City of Concord

City Council

Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 13, 2026	**7:00 PM**	**City Council Chambers** **37 Green Street** **Concord, NH 03301**

Non-meeting in accordance with RSA 91-A: 3, II (a)-(c) to discuss the City Manager's Evaluation followed by a non-meeting in accordance with RSA 91-A: 2, I (a) to discuss contract negotiations and a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A: 3, II (d) to discuss property acquisition to begin at 5:15 p.m.

1. Mayor Champlin called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

2. Invocation.

3. Pledge of Allegiance.

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

5. Approval of the Meeting Minutes.

   March 9, 2026 City Council Draft Meeting Minutes.

   Action: Councilor Grady Sexton moved approval of the March 9, 2026 City Council meeting minutes. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Schultz and passed with no dissenting votes.

6. Agenda overview by the Mayor.

7. Justin Kantar, International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Union President.

   Action: Justin Cantor, representing the Concord Firefighters Union, addressed the City Council to express appreciation for its support over the past five years and to mark his departure from his role as union president. He reflected on the working relationships developed with Council members and City leadership and expressed hope that those relationships will continue under new union leadership.

Mr. Cantor urged the Council to consider increased staffing and resources during the upcoming budget process. He noted that fire department call volume has more than doubled over the past several decades without corresponding increases in staffing, and that approximately half of current personnel have 10 years or less experience, contributing to significant training demands. He also described expanded responsibilities within the fire alarm/dispatch division, including regional service obligations and high call volumes. While acknowledging the addition of a fourth ambulance in 2022 as a positive step, he stated that staffing levels remain strained and limit the department's ability to address training, equipment maintenance, and employee recovery time. He emphasized the importance of sustainable investment to maintain service levels and support workforce well-being. City Council members thanked Mr. Cantor for his service and commitment.

Consent Agenda Items

Action: Councilor Kretovic moved approval of the Consent Agenda. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Schultz. Items 22 and 23 were pulled from the Consent Agenda by Councilor Brown. As part of the approval process, Councilor Brown put item 34 back on the Consent Agenda, indicating that she no longer had a need to pull the item. Councilor Kretovic recused herself from item 23 as the Chair of the Committee. Councilor Foote also recused himself from item 23 as his wife is a member of the Committee. Lastly, Councilor Brown recused herself from Item 35 as her husband is a police officer.

The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

Referral to General Services

8. Communication from Megan DeVorsey, 6 Cambridge Street, requesting the addition of the Centre Street/Loudon Road Sidewalk to High-Priority Snow Removal for Transportation Center Access.

Action: The communication was referred to General Services.

Referral to the Transportation Policy Advisory Committee

9. Communication from Maureen Page, 2 Johnson Avenue, requesting sidewalk installation on South Street from Wilson Avenue to Iron Works Road to Improve Pedestrian Safety for School-Aged Children.

Action: The communication was referred to the Transportation Policy Advisory Committee.

Referral to the Legal Department

10. Request for Restoration of Involuntarily Merged lots, located at 262 N State St (Tax Map and Lot 58/Z 17) from the Senior Planner.

Action: The communication was referred to the Legal Department.

Referral to the Parking Committee

11. Communication from Councilor Brown, on behalf of residents of 29 Columbus Avenue, asking that consideration be given to removal of a No Parking Sign on the west side of Columbus Avenue, just north of their driveway.

Action: The communication was referred to the Parking Committee

Items Tabled for May 11, 2026 Public Hearings

12. Ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances; Title II, Traffic Code; Chapter 18, Parking, Article 18-1, Stopping, Standing and Parking, Section 18-1-6, Schedule I, to modify no parking restrictions on Church Street between Bradley and Rumford Streets; together with a report from the Assistant Director of Community Development.

Action: Ordinance moved to set for a public hearing.

13. Ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances, Title I, General Code; Chapter 1, Government Organization, Article 1-5, Fees, Fines, and Penalties, Schedule 1; together with non-ordinance fees and a report from the Deputy City Manager-Finance.

Action: Ordinance moved to set for a public hearing.

14. Ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances, Title IV, Zoning Code; Chapter 28, Zoning Ordinance by amending certain definitions included within the Glossary and Article 28-5, Supplemental Standards, by amending Section 28-5-2 Duplex or Two-Family Dwellings; together with a report from the Deputy City Manager - Development.

Action: Ordinance moved to set for a public hearing.

15. Ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances, Title IV, Zoning Code; Chapter 28, Zoning Ordinance, Section 28-5-3 Conversion of a Residential Building; together with a report from the Deputy City Manager - Development.

Action: Ordinance moved to set for a public hearing.

16. Ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances, Title IV, Zoning Code; Chapter 28, Zoning Ordinance, Article 28-9, Administration and Enforcement, Section 28-9-3 Decisions by the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA), and Subsection 28-9-3(f)(3) Application Procedure for the ZBA; together with a report from the Deputy City Manager - Development.

Action: Ordinance moved to set for a public hearing.

17. Ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances, Title IV, Zoning Code; Chapter 28, Zoning Ordinance, Section 28-4-5 Development of Attached and Multifamily Buildings; together with a report from the Deputy City Manager - Development.

Action: Ordinance moved to set for a public hearing.

18. Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a project agreement with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) for the design, permitting, right-of-way, and construction of the multi-use path on the city-owned rail corridor from Sewalls Falls Road north to the Boscawen town line (CIP #543, State project no. 43732), appropriating the sum of $1,553,928.00, in the Merrimack River Greenway Trail project (CIP #543), accepting the sum of $1,243,142.40 in NHDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding, authorizing the transfer and use of Impact Fee Funds in the sum of $225,000, and authorizing the transfer and use of Recreation Reserve Funds in the sum of $85,785.60 for this purpose; together with a report from the Director of Special Projects and Strategic Initiatives. (Revised resolution, supplemental report and communication from the Friends of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail submitted.) (Public testimony received.)

Action: Resolution moved to set for a public hearing.

From the City Manager

19. Positive Citizen Comments.

Action: Received and filed.

Consent Reports

20. Diminimus gifts and donations report from the Library Director requesting authorization to accept gifts and donations totaling $1,600.10, as provided under the pre-authorization granted by City Council.

Action: Consent report approved.

21. Diminimus lease payment report from the Director of Special Projects and Strategic Initiatives requesting authorization to accept a lease payment in the amount of $2,632.09.

Action: Consent report approved.

22. Report from Deputy City Manager - Finance recommending the FY 2027 City Council Budget Schedule and Committee Guidelines. (Pulled from consent by Councilor Brown.)

Action: Item was pulled from the consent agenda for discussion.

23. Report from the Ad-Hoc Semiquincentennial & Tri-Centennial Committee requesting use of Official City Marks. (Revised commemorative coin design submitted.) (Pulled from consent by Councilor Brown.)

Action: Item was pulled from the consent agenda for discussion.

24. Quarterly Current Use Tax Report from the Director of Assessing.

Action: Consent report approved.

25. Report from the Parks and Recreation Director regarding an installation of a Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire Marker for William Penn Thompson.

Action: Consent report approved.

26. Report from the Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee and the Parks and Recreation Director regarding the Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee's recommended Capital Improvement Plan for Fiscal Year 2027.

Action: Consent report approved.

27. Report from the Parks and Recreation Director on the Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee's recommendation following the October 2025 City Council referral regarding combining softball lease agreements.

Action: Consent report approved.

28. Report from the Parks and Recreation Director on the Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee's review of the July 2025 City Council Referral on adding an AED at the Beaver Meadow Park Tennis/Picklball Courts.

Action: Consent report approved.

29. Report from the Transportation Policy Advisory Committee recommending

transportation project priorities for the FY 2027-2036 Capital Improvements Program.

Action: Consent report approved.

30. Report from the Transportation Engineer, on behalf of the Traffic Operations Committee and Transportation Policy Advisory Committee, in response to a referral from City Council regarding requests from Claire Michlovitz, South Curtisville Road, for traffic safety and school drop-off/pick-up flow improvements at South Curtisville Road and Portsmouth Street.

Action: Consent report approved.

31. Report from the Transportation Engineer seeking authorization for the City Manager to enter into a License Agreement with the owner of 102 Sewalls Falls Road concerning maintenance of newly established landscaping areas associated with FY2024 Capital Improvement Project #520 (Sewalls Falls / Abbott Road Intersection Realignment Project).

Action: Consent report approved.

32. Report from the Assistant Director of Community Development and General Services Director, on behalf of the Parking Committee and General Services Department, in response to a referral from City Council requesting consideration of 3-hour parking restrictions, parking signage locations, and adding sidewalk plowing along the portion of Washington Street between North State Street and North Main Street.

Action: Consent report approved.

33. Report from the General Services Director outlining the City's Pilot Curbside Collection Rules.

Action: Consent report approved.

Consent Resolutions

34. Resolution authorizing the City Manager to Enter into a Lease Agreement with Scenic RailRiders, Inc., concerning the City-Owned Parcels identified as Tax Map 743Z, Lot 10-2 and Tax Map 13P, Lot 21 (former Northern Railroad) to Operate a Railbike Tour Business; together with a report from the Director of Special Projects & Strategic Initiatives. (Pulled from consent by Councilor Brown.)

Action: Consent resolution approved.

As part of the approval process, Councilor Brown put Item 34 back on the Consent Agenda, indicating that she no longer had a need to pull the item.

35. Resolution authorizing the City Manager to submit an application to the Jeanne Shaheen Congressional Directed Spending Program for funds designated for Law Enforcement-Related Programs; together with a report from the Deputy Chief of Police.

Action: Consent resolution approved.

Councilor Brown recused herself as her husband is a police officer.

Appointments

36. City Manager's Proposed Appointments to the Conservation Commission: Kevin Porter and G. Bruce Currie.

Action: Appointments approved.

37. Mayor Champlin's proposed appointment to the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice and Belonging (DEIJB) Steering Committee: The Rev. Jean C. Beniste.

Action: Appointment approved.

End of Consent Agenda

Public Hearings

38A. Resolution appropriating the sum of $385,000, in the Memorial Field Facility Improvement Project (CIP #557) to remove and secure bleachers, authorizing a transfer from the General Fund in the sum of $385,000, appropriating the sum of $385,000 in the General Fund as a transfer out to capital, and authorizing the use of $385,000 in General fund balance for this purpose; together with a report from the Parks and Recreation Director, the General Services Director and the Public Properties Superintendent. (Public testimony received.)

Action: City Manager Aspell informed City Council that the Memorial Field stadium bleachers have reached the end of their useful life, citing visible deterioration (corrosion, material fatigue, and potential instability) that poses safety risks and liability exposure. He noted the bleachers also fail to meet current building and accessibility standards, increasing legal and insurance risks. While long-term improvements will be considered through the Memorial Field master plan, he

emphasized that action on the existing bleachers is necessary regardless of future decisions and should be viewed as a responsible, immediate investment.

Two options were presented. Option 1 would close off the center section of the baseball bleachers, leaving the structure in place but inaccessible. Option 2 (staff recommendation) would remove the center section's steel beams and seating for storage and future reuse, improving safety. For football facilities, Option 2 includes full removal of the main stands, press box, and visitor bleachers, with remediation of any contaminated soil, site restoration, and installation of a small ground-level structure for electrical and PA systems.

Estimated costs are $85,000 for baseball bleacher work and $300,000 for football bleachers and press box removal. He stressed that these costs will be incurred regardless of timing and recommended proceeding now to protect public safety.

Councilor Fennessy inquired about the baseball bleacher press box under Option 2. Parks and Recreation Director David Gill clarified it is a freestanding structure and would remain operational. Regarding the proposed ground-level structure for football facilities, Mr. Gill stated the modest-cost shed would support existing users (e.g., youth football) and allow flexibility for future use, noting uncertainty about how long the field may remain active.

Councilor Brown questioned prior capital planning entries regarding funds placed in 2024 to replace the concession building. City Manager Aspell explained funds were scheduled but deferred in past years as other priorities took precedence, resulting in delays to bleacher replacement. Mr. Gill confirmed the bleachers have been in continuous use since the early 1970s, including the previous year.

In response to Councilor Sekou, General Services Director Jeff Hoadley explained that cost estimates were based on quotes obtained through the City's on-call contractor, Milestone, which solicited subcontractor bids. Options presented derive from those quotes.

Discussion also addressed potential cost-sharing with the school district. City Manager Aspell noted this would require Council-directed negotiations with the school board. Councilors discussed interim alternatives (e.g., fencing), but staff reiterated that removal is the only reliable safety solution and costs will increase if delayed.

Mr. Gill added that the proposed temporary shed is not permanent and could be re-purposed. Historical funding for the bleachers included a mix of federal (Land and Water Conservation Fund) and city dollars. While school representatives agree on the unsafe condition, no financial discussions have occurred. Staff indicated that future decisions will be guided by the forthcoming Memorial Field Complex master plan. Councilor Foote noted the Joint City/School Memorial Field Planning Committee is scheduled to meet on April 29, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. to further address planning and coordination.

Councilor Brown asked about immediate safety. Parks and Recreation Director Gill confirmed the bleachers have been closed and roped off since November.

Mayor Champlin opened the public hearing.

Roy Schweiker, resident, stated that the school board has directed staff to provide a May 31 report outlining a proposed first phase for Memorial Field, suggesting the bleacher issue be considered within that broader plan. He expressed concern about awarding the project through a single on-call contractor rather than a full competitive bidding process, and recommended seeking further input from the school board before proceeding. Mr. Schweiker also argued that future investments at Memorial Field should be allocated based on who primarily benefits, asserting that some proposed improvements appear to serve school needs more than general public use.

Councilors Foote and Sekou acknowledged his concerns regarding competitive bidding.

In follow-up discussion, Mr. Schweiker reiterated his view that certain past investments in the facility served broader community purposes, while current proposals may be more school-specific, and therefore funding responsibilities should be evaluated accordingly.

Councilor Brown confirmed with Parks and Recreation Director Gill that the bleachers have been closed and roped off since November.

During further public testimony, residents Jessica Wheeler Russell (Merrimack

Valley School Board member), Tracy Bricchi (New Hampshire State Representative; Chair, Merrimack Valley School Board), and Devin Rodrique, all of Penacook and speaking as private citizens, presented a community petition with over 500 signatures concerning Memorial Field improvements. The petition calls for equitable treatment of Merrimack Valley School District (MVSD) taxpayers, asserting that MVSD fully funds and maintains its own athletic facilities while also contributing to Memorial Field through City taxes. They cited prior precedent (MVSD funding Rolfe Park improvements) and usage data indicating the majority use of Memorial Field is by the Concord School District, arguing that project costs should align with primary beneficiaries. City Councilors raised concerns regarding the use of an on-call contractor versus a broader competitive bidding process.

Speakers further outlined disparities in property tax burdens between MVSD and Concord School District residents, attributing differences to state funding formulas, and urged a balanced, transparent cost-sharing approach tied to facility use. While emphasizing fairness, they expressed support for safe, high-quality athletic facilities and willingness to participate in ongoing discussions. They also described MVSD's long-term capital planning practices and investment history.

Discussion also included the broader relationship between the two school districts, including considerations of long-term structural questions such as potential consolidation, though no formal proposals were advanced. Speakers and Councilors emphasized the importance of maintaining a collaborative relationship. It was noted that MVSD has been cooperative in sharing its facilities, including allowing Concord School District students access to its track and other resources, underscoring ongoing inter-district coordination. Ms. Bricchi stated that, based on her experience, many Penacook residents are not in favor of consolidating the school districts, while others noted the issue would ultimately require broader public input.

Councilors engaged in extended discussion on cost allocation, facility usage, and inter-district coordination, including questions regarding MVSD access to City facilities and potential future collaboration. Residents indicated MVSD students generally do not use Memorial Field and rely primarily on district-owned facilities.

Additional testimony from Concord High School Athletic Director Steve Largy emphasized immediate safety concerns and liability risks associated with the

bleachers, supporting their removal. He also described current challenges due to limited facility access, impacting student athletics programming.

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

38B. Resolution appropriating the sum of $526,968, in the Vehicle and Equipment Replacement project (CIP #121) for the replacement of two dump trucks, accepting the sum of $421,574, in grant funding from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, and authorizing the issuance of General Fund General Obligation Bonds and Notes in the sum of $105,394, for this purpose; together with a report from the General Services Director.

Action: City Manager Aspell informed Council that the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services launched the Granite State Clean Fleets program to assist municipalities in reducing transportation related emissions. This program provides financial support in replacing aging diesel vehicles with cleaner more efficient alternatives. The General Services Department has identified eligible vehicles for replacement. It seeks City Council authorization to pursue funding for the two new dump trucks under this program to support the modernization of the municipal fleet and advance environmental and public health objectives. The City submitted the application to replace the old fleet units that no longer meet current emissions standards. These applications were approved by the Governor and Executive Council on January 28th and to proceed the project requires formal appropriation by the City Council and the associated grant funds will be reimbursed to the City upon completion.

In response to Councilor Horne's question whether this item could be part of the upcoming budget. City Manager Aspell explained that one truck is already included in the upcoming budget while the second is planned for two years forward. Pursuing the grant now avoids losing available funding. General Services Director Hoadley added that the project is time-sensitive, with a completion deadline of December and delaying approval could jeopardize procurement timelines and grant eligibility. Fleet Manager Jim Bell noted vehicle ordering alone requires approximately 12 weeks, making the schedule tight.

Councilors discussed timing and budget coordination. Councilor Foote commended staff for securing the competitive grant. Councilor Brown asked for clarification. City Manager Aspell responded that the City must appropriate funds upfront, with reimbursement of approximately $481,000, resulting in a net City cost

of about $105,000 for both trucks.

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

38C. Resolution appropriating the sum of $5,000, in the Community Development Miscellaneous Grants and Donations Project for Tree Planting on City Property and within public rights-of-way under the Sustainable Tree Program and authorizing a transfer in the sum of $5,000, from the Urban Tree Trust Fund for this purpose; together with a report from the Conservation Commission Tree Subcommittee.

Action: City Manager Aspell recommended approval of grant funding to support tree planting and related initiatives.

Councilor Brown inquired about the City's status as a Tree City USA community and whether minimum per-capita spending requirements had been met. Director of Special Projects Beth Fenstermacher confirmed the City exceeds requirements, noting that both tree planting and maintenance costs (including staff and operations) are included, totaling approximately $7 per resident.

During the public hearing, Ted Diers (Chair Emeritus, Tree Subcommittee of the Conservation Commission), along with Tom Daigle (Chair), presented an overview of the City's urban forestry efforts. Mr. Diers highlighted the importance of trees as critical green infrastructure, noting ongoing challenges including aging tree stock, climate impacts, pests, and conflicts with utilities. He emphasized the need for improved long-term maintenance and replacement strategies. The Sustainable Tree Program was reported as fully subscribed, with over 100 trees planted to date and a current waiting list. Additional initiatives include community outreach, tree giveaways, the Tree Champion Award, and exploration of new efforts such as invasive species (bittersweet) control. Mr. Daigle affirmed continued collaboration with the City and support for expanding urban tree canopy and integration into planning efforts.

Councilors expressed appreciation for the committee's work and discussed opportunities for further collaboration, including coordination with the Energy and Environment Committee to highlight environmental and energy-saving benefits of trees.

Mayor Champlin opened the public hearing.

Resident Wyatt Porter Brown spoke regarding the recent removal of a significant number of trees at Memorial Field, expressing concern over the loss of canopy, habitat, and long-term environmental value. He questioned the decision-making process and recommended the City consider using certified tree assessors to

evaluate both risk and value prior to large-scale removals. Councilors acknowledged his concerns and noted ongoing and future efforts, including a planned tree inventory.

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

38D. Resolution modifying the All Veterans' Tax Credit for the City of Concord pursuant to the provisions of RSA 72:27-a; together with a report from the Director of Assessing.

Action: City Council, by consent, agreed to combine the public hearing for items 38D, 38E, and 38F, as all items relate to veterans' tax credits.

City Manager Aspell reported that the Tax Exemption Policy Committee met on February 5 to review existing elderly, blind, and veterans tax exemption programs, including comparisons with 13 other communities. The Committee reviewed current eligibility thresholds, exemption amounts, and income and asset limits for elderly and blind exemptions, as well as veterans' tax credits.

For elderly exemptions, current asset limits remain $150,000 (excluding primary residence), with income thresholds of $44,100 for single applicants and $63,000 for married applicants. Exemption tiers are $80,000 (ages 65-74), $131,000 (ages 75-79), and $223,000 (ages 80+). The Committee recommends increasing income thresholds to $45,500 (single) and $64,000 (married), with no change to asset limits or exemption tiers.

For blind exemptions, the current $125,000 exemption is unchanged.

For veterans' credits, the Committee recommends increasing the optional veterans tax credit and all veterans tax credit from $400 to $500 (consistent with RSA 72-28-B requirements), and increasing the service-connected permanent and totally disabled veterans tax credit from $2,000 to $2,500. No other changes were recommended.

Mayor Champlin opened the combined public hearing for items 38D, 38E, and 38F. There being no testimony, Mayor Champlin declared the public hearing closed.

38E. Resolution modifying the Optional Veterans' Tax Credit for the City of Concord pursuant to the provisions of RSA 72:27-a; together with a report from the Director of Assessing.

Action: City Council, by consent, agreed to combine the public hearing for items 38D, 38E, and 38F, as all items relate to veterans' tax credits.

38F. Resolution modifying the Tax Credit for Service-Connected Permanent and Total Disability for the City of Concord pursuant to the provisions of RSA 72:27-a; together with a report from the Director of Assessing.

Action: City Council, by consent, agreed to combine the public hearing for items 38D, 38E, and 38F, as all items relate to veterans' tax credits.

38G. Resolution modifying the Elderly Exemption for the City of Concord pursuant to the provisions of RSA 72:27-a; together with a report from the Director of Assessing.

Action: Mayor Champlin noted that City Manager Aspell discussed this item with items 38D, 38E, and 38F.

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

38H. Ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances, Title I, General Code; Chapter 9, Water, Article 9-6, Sewer and Drains, updating language to comply with current State and Federal requirements; together with a report from the General Services Director.

Action: City Manager Aspell reported that the City of Concord Water Division, in cooperation with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES), completed a review of the City's sewer use ordinance. The review was prompted by updates to state and federal regulations affecting municipal sewer standards. As a result, the City Solicitor prepared an ordinance amendment updating several sections of the existing sewer use ordinance to ensure compliance.

City Manager Aspell stated these changes are regulatory in nature and required for compliance. He noted that failure to adopt the updates would place the City in violation of NHDES requirements and could result in enforcement action. Accordingly, the ordinance must be updated to remain in compliance with applicable state and federal regulations.

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

Public Hearing Action

39. Resolution appropriating the sum of $385,000, in the Memorial Field Facility Improvement Project (CIP #557) to remove and secure bleachers, authorizing a transfer from the General Fund in the sum of $385,000, appropriating the sum of $385,000 in the General Fund as a transfer out to capital, and authorizing the use of $385,000 in General fund balance for this purpose; together with a report from the Parks and Recreation Director, the General Services Director and the Public Properties Superintendent. (Public testimony received.)

Action: Councilor Fennessy moved approval. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Grady Sexton.

Councilor Brown moved to table the item until there is a conversation with the Concord School District. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Schultz.

Council discussion followed. Councilors Fennessy, Keach, Kurtz, Todd, and others opposed tabling, citing public safety concerns, liability risks, and the condition of the bleachers, emphasizing that the structures should be removed regardless of future planning. Councilor Brown supported tabling, referencing concerns raised by residents, contract approach, prior capital prioritization decisions, and the need for further discussion on cost allocation and school district participation.

Councilor Horne supported the item because of the safety issue, however, she asked to advance a separate discussion regarding initiating negotiations with the school district on cost-sharing and related arrangements later in this meeting.

Councilors Kretovic and Keach noted that broader Council consensus had not yet been established and that upcoming joint committee discussions on April 29 should occur before formal negotiation directives.

Mayor Champlin noted safety and liability concerns and indicated support for proceeding rather than delaying action. The City Manager stated he could participate in future discussions but noted multiple possible approaches would need Council direction.

Roll call was requested by Councilor Fennessy:

No: Councilor Fennessy, Councilor Foote, Councilor Grady-Sexton, Councilor Horne, Councilor Keach, Councilor Kretovic, Councilor Kurtz, Councilor Schlosser, Councilor Sekou, Councilor Todd, Mayor Champlin

Yes: Councilor Kalob, Councilor Schultz, Councilor Brown, Councilor Davie

The motion to table failed.

Councilor Horne stated that, separate from the immediate vote on the bleacher demolition, she wished to bring forward a motion to initiate a broader Council discussion at a future meeting (referencing the May Council meeting). She expressed that the intent was to begin a structured process for the City Council to provide direction to the City Manager regarding negotiations with the Concord School District related to the Memorial Field project, including the potential division of costs and responsibilities between the City and the School District. She noted prior conversations about the possibility of transferring ownership of the park or portions of the facility to the School District and indicated that multiple approaches should be explored collaboratively.

Councilor Horne emphasized that she was seeking to begin a Council-level consensus-building discussion so that direction to the City Manager would reflect the full Council, rather than relying solely on a smaller ad-hoc committee. She also stated that this discussion should include consideration of how the City Manager would approach negotiations with the School District going forward.

Councilor Schultz seconded the motion.

Councilor Kretovic clarified that it's not a motion.

During discussion, several Councilors and the City Manager clarified procedural concerns and timing, noting that an ad-hoc committee meeting was already scheduled for April 29 to review scope and options, and that broader direction from the full Council had not yet been established.

Mayor Champlin indicated that while nonpublic discussion on property matters could be scheduled, he believed it was premature to direct negotiations before the ad-hoc committee completed its work and before Council consensus had been reached regarding overall direction.

Councilor Keach also noted that there was not yet agreement among Councilors on a unified direction, and therefore initiating negotiation directives at this stage would be premature.

City Manager Aspell stated that, depending on Council direction, he would be prepared to participate in discussions and outline potential options, but emphasized that he currently did not have clear direction from the Council regarding negotiation parameters.

Councilors Sekou, Grady-Sexton, Kretovic, Kurtz, Keach, Fennessy, Todd, and others emphasized differing perspectives balancing fiscal concerns, safety, and process considerations, with some urging multiple project options and further intergovernmental collaboration.

Mayor Champlin and several Councilors emphasized urgent safety and liability concerns as justification for proceeding.

Mayor Champlin indicated that the vote before Council would be to approve the resolution, moving forward with the demolition of the bleachers.

The motion was put to a roll call vote by Councilor Schultz.

Roll Call:

No: Councilor Schultz, Councilor Brown, Councilor Davie, Councilor Horne, Councilor Kalob

Yes: Councilor Sekou, Councilor Todd, Mayor Champlin, Councilor Fennessy, Councilor Foote, Councilor Grady-Sexton, Councilor Keach, Councilor Kretovic, Councilor Kurtz, Councilor Schlosser

The motion passed by the required two-thirds majority vote.

40. Resolution appropriating the sum of $526,968, in the Vehicle and Equipment Replacement project (CIP #121) for the replacement of two dump trucks, accepting the sum of $421,574, in grant funding from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, and authorizing the issuance of General Fund General Obligation Bonds and Notes in the sum of $105,394, for this purpose; together with a report from the General Services Director.

Action: Councilor Kretovic moved approval. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Schultz.

Councilor Brown stated that she wished to make a motion to fund $105,394 from the Capital Reserve Fund, Highway Paving, rather than from the unassigned fund balance. Councilor Schultz seconded the motion.

Councilor Brown explained that the Highway Paving Capital Reserve Fund is intended for uses such as paving and related infrastructure needs, and that these funds function as a type of savings account set aside for capital needs. She stated her concern that, given multiple bonded projects and uncertainty around revaluation impacts, the City should avoid increasing pressure on the tax rate. She therefore proposed using the Highway Paving Capital Reserve Fund to cover the expense.

Councilor Keach spoke in opposition, stating that during his tenure on the Council, the City has historically underfunded paving needs. He cautioned that diverting funds from paving would further reduce the City's ability to maintain its roadway infrastructure.

Councilor Fennessy stated agreement with Councilor Keach's comments and also opposed the motion.

Councilor Kurtz asked for clarification regarding the City's general approach to using fund balance versus bonding, particularly in relation to capital versus operating decisions. She sought to understand why certain items were recommended for bonding while others were proposed to be funded differently.

City Manager Aspell responded that capital planning is forward-looking and that funding decisions are made in the context of multi-year capital needs. He explained that reducing funding from the Highway Reserve Fund would directly reduce the number of paving projects the City is able to complete. He also noted that bonding is typically used for assets with longer useful lives, and that in this case, using state grant funds and reducing future bonding obligations helps minimize long-term

taxpayer costs.

Councilor Kurtz followed up, asking whether the City could instead use general fund balance for the $105,394 portion rather than reducing paving reserves. City Manager Aspell responded that doing so would still reduce future financial flexibility and potentially increase reliance on future taxation or borrowing, emphasizing the importance of preserving one-time funds for future needs.

Councilor Sekou asked for clarification on the size of the Highway Reserve Fund and how the proposed reduction would affect the paving program. He also asked how much was planned for future paving in the capital improvement program. He emphasized that if funds exist for their intended purpose, they should be carefully evaluated before being redirected.

Deputy City Manager - Finance, Mr. LeBrun, explained that the Highway Reserve Fund currently totals approximately $2 million, and that the City typically spends about $2.7-$2.8 million annually on paving. He stated that the fund is carefully managed to maintain roadway conditions and that reducing it would directly impact the City's ability to pave roads. He also clarified that the $105,394 request for vehicles would normally be appropriate for bonding given its useful life of approximately 10-15 years, but that staff had recommended an alternative funding approach to minimize borrowing.

Councilor Sekou acknowledged the explanation and noted the importance of understanding how fund reductions directly affect paving capacity. He reiterated that reductions would likely result in fewer paved streets.

Councilor Brown then stated she wished to modify her motion. She withdrew her original motion and proposed instead that the funding come from the Equipment Reserve Fund, noting that it had an available balance of approximately $535,000 and that using it would avoid additional bonding and interest costs.

Mayor Champlin asked for clarification, and Councilor Brown formally withdrew her initial motion. She then made a new motion to fund the $105,394 from the Equipment Reserve Fund.

Councilor Schultz withdrew her second to the original motion.

No second was made to the revised motion, and therefore it failed for lack of a

second.

The original motion to approve the resolution passed with the required two-thirds majority, by a unanimous vote.

41. Resolution appropriating the sum of $5,000, in the Community Development Miscellaneous Grants and Donations Project for Tree Planting on City Property and within public rights-of-way under the Sustainable Tree Program and authorizing a transfer in the sum of $5,000, from the Urban Tree Trust Fund for this purpose; together with a report from the Conservation Commission Tree Subcommittee.

Action: Councilor Kurtz moved approval. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Schultz.

Mayor Champlin noted, "We all love trees."

Councilor Brown stated for the record that, in her view, more than 300 trees had been cut in Concord, including approximately 255 trees at Memorial Field and 49 at Beaver Meadow. She expressed concern about the cumulative loss of mature trees and stated that the City should consider retaining or hiring a qualified tree assessor prior to undertaking any large-scale tree removals, in order to better evaluate value, condition, and long-term community impact. She emphasized that tree removal represents a significant loss to the community and future generations.

The motion passed by the required two-thirds majority vote.

42. Resolution modifying the All Veterans' Tax Credit for the City of Concord pursuant to the provisions of RSA 72:27-a; together with a report from the Director of Assessing.

Action: Councilor Fennessy moved approval. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Schlosser. Councilor Brown recused herself because she is a veteran.

The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

43. Resolution modifying the Optional Veterans' Tax Credit for the City of Concord pursuant to the provisions of RSA 72:27-a; together with a report from the Director of Assessing.

Action: Councilor Fennessy moved approval. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Keach. Councilor Brown recused herself as she is a veteran.

The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

44. Resolution modifying the Tax Credit for Service-Connected Permanent and Total Disability for the City of Concord pursuant to the provisions of RSA 72:27-a; together with a report from the Director of Assessing.

Action: Councilor Kretovic moved approval. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Fennessy.

Councilor Fennessy stated that the change in the ordinance is being made in part due to a change in state law. He explained that under the updated requirements, certain veterans' tax credits can no longer be stacked as they previously had been. He noted that, in order to ensure that eligible service-connected, permanently and totally disabled veterans continue to receive the full intended benefit, the City is increasing that specific credit to $2,500. He emphasized that this adjustment is necessary to align with the revised statutory framework.

Councilor Sekou thanked Councilor Fennessy for explaining the rationale behind the change and for helping clarify the impact of the updated structure.

Mayor Champlin encouraged veterans and disabled veterans in the community to review the updated program and noted that the application deadline is April 15th, which he emphasized is imminent.

The motion passed unanimously.

45. Resolution modifying the Elderly Exemption for the City of Concord pursuant to the provisions of RSA 72:27-a; together with a report from the Director of Assessing.

Action: Councilor Sekou moved approval. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Kurtz and passed unanimously.

46. Ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances, Title I, General Code; Chapter 9, Water, Article 9-6, Sewer and Drains, updating language to comply with current State and Federal requirements; together with a report from the General Services Director.

Action: Councilor Fennessy moved approval. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Todd and passed unanimously.

Reports

New Business

Unfinished Business

47. Presentation on the Memorial Field Master Plan from the Parks and Recreation Director. (Presentation given at the November 10, 2025 City Council Meeting.) (Action on this item tabled at the November 24, 2025 City Council Meeting.) (Communication from Concord School District received.) (Petition and public testimony received.)

48. Ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances; Title II, Traffic Code; Chapter 18, Parking, Article 18-1, Stopping, Standing and Parking, Section 18-1-7.1, Parking Prohibited During Certain Hours and Months in Designated Places, Schedule IX; to modify parking requirements on School Street between Pine and Liberty Streets; together with a report from the Assistant Director of Community Development. (Action on this item tabled at the August 11, 2025 City Council meeting.) (Public comments received.)

49. Resolution appropriating the sum of $84,000 to support efforts by Concord's Plan to End Homelessness and authorizing a transfer in from the Community Improvement Reserve in the sum of $84,000 for this purpose; together with report from Councilor Jim Schlosser. (Action on this item tabled at the April 14, 2025 City Council meeting.)

Consideration of Items Pulled from the Consent Agenda

22. Report from Deputy City Manager - Finance recommending the FY 2027 City Council Budget Schedule and Committee Guidelines. (Pulled from consent by Councilor Brown.)

Action: Councilor Todd moved approval. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Schultz.

Councilor Brown moved to modify the work session and separate the public hearing and the public action to happen a week later at the regularly scheduled June meeting. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Davie.

Councilors discussed the proposal. Councilor Keach inquired about the impact on the budget timeline. The City Manager stated that while the schedule change was

possible, it could compress the agenda in June depending on other scheduled items, including continued discussion of Memorial Field and the overall budget.

Councilors expressed differing views. Some supported additional time for deliberation and public reflection, while others raised concerns about delaying budget decisions and potentially complicating the process or reducing efficiency. Several Councilors emphasized the importance of maintaining public participation and ensuring that Council decisions are informed by the full budget presentation.

The City Manager noted that a similar process had been used in prior years, but that it had been changed due to concerns that early partial votes did not account for the full budget context.

Councilor Brown stated the intent of the motion was to provide the public with clearer separation between work sessions and final action, and to allow additional time for public feedback.

Mayor Champlin spoke in opposition to the motion, citing concerns about efficiency, continuity of deliberations, and the risk of decisions unraveling between meetings.

Councilor Brown asked for a Roll Call vote:

Yes: Councilor Brown, Councilor Davie, Councilor Horne, Councilor Kalob, Councilor Schultz, Councilor Sekou

No: Mayor Champlin, Councilor Fennessy, Councilor Foote, Councilor Grady-Sexton, Councilor Keach, Councilor Kretovic, Councilor Kurtz, Councilor Schlosser, Councilor Todd

The motion failed six to nine.

The original motion passed unanimously.

23. Report from the Ad-Hoc Semiquincentennial & Tri-Centennial Committee requesting use of Official City Marks. (Revised commemorative coin design submitted.) (Pulled from consent by Councilor Brown.)

Action: Councilor Todd moved approval. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Schultz.

Councilor Brown inquired about the design of the unofficial City marks. Mayor Champlin noted that action by Council would be approving the revised logo.

Councilor Kretovic recused herself as the Chair of the Committee, as well as an officer with the Concord Historical Society. Councilor Foote also recused himself as his wife services on the Committee.

The motion passed unanimously.

34. Resolution authorizing the City Manager to Enter into a Lease Agreement with Scenic RailRiders, Inc., concerning the City-Owned Parcels identified as Tax Map 743Z, Lot 10-2 and Tax Map 13P, Lot 21 (former Northern Railroad) to Operate a Railbike Tour Business; together with a report from the Director of Special Projects & Strategic Initiatives. (Pulled from consent by Councilor Brown.)

Action: Consent resolution approved.

As part of the approval process, Councilor Brown put Item 34 back on the Consent Agenda, indicating that she no longer had a need to pull the item.

Comments, Requests by Mayor, City Councilors

Action: Councilor Foote reported on a recent community cleanup day, noting approximately three dozen volunteers participated and collected over 200 bags of trash along roadways and railroad tracks. He also recognized assistance from an abutter who provided dumpsters and equipment. Councilor Foote thanked Councilor Kalob for coordinating volunteer efforts at one site and Mayor Champlin for participating in cleanup activities, noting the event was highly successful and productive.

Councilor Brown provided several announcements. She highlighted the Concord Public Library Foundation and its programming, including participation in the "Concord Reads" program featuring author Sy Montgomery, who will appear at the Bank of New Hampshire Stage on April 23. She encouraged participation in library programs and noted expanded library offerings, including "library of things" items such as educational kits, compasses, karaoke machines, and metal detectors available for checkout.

Councilor Brown announced she will co-lead a tree tour with landscape architect Bob Pollock on May 1 during the "Petals and Pedals First Friday" event, beginning at Memorial Arch.

She also recognized student participation in "Project Story" civic engagement activities at the State House, noting student testimony on HB 1633 related to survivor rights in sexual assault cases. She commended youth civic involvement and engagement with legislative processes.

Councilor Sekou noted the Islamic community celebrated Eid on March 20 and expressed gratitude to the Concord Police Department and City staff for supporting public safety and accommodations during the celebration held outside the mosque. He extended appreciation on behalf of the Islamic Society of Greater Concord.

Councilor Kalob thanked Councilor Foote and volunteers for participation in the cleanup event and noted positive community engagement and outreach through local media and social platforms.

She announced a Renters Caucus Zoom webinar scheduled for April 21 at 5:30 p.m., in partnership with New Hampshire Legal Assistance, focused on renter rights education.

She also reported meeting with Director of Human Services, Karen Emis-Williams with Councilor Schultz, describing it as informative and impactful. Councilor Kalob additionally noted her volunteer service at the emergency winter shelter and reflected on the experience as meaningful and emotionally significant.

Councilor Kalob welcomed a new constituent, baby Felix, to Ward 6.

Councilor Fennessy highlighted the establishment by the Parks and Recreation of a Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire marker honoring William Penn Thompson, to be located near White Park. He provided historical background on Thompson, noting his significance as one of the last African American baseball players in segregated-era professional play and his longstanding ties to Concord.

Councilor Grady-Sexton recognized National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week and expressed appreciation for Concord dispatchers for their professionalism and service.

Councilor Schultz reflected on the importance of civility and neighborliness in upcoming Council discussions. She expressed appreciation to Councilor Kalob for inclusion in community engagement efforts and issued a public apology to Public Works Director Jeff Hoadley for a scheduling error.

Councilor Davie reported on the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission's regional master planning initiative and encouraged engagement. He provided updates regarding Concord Area Transit (CAT), including research projects on route history, planned public engagement rides, and volunteer opportunities for transit studies scheduled in May. He also reported on a tour of the WIN Waste Innovations facility in Penacook.

Councilor Kretovic congratulated resident Ryan Cunning on his involvement in the William Penn Thompson marker initiative.

Councilor Horne reminded residents of available tax exemptions and credits for veterans, elderly, and blind residents, noting the April 15 application deadline. She also clarified that Council will be meeting next month to begin discussions related to Memorial Field.

Councilor Todd yielded time to introduce Deputy City Solicitor Danielle Sakowski, who introduced herself and provided background in federal and state prosecution

experience.

The Mayor provided additional historical context regarding William Penn Thompson, noting that he was born in Virginia and moved to Concord in the 1880s. He described Thompson as a significant figure in local history, particularly in the context of early integrated baseball and community life. The Mayor noted that Thompson played for local and regional teams beginning in the early 1890s and was widely regarded for his skill as a catcher, as well as his leadership on and off the field.

He further noted that Thompson remained a long-term resident of Concord and was known in the community not only for his athletic contributions but also for his later work and civic presence, including his role as custodian at the Concord Police Department. The Mayor highlighted that Thompson was well respected locally and remained actively involved in community activities such as the Sunset League, one of the oldest amateur baseball leagues in the country.

The Mayor also referenced the historical significance of Thompson's life in the broader social context of the era, noting that he lived during a period when racial segregation and discriminatory laws were still present in parts of the United States, yet he built a life and family in Concord and was accepted as a valued member of the community.

He concluded by noting that the naming of the William Penn Thompson play lot occurred shortly after Thompson's death in 1961, at a time when segregation-era policies were still prevalent in the country. The Mayor stated that this action reflected the community's recognition of Thompson's contributions and enduring legacy. He further expressed hope that the marker would serve as part of a broader effort to expand Black Heritage Trail sites within Concord and to preserve and share important local history.

Comments, Requests by the City Manager

Adjournment

Action: Councilor Kretovic moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:06 p.m. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Kurtz passing unanimously.

Information

Inf1 September 3, 2025 Zoning Board of Adjustment Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf2 December 3, 2025 Zoning Board of Adjustment Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf3 January 7, 2026 Zoning Board of Adjustment Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf4 January 22, 2026 Transportation Policy Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf5 February 3, 2026 Architectural Design Review Committee Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf6 February 4, 2026 Zoning Board of Adjustment Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf7 February 5, 2026 Heritage Commission Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf8 February 11, 2026 Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf9 February 11, 2026 Conservation Commission Trails Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf10 February 12, 2026 Heritage Commission Site Walk Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf11 February 18, 2026 Planning Board Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf12 February 23, 2026 Parking Committee Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf13 March 3, 2026 Solid Waste Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf14 March 4, 2026 Concord Housing and Redevelopment Authority Draft Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf15 March 9, 2026 Concord Public Library Board of Trustees Draft Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf16 March 12, 2026 Golf Course Advisory Committee Draft Meeting Minutes.

Action: Information item received and filed.

Inf17 Communication from Kate McDougall requesting reconsideration of the removal of railroad tracks along the corridor currently used by Scenic Railriders.

Action: Information item received and filed.

A true copy, I attest:

Deborah Tuite
Deputy City Clerk