August 29; and the final meeting on September 6. The main discussion items dealt with the rental fees of rooms at the City-Wide Community Center (CWCC) and Community Development fees.

David Gill, the City's Parks & Recreation Director, met with the committee and explained the Parks & Recreation Department fee structures. CWCC fees were a central part of these discussions. On May 25, 2022, the committee held a public forum with representatives of user groups to determine the equity of the fees, discover and mitigate barriers to public recreation facilities, and ensure accessibility for all. The following groups were represented at the May 25 meeting:

- Overcomers Refugee Services
- Capitol Center for the Arts
- Multicultural Festival
- Importance TV

- Project S.T.O.R.Y
- Friends of Concord Crew
- Change for Concord
- Daughters of the American Revolution
- Other renters of the CWCC, West Street Ward House, and other City recreation facilities

These groups provided significant feedback to the committee on how their organizations use the CWCC and other facilities. These groups also indicated how they could expand their capacity and operations for the benefit of underserved citizens if the fees were lowered. The committee ultimately made the following recommendations to the City Council:

- Reduce CWCC meeting room rental rates to \$15/hour for residents and \$30/hour for non-residents;
- Reduce CWCC auditorium rental rates to \$25/hour for residents and \$50/hour for non-residents;
- Add additional fee for CWCC rentals outside of standard time at rate of \$40/hour;
- Reduce West Street Ward House rental fee to \$15/hour for residents and \$30/hour for non-residents.

The City Council approved these recommendations, along with other rate revisions, at its August 8, 2022 meeting.

The Ad-Hoc Committee also reviewed the Community Development fee structure. The committee compared various development review fees in twelve NH communities. It was noted that Concord is in the bottom third of the twelve communities compared in terms of cost of the municipal development review process on developers. Fees such as building permits, planning board application fees, and impact fees were discussed.

The committee invited several developers to provide testimony. The developers who provided feedback noted that, although fees are a consideration, other factors such as consistency, ease of approvals, and process simplicity, many times, play just as much a role in a developer's choice of where to build a project.

In its deliberations, the committee noted that the City's building permit fee is a three-part amalgam of a basic application fee, a fee based on project value, and a per square foot fee. This was not the prevailing model found in other communities. At its September 6, 2022 meeting, the committee voted to recommend to the City Council to eliminate the square footage portion of the building fee permit calculation. This change was not expected to have a dramatic impact on overall City revenues but was thought to make the process simpler for applicants and reduce a portion of the financial impact on their projects.