City of Concord

City Council

Meeting Minutes - Final

Monday, January 5, 2026	7:00 PM	City Council Chambers 37 Green Street Concord, NH 03301

1. Mayor Champlin called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

4. Roll Call.

Present: 15 - Councilor Stacey Brown, Mayor Byron Champlin, Councilor Mark Davie, Councilor Nathan Fennessy, Councilor Jeff Foote, Councilor Amanda Grady Sexton, Councilor Michele Horne, Councilor Aislinn Kalob, Councilor Fred Keach, Councilor Jennifer Kretovic, Councilor Judith Kurtz, Councilor Jim Schlosser, Councilor Kris Schultz, Councilor Ali Sekou, and Councilor Brent Todd

2. Invocation by Reverend Lourey Savick, Wesley United Methodist Church and Imam Gabir Ahmed, Islamic Society of Greater Concord.

3. Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Ceremonial swearing in of Mayor Champlin.

Action: Mayor Champlin successfully took the oath and was officially sworn-in as Mayor.

5. Ceremonial swearing in of Members of City Council.

Action: Mayor Champlin successfully completed the ceremonial swearing-in of the newly elected and re-elected City Council members.

Councilor Foote left the meeting after the swearing-in ceremony.

6. Nominations for Mayor Pro Tem.

Action: Councilor Todd nominated Councilor Sekou. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Kurtz.

Councilor Brown nominated Councilor Horne. The motion failed for a lack of a second.

7. Election of Mayor Pro Tem.

Action: Councilor Sekou was re-elected as Mayor Pro Tem, with no dissenting votes.

8. Remarks by Mayor Pro Tem.

Action: Councilor Sekou expressed gratitude for the confidence of the Council in re-electing him as Mayor Pro Tem. He thanked the residents of Ward 8 for their continued trust and support and acknowledged the support of his family, community members, and campaign supporters. He affirmed his commitment to serve with integrity, fairness, and collaboration, to support the Mayor, work closely with fellow Councilors and City staff, and to advance the best interests of the City of Concord.

9. Comments by Members of City Council.

Action: Councilor Todd thanked voters for their continued trust and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve the residents of Penacook. He congratulated the Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, and welcomed newly elected Councilors. He acknowledged the support of his family and affirmed his commitment to working collaboratively with the Council to address upcoming challenges, including economic concerns, while responsibly stewarding city resources.

Councilor Horne expressed appreciation for being sworn in for a second term representing Ward 2 and thanked her family, friends, and community members for their support and engagement. She acknowledged the importance of hearing diverse perspectives and reaffirmed her commitment to being accessible, communicative, and a voice for working residents. She expressed gratitude to fellow Councilors and City staff for their collaboration and support and looked forward to continuing the work ahead.

Councilor Kretovic requested recognition of the late Jim Howard, the City's first Finance Director, honoring his decades of service, integrity, and lasting contributions to fiscal stewardship and transparent government, and extended the Council's condolences to his family. She thanked the residents of Ward 3 for their continued trust and reaffirmed her commitment to responsible governance. She welcomed newly elected Councilors and emphasized the importance of respectful, collaborative dialogue, support for City administration, staff, and volunteers. Councilor Kretovic also acknowledged the support of her family and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to continue serving.

Councilor Davie thanked the residents of Ward 4 for their support and confidence and expressed appreciation to community members, friends, and mentors who encouraged him to run and supported his campaign, and he thanked his family for their unwavering support, noting their presence from Maryland for the inauguration. He acknowledged his experience on the Zoning Board and thanked City staff for their assistance during the transition. Councilor Davie expressed gratitude for the support from the Concord Greenspace Coalition, and for the welcoming collaboration of his colleagues, looking forward to serving and working together in the term ahead.

Councilor Brown expressed appreciation for being elected to a third term representing Ward 5 and thanked residents and her family for their continued support. She acknowledged the dedication of the Council and explained her nomination of Councilor Horne for Mayor Pro Tem as recognition of her integrity, independent leadership, commitment to transparency, fiscal responsibility, and advocacy for inclusive community values. Councilor Brown expressed appreciation for Councilor Horne's service and looked forward to continued collaboration with the Council.

Councilor Kurtz congratulated returning Councilors on their re-election, welcomed newly elected Councilors, and expressed enthusiasm for continuing the Council's work and addressing upcoming challenges collaboratively.

Councilor Grady Sexton congratulated fellow Councilors on their election and thanked the residents of Concord for the opportunity to serve another term. She expressed appreciation for City staff for their dedication and acknowledged the support of her family. Councilor Grady Sexton reaffirmed her gratitude for the honor of serving the community.

Councilor Keach thanked supporters and colleagues for their encouragement and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve another term. He acknowledged that while Councilors may disagree, they share a common commitment to the best interests of Concord. Councilor Keach also thanked City staff for their professionalism and patience and expressed gratitude for their continued support.

Councilor Fennessy echoed congratulations to the Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, returning Councilors, and welcomed newly elected Councilors, expressing

appreciation and looking forward to working together.

Councilor Kalob thanked colleagues, City staff, family, friends, and Ward 6 residents for their support and trust. She expressed appreciation for the guidance she has received, reaffirmed her commitment to serving her constituents, engaging with community feedback, advocating for their interests, and working collaboratively with the Council to build a thriving, inclusive community.

Councilor Schlosser thanked the voters of Ward 7 for re-electing him to a second term and congratulated his fellow Councilors and the Mayor. He noted that his priorities include growing the City's tax base and increasing housing of all types to meet community needs. He expressed appreciation for his appointment to the Community Development Advisory Committee and looked forward to collaborating with the Council and residents on planning and development initiatives.

Councilor Schultz thanked the voters of Ward 9 for re-electing her to a second term and expressed gratitude for the support of her family, friends, and community. She emphasized the importance of empathy, compassion, and representing all residents, including those whose voices are less often heard. Councilor Schultz highlighted affordability and inclusivity as priorities and affirmed her commitment to public service at both the City Council and State Representative levels, looking forward to continuing her work on behalf of the community.

Councilor Sekou extended condolences to the family of Jim Howard, congratulated the Mayor, and welcomed newly elected Councilors, expressing eagerness to work with the full Council.

10. Mayor's remarks.

Action: Mayor Champlin thanked Councilor Kretovic for recognizing Jim Howard and acknowledged his dedication and contributions to the City. He also expressed appreciation for former Councilors Paul McLaughlin and Karen McNamara, noting the high standards they set for their successors and welcoming the new Councilors to continue their work.

Mayor Champlin then delivered his acceptance speech: Let me begin by saying "Thank you." Thank you to the citizens of Concord, who have honored me with another term as their Mayor. I pledge to do everything in my ability to serve you and the best interests of this city.

Thank you, as well, to my wife, Susie and to our daughters, Emma and Madeline, for their unwavering support, along with the friends and supporters who sustain me with their energy, encouragement and belief in what Concord is and what it can be.

My appreciation, too, goes out to Rev. Savick and Imam Ahmed for their invocations. And I send prayers for healing to Rabbi Robin Nafshi who could not accept our invitation to be here due to an injury.

We live in a time of uncertainty. It sometimes feels as if the ground is shifting beneath our feet. Long-established norms no longer seem to apply. Social media amplifies the voices of the disaffected.

Nevertheless, when I talk to people face-to-face, they are positive about Concord. When I walked Main Street in December during Midnight Merriment, person after person spontaneously stopped me to say how much they love this city, how excited they are to live here, and what a great, vibrant downtown we have. When I met a few months ago with members of the Overcomers Refugee Services women's group-all of whom resettled here from Africa-I asked what they thought of Concord; their response: "We feel safe here." A man recently approached me in a local business and reminded me that I had extended a welcome to him and his wife when they first moved to the city a couple of years ago. He wanted to tell me that my welcome was typical of the way the couple has been received in Concord.

Concord is, indeed, a wonderful city. With our destination downtown, a broad range of recreational options, sound infrastructure and safe neighborhoods, it's no wonder we are frequently ranked as one of the country's most desirable places to live.

Folks, Concord has a good thing going. But this success is neither accidental nor free. It is built on the investments made by past City Councils over several decades. Sometimes against strong headwinds. We on City Council need to keep this in mind as we weigh projects and expenditures over the next two years.

That's not to say that the voices of those who feel the pressure of rising property taxes should be ignored. On the contrary, we need to be aware of the impact of our actions, particularly on those with limited or fixed incomes.
Without doubt, the next two budget cycles will be challenging. We are going to have to make difficult choices. The zero percent increase in employee health

insurance costs that we experienced this fiscal year is unlikely to be repeated. That expense will rise. Cost of living increases negotiated in current, multi-year employee contracts will come due. In all probability, the cost of goods and services will increase. And balancing the budget will not be made any easier if the State falls short on sharing revenue and continues to downshift expenses to municipalities.

So, everyone around this table can expect to make tough choices. Just like the tough choices Concord's families are making.

But we have opportunities on the horizon, as well. Business growth continues at Merchant's Way in Penacook. And Penacook Village, with the city's significant infrastructure investments, holds potential for economic revival. When the old Legislative Parking Garage over Storrs Street comes down, that area will be ripe for redevelopment and tax base expansion. The Steeplegate Mall site still holds enormous potential. And we are seeing young entrepreneurs who love Concord step forward to make their mark, too.

We need to ensure that as these opportunities unfold, they are facilitated by the city to the greatest extent possible within current ordinances, so that our tax base grows. Make no mistake, in addition to housing, commercial development that shifts the tax burden away from residential property taxpayers, needs to be a priority. We must determine where Concord goes from here and what we need to put in place to get there.

In addition to our dedicated staff, our greatest asset in meeting these challenges and opportunities is this Council. Over the past two years, following a significant turnover in membership, we have for the most part learned to work together, to share our differences and to reach consensus. This is not lockstep governance, as some would characterize it, but a legislative collaboration in which the individual members work together for the good of the city. And starting today we have two new, talented members joining us who bring their own unique talents and energy and a new generational perspective to the table. I look forward to working with you all.

Concord sits at a crossroads. Not only the crossroads of New Hampshire, but also of its own destiny. We must ensure that we continue to be a safe, welcoming, vibrant and affordable place to live, to create a business and to raise a family. A city that is the jewel in New Hampshire's crown and the envy of the nation. I believe that this Council is up to the task.

11. Mayor Champlin's City Council 2026-2027 City Council committee assignments.

Action: The 2026-2027 City Council committee assignments were provided to Council.

12. Adjournment.

Action: At 7:59 PM, there being no additional Council business, Councilor Grady Sexton moved approval to adjourn. The motion was duly seconded and passed with no dissenting votes.

A true copy, I attest:

Deborah Tuite
Deputy City Clerk